

# Acacia42



# Trestleboard

“ MAY BROTHERLY LOVE PREVAIL AND EVERY MORAL AND SOCIAL VIRTUE CEMENT US ”

### MONTHLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS

12/6/11

Stated Meeting - 7pm

12/13/11

Stewards and Deacons Workshop - 7pm

12/20/11

Christmas Party

6PM-

12/27/11

Education

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## FROM THE EAST

I am very excited for the upcoming year. I hope to do the Lodge well in all our proceedings and continue the great name and reputation Acacia Lodge # 42 has earned through so much hard work of the recent past masters.

Thanks to John Nichols. John has been a great benefit to the Lodge, and has been very important to me in my learning process with his non-stop desire of all things Masonic. His knowledge of Freemasonry is incredible, and has helped me immensely. His running of the Lodge has helped us accomplish many goals and set us on a great track. Thank-you, John.

As we move closer to the big holidays, we all seem to become quite overwhelmed with the amount of work to be completed. The family members arriving, the meals to plan, all the baking...oh, and I almost forgot, shopping!!

A few words of advice before you set out to the mall or grocery store:

1. Get yourself prepared for the crowds. Don't forget



W Bro. Jacob Hansen

to watch and enjoy all the people who are creations of the Great Architect. The bustle almost becomes a dance. Tempers can become short. Do the following to help- Smile, it is more contagious than a yawn, and will make anyone who sees you feel better. Don't forget the little things like holding the door for others, let someone else get in line before you. Take a deep breath and remember we are trying to improve life around us.

2. Remember while you're rushing around, it is a season of happiness, dating back to the celebration of Saturnalia in Rome, the original winter feast time, which was the ancient celebration of

everlasting life, looking forward to the return of life in the Spring.

3. Call a friend you haven't spoke to in a while. Ask them how they are, listen to them, don't overwhelm them with what you've been doing. Just listen to them and wish them and their family well. Ask a complete stranger (such as the waiter or waitress when you dine out) if they know of anyone in their family who may be in need of prayer or other comfort.

Remember to set time aside to spend with your own family. My family is my rock. My wife and children keep me strong. My brother entertains me with his wit and humor. My parents enjoy sugaring up my children at their house and then returning them to me and watching the fun. My in-laws enjoy giving my grandchildren the same sugary stuff for the same reasons. When we are all in the same room at once, it can become a little wild, but they're my family, and we find a way to make our time together fun.

I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. Please remember to improve the lives of those around you.

Grand Lodge of Arizona

www.azmasons.org

345 W. Monroe St. Phoenix, AZ 85003 - 602-252-1924

MW Bro. D. Brook Cunningham, Grand Master

## FROM THE WEST

*Strength- noun 1. the quality or state of being strong 2. intensity 3. force in numbers 4. strong or valuable quality.*

As I contemplate these definitions of the term strength, I am humbled to hold the position in the Lodge which is representative of strength. Acacia has gained a tremendous amount of strength in the short amount of time that I have been blessed to be a member. She is resilient because of you and our past leadership. I pray that I am strong enough to discharge the duties you have vested me with.

The strength of Acacia resides in her membership and each of you have supported her in her fullest splendor. The past year we have celebrated one of Acacias best. This is due to the dedication and commitment that you have all shown. I thank you, in advance for your continued support. Strength comes from many places in our personal lives; family, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers at times. In our daily lives however, we must not forget to look up and all around us for strength. The Great Architect has designed

our personal Temples to be resilient. We may, from time to time, feel as though we are weakened by events in our lives. At times like these, we need only to trust in Him and in his designs for support. He has placed you all in my life for strength. It now becomes my duty to represent the pillar of strength for Acacia, and strength is what I pray for. Thank you for your confidence.

Chuck Hope SW



**Bro. Chuck Hope**

## THE SECRETARY'S DESK

*“There is no  
darkness,  
only the  
absence of  
Light”*

I would like to reach out to our Brothers who we haven't seen at the Lodge for a while. If you need a ride to and from Lodge, please don't hesitate to call and ask. We would love to see you again. We've lost contact with a number of you and would like to reach out and enjoy your company again soon. If you are sick or need assistance in anyway, con-

tact me or any of our officers, we just need to know. I hope that your Thanksgiving was safe and happy, and I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and happy New Year.



**W Bro. John E. Tull II**

**FROM THE SOUTH**

Time, from a quantum physics perspective, is...well...never mind. For practical purposes, let us simply say that the few seconds you spent reading to this point are gone...you will never have them again.

As the JW tells the time in Lodge, calling the Craft from labor to refreshment, so I should remind us all to keep a good record of our own time, and to use it wisely.

Benjamin Franklin was a good example of a Man who used his time well. One example of this was his little book of virtues. Not a book written by another person, mind you, this was like a little notebook he carried on his person. In it, every week, he

would note one virtue he wanted to practice and focus on during the week. As there were thirteen virtues on his master list, he would repeat each virtue four times per year, repeating the same list of virtues over and over again.

His wise use of time was not measured in billable hours or seconds...it was in weeks and years. Slowly but certainly, with patience and perseverance, Franklin reminded himself that the virtues existed and that they were important to him. His diligence in this minor aspect of his life led to much greater achievements along the way. As an author, publisher, Diplomat, businessman, etc., Franklin's life is that of achievement and importance. He was a man who

never really had to become President.

But all this came from his quiet personal practices, those little things he did to create a man in himself who could achieve great things.

So...Brother...how are you spending your time?



**WBro. Adrian Fontes**

**COMMITTEES**

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**Widows Program**

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*“Always aim at complete harmony of thought, and word, and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts, and all will be well.”*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

MEMBER BIOGRAPHYName: John A. NicholsWife: N/ABirthday: 10/26/81Birthplace: Okinawa, JapanResidence: Phoenix\*Favorites\*Book: The Harry Potter SeriesMovie: Godfather Part. 2TV Show: TBDMusic: I enjoy all musicSports team: Duke Blue DevilsFood: German\*Hobbies\*

Reading, martial arts, painting, poetry

Dream car: 1970 Chevelle SSBiggest pet peeve: IntolerancePepsi or Coke: PepsiStones or Beatles: BeatlesChevy or Ford: ChevyPC or Mac: PCIf you could visit anywhere it would be: LondonIf you could live anywhere it would be: BavariaIf you could learn any language it would be: LatinPersonal hero(s): My father, Charlie Wilson, Theodore RooseveltHistoric hero(s): Peter the Great, Miyamoto Musashi, Giordano BrunoBlue Lodge symbol that speaks to you most: Mosaic PavementWhat do you want to be remembered for?: For putting others before myself and never ceasing to seek truth.Favorite quote: "See the beauty in everything." - ???

**Bro. John A. Nichols**  
PM

BOOK REVIEW**The Temple and the Lodge**

by  
Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh

This fun book is another one that would fall under speculative history as the authors try to piece together the murky history of Freemasonry and the Knights Templar. Seen as somewhat of a follow-up to Holy Blood, Holy Grail (the book that the author's claim Dan Brown ripped off) this interesting book traces the Masonic and Templar histories and attempts to connect the two through the remaining and available history out there.

The book covers Rosslyn Chapel, the Templar arrests, the missing Templar treasure and their appearance in Scotland assisting Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Bannockburn and several other investigative theories about when the Templars faded from history and Freemasonry emerged and if they are one in the same.

Serious scholars both Masonic and historic might scoff at this book and others like it, however I found the book to be very entertaining and thought provoking. I think that speculative historical books like

theses spark the interest and desire to look further into history.

If the contents of the book are questionable, then the platform for further research is presented right then and there, and the student may taken upon their own investigative tasks. I think anyone, Mason or not, who likes to read about Templarism, Medieval history, or just theoretical history will definitely find enjoyment in this book.

Review by John A. Nichols, PM

SONS OF VOLTAIRE

Next Meeting: Tuesday January 31, 2012 at 7:00pm  
Presentation: The Arab Perspective by Eric Jameson

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

Ochs, Fredrick	12/21	Wiedmeyer, Raymond	12/12	Living, Michael	12/4
Douglas, Ronald	12/19	Johnson, Murray	12/31	Costanzo, Angelo	12/13
Ussery, Harvey	12/13	Gordon Jr., Edward	12/10	Malmos, John	12/24
Watkins, Freddie	12/27	Treadway, Barton	12/9	Herrera, Michael	12/7
Marks Jr., Sylvan	12/2	Quinn, John	12/9	Ramos, Yosue	12/24

**MASONIC BIRTHDAYS**

Dooley Jr., Percy	30	Mrkvicka, Robert	57	Sampsel, Donald	32
Fontes, Adrian	17	Nafziger, James	24	Smith, Douglas	9
Marks Jr., Sylvan	37	Owens, David	15	Stewart, Adrian	46

**SICKNESS AND DISTRESS**

If you need to report any sickness or distress please contact Bro. Frederick Jameson at 623-221-5797 or the Lodge Secretary, John Tull, at 602-478-5989 or [jtctull2@msn.com](mailto:jtctull2@msn.com)

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## MASONIC EDUCATION

### Discretion and Secrets

Richard D. Marcus, George Washington 1776 Lodge, #337, F&AM, Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin

We live in a time that celebrates openness about one's deepest feelings and worst foibles. The media enthusiastically report infidelities of community leaders. Newscasters tell us the lurid details of the lives of Gary Condit or Robert Blake. Our society's habit of public confession can even become brutal. On TV, Jerry Springer encourages people to tell all and thereby jolt their friends and family into outrageous action. Bluntly stating what you know regardless of the damage done is oddly praised as candor and forthrightness. It is almost a part of the American character to "say what you mean and mean what you say," without artful diplomacy or courtesy.

Yet we, in Freemasonry, continue to practice the art of keeping secrets. We learn in our posting that we can tell everything about Freemasonry except the modes of recognition. The question we will investigate tonight is why do we continue to keep some things secret?

Some have suggested that secrecy was needed because political and religious persecution has at times led to the death of Freemasons. Even so, the deliberately public announcement of the founding of the Grand Lodge in London in 1717 would seem to have ended the need for further secrecy. Nevertheless, we persevere in our attachment to secrecy.

Others have scoffed that secrecy is merely a sociological tool for holding a group together through a shared knowledge. Certainly specialized knowledge helps keep groups together: be it people who love to sing madrigals, those who reenact Civil War battles, or professional groups of engineers or architects. But secrecy is not essential to these groups.

The answer to why we continue to practice secrecy, it seems to me, is to achieve our goal of becoming better men in Masonry. Maintaining secrecy is a lifelong discipline. Practicing the discipline of secrecy makes us better at doing it.

We are likewise commended to keep of the secrets of a Brother, rather than gossip what we know to others. Lax discipline in secrecy within a Lodge is a source of disharmony. Perhaps a Masonic allegory can help illustrate the benefits of secrecy to our fraternity and our lives.

\* \* \*

Adam Craftsman worked for several years in sales. His trips took him on long journeys to the North. Adam often returned dejected from these trips with more rejections than he'd want to tell anyone.

Pondering his life's path, he mentioned his dissatisfaction to his good friend Buddy Freeman. Buddy, a Master bricklayer, enjoyed his work out East.

"There is plenty of work for you as a bricklayer," Buddy said. Adam asked to join the other laborers. Adam worked hard, advancing to Journeyman and Master status under Buddy's expert

## MASONIC EDUCATION

guidance.

After a hard day's work, Buddy became more serious than usual. "I want you to keep this in strictest confidence," Buddy whispered. "It's been something I have wanted to share with you for some time. My son, Lewis, was actually adopted. My wife's family wants it kept a secret. Eleven years ago, my wife's teenage sister was pregnant. Since my wife and I were married, the whole family agreed that the baby would become ours to raise. But we are to keep it a secret."

Adam felt privileged to share in Buddy's personal secret. Adam congratulated his friend on his fine parenting skills, as he knew how well Lewis was doing.

A few days later, Adam shared his knowledge to another bricklayer, who later confided in another. The story slowly spread, each time in strictest confidence, eventually finding its way to Buddy's distraught sister-in-law and to Lewis.

Buddy's family moved away. Adam's best friend was thereby lost through his violation of trust.

\* \* \*

Adam's violation of his obligation reminds us of the enduring value of keeping secrets. We should reflect on our promise not to reveal the secrets of our worthy brothers, except in the case of treason or murder.

Keeping some parts of our craft secret is surprisingly difficult. In our public gatherings, for example, we may slip by giving the due-guard and sign when we know that we should not. Secrecy maintains harmony. When we can keep one simple secret, we grow in strength to keep larger secrets revealed inadvertently at work or in our community.

The modern German tradition in Freemasonry tends not to refer to the Fraternity as being secret (Geheimnis) but as being discreet (Diskret). Discretion conveys a sense of being tactful or silent, rather than a sense of hiding things from others. How can we feel free to communicate frankly and to grow in our development if everything we might say would be aired in public? Our emphasis on secrecy should be relabeled as practicing discretion.

Since practice helps to perfect our actions, let us all live up to our promises in our obligation. We should continue to practice secrecy and discretion, not only in the modes of recognition but also in the secrets of everyday life that are daily entrusted to us. We need not say everything we know. As we remain faithful in keeping secrets and showing discretion, we will achieve our goal of becoming better men in Freemasonry.

## MASONIC EDUCATION

### FOREVER CONCEAL, AND NEVER REVEAL

The "Secrets" of Freemasonry

By: Eugene L. Goldman, P.M.

Brother Goldman is a member of Blackmer Lodge #442, Free and Accepted Masons, State of California. He served his lodge as Master in 1993 and currently serves as Chairman of its Masonic Education Committee.

While serving my Lodge, I had occasion to call on one of our Entered Apprentices to ask about the reasons for his long absence from the Work. Like all too many men who join our Fraternity, he completed his initiation and then disappeared. He had several reasons; the demands of his busi-ness had picked up, some personal issues requiring his attention at home, scheduling problems with his Coach, etc. All these were valid, but there appeared more to this than he was letting on. After some more conversation the truth was revealed... he was concerned about his obligation, particularly about the penalties for revealing our secrets.

Our Brother is a man who is very interested in Symbolism, Metaphysics, and (what we call our) Esoteric Work. The reason he sought out a Lodge to join was to write some papers on our Symbolism! He explained that he became alarmed when taking the obligation. We never informed him of what "secrets" he had just vowed to protect! We simply advised him of grave penalties for failing to protect them. This caused him concern, as it was his goal to bring some light to non-initiates in his writings. Being a man of much honor, he felt it better to go no further in our mysteries to be free to explain some of our symbolism to non-masons.

#### Symbolic vs. Pragmatic

We entered a discussion of the penalties. The need for protection of our secrets was, and is, self evident . . . if every-one knows our secrets, we have none. Having none, we are no longer unique, or even special. Nothing then remains to induce men of good moral character to want to associate with us. We discussed the historic nature of the penalties. Without addressing the accuracy of our alleged descent from the Knights Templar, there have been other times in history when Masons have faced death simply for being Masons, and living according to Masonic principles. Hitler, Franco, Khomeini, and others have issued death sentences for freethinkers. We teach our candidates to be freethinkers by the nature of our ceremonies.

He was surprised to learn that, under Masonic Law, the strongest penalty a Lodge can impose on a member is simply expulsion from the Fraternity ! Although to most Masons, separation from the Craft would be far worse than the grisly acts described in our Ritual ! The term "no less a penalty" applies here, in great measure. The thought of revealing our secrets to the unentitled should cause revulsion in the minds of our membership.

#### The Secrets Themselves

What are our secrets? Today, in this country, our existence is well known. Published phone numbers and meeting times, even the jewelry openly and proudly worn by many Masons is evidence of this.

That we use mystic ceremonies, embedded with symbolism to impart moral and ethical lessons to our novitiates is almost as well documented. Any interested person could enter a specialty bookstore, purchase a book or two and learn the essence of our ceremonies. At the Local Masonic Center in my area there is a book store, well stocked with books on and about Masonry, and writings by many Masons. Many of these books clearly explain our ceremonies and the reasons for the manner in which we exemplify them. Within the same building there is a library containing hundreds of volumes of writings by countless Masonic scholars. Most of these books discuss either the history of our Craft, or the Ceremonies and symbolism we employ in our Work. Who we are, what we do, and how we do it are clearly not secret.

We proudly refer to our modes of recognition as the only secrets in our craft today. In my library at home, I have books describing our ritual in detail. These books have clear English text and include our cherished modes of recognition (complete with diagrams). These books were purchased at a wonderful little bookstore in the Business district in my neighborhood. Any inter-ested person, with a few dollars, can do the same. Though Masons treat the modes of recognition as secret, they could not be considered unknown outside the Craft.

#### Secrets Defined

Well, what does that leave? It sounds like it's all out in the open. Our existence, methods, ritual, even the ways we recognize each other are known to any expressing an interest. The real secret of our Craft is the spiritual and emotional growth we encountered because of the experiences we shared. The true Mysteries of Free-masonry are contained within the acts of being conducted around the Lodge Room, kneeling at the Altar, first learning the Grips and Words of the several Degrees, and participating in the Third Degree Ritual. Experiencing this as we do (first hand) cannot be described in words. As with many other life experiences "you have to be there" to really understand it. Words could only confuse the issue, never explain it.

**What this means to us, my Brother**

## MASONIC EDUCATION

What does it mean that we are required to keep all this secret? The prohibition against unlawful disclosure of these secrets is meant to protect our ritual from corruption. It is not prohibited to instruct a candidate in the Work. Proper instruction of Candidates is strongly encouraged by Lodges.

Candidates Coaches (the unsung warriors of our Fraternity ) spend hour after hour personally instructing candidates in a myriad of areas. The Ritual Work, the history of Freemasonry, even proper Lodge etiquette are topics of much discussion. They spend many additional hours sharpening their proficiency in the Work to do this more effectively. They patiently answer the hundreds of questions posed by Candidates. Officers spend evenings away from their families to attend practices to improve their Work. In California, Coaches and Officers are required to attend District Schools of Instruction, and when proficient, they are certified by District Inspectors. Inspectors are supervised by Assistant Grand Lecturers. These men come under the oversight of the Grand Lecturer. The Grand Lodge of California, and most of its constituent Lodges, have active committees on Masonic Education. This elaborate system exists to insure that Candidates receive proper instruction.

Work is done only in a tyled Lodge, by qualified Officers. Coaching is done in private settings, by skilled and dedicated men. In this way the Ancient Landmarks are preserved. If Degrees were to be conducted by the unqualified, errors would begin to seep in and Keystones would begin to change or disappear. The essence of the Work would change and those elements that make it what it is would be lost. Thus, it is easy to see why the admonition against unlawful disclosure of our Work exists.

### **The ‘flip side’**

“That is it? All I have to do is leave things to the Officers and Coaches and I have fulfilled my Obligation?” Not at all! Remember promising never to reveal these secrets unlawfully? That promise contains a hidden injunction to reveal lawfully. Relate the emotions you feel in Lodge to your family and friends, and to the way in which you conduct your life. Share what Masonry means to you by your conduct out of the Lodge. Remind yourself why you are a Mason. Let the world see, by your actions, evidence of the growth you experienced. Promote your Lodge’s activities and invite non-Masons to social activities. They just might get caught up in the spirit of Brotherhood and ask “How may I become a Mason?”. Then discuss the membership and degree processes with him. If he asks for a petition, help him fill it out. Introduce him to other members of your Lodge.

### **Lawful disclosure of our secrets**

Signing a petition also carries with it a moral obligation. It obliges you to support our new Brother through his Masonic travels. Be present at his Degrees and Proficiency examinations. Patiently answer his questions, or refer him to his Coach. Sit with him at Lodge dinners and in Lodge. Be to him the friend you told your Lodge he was to you. Being a member of a Lodge enjoins you to attend whenever you can, even if you are not an officer. A full Lodge room for an initiation expresses the love of the fraternity to the Candidate and encourages him to become more active himself.

Doing these things will go a long way to fulfilling your “unstated” obligation to lawfully communicate the secrets of Freemasonry. Become a True and faithful Brother and encourage others by your cackle.

### **Meanwhile back at the Coaching Room**

Remember our Candidate? As this paper is being written, he has actively resumed meeting with his Coach. He is looking forward to completing his Degrees, and writing many excellent articles on our Craft. I know he will be happy as he forever reveals, and never conceals much of the non-secret information about our Fraternity. He will be happier still as he lawfully communicates many of our secrets.

## MASONIC EDUCATION

### SO MOTE IT BE

SHORT TALK BULLETIN - Vol.V June, 1927 No.6

by: Unknown

How familiar the phrase is. No Lodge is ever opened or closed, in due form, without using it. Yet how few know how old it is, much less what a deep meaning it has in it. Like so many old and lovely things, it is so near to us that we do not see it.

As far back as we can go in the annals of the Craft we find this old phrase. Its form betrays its age. The word MOTE is an Anglo-Saxon word, derived from an anomalous verb, MOTAN. Chaucer uses the exact phrase in the same sense in which we use it, meaning "So May It Be." It is found in the Regius Poem, the oldest document of the Craft, just as we use it today.

As everyone knows, it is the Masonic form of the ancient AMEN which echoes through the ages, gathering meaning and music as it goes until it is one of the richest and most haunting of words. At first only a sign of assent, on the part either of an individual or of an assembly, to words of prayer or praise, it has become to stand as a sentinel at the gateway of silence.

When we have uttered all that we can utter, and our poor words seem like ripples on the bosom of the unspoken, somehow this familiar phrase gathers up all that is left - our dumb yearnings, our deepest longings - and bears them aloft to One who understands. In some strange way it seems to speak for us into the very ear of God the things for which words were never made.

So, naturally, it has a place of honor among us. At the marriage Altar it speaks its blessing as young love walks toward the bliss or sorrow of hidden years. It stands beside the cradle when we dedicate our little ones to the Holy life, mingling its benediction with our vows. At the grave side it utters its sad response to the shadowy AMEN which death pronounces over our friends.

When, in our turn, we see the end of the road, and would make a last will and testament, leaving our earnings and savings to those whom we love, the old legal phrase asks us to repeat after it: "In The Name Of God, AMEN." And with us, as with Gerontius in his Dream, the last word we hear when the voices of earth grow faint and the silence of God covers us, is the old AMEN, So Mote It Be.

How impressively it echoes through the Book of Holy Law. We hear it in the Psalms, as chorus answers to chorus, where it is sometimes reduplicated for emphasis. In the talks of Jesus with his friends it has a striking use, hidden in the English version. The oft-repeated phrase, "Verily, Verily I Say Unto You," if rightly translated means, AMEN, AMEN, I say unto you." Later, in the Epistles of Paul, the word AMEN becomes the name of Christ, who is the AMEN of God to the faith of man.

So, too, in the Lodge, at opening, at closing, and in the hour of initiation. No Mason ever enters upon any great or important undertaking without invoking the aid of Deity. And he ends his prayer with the old phrase, "So Mote It Be." Which is another way of saying: "The Will Of God Be Done." Or, whatever be the answer of God to his prayer: "So Be It - because it is wise and right.

What, then, is the meaning of this old phrase, so interwoven with all our Masonic lore, simple, tender, haunting? It has two meanings for us everywhere, in the Church, or in the Lodge. First, it is assent of man to the way and Will of God; assent to His Commands; assent to His Providence, even when a tender, terrible stroke of death takes from us one much loved and leaves us forlorn.

Still, somehow, we must say:" So it is; so be it. He is a wise man, a brave man; who, baffled by the woes of life, when disaster follows fast and follows faster, can nevertheless accept his lot as a part of the Will of God and say, though it may almost choke him to say it:

"So Mote It Be." It is not blind submission, nor dumb resignation, but a wise reconciliation to the Will of the Eternal.

The other meaning of the phrase is even more wonderful; it is the assent of God to the aspiration of man. Man can bear so much - anything, perhaps - if he feels that God knows, cares and feels for him and with him. If God says Amen, So it is, to our faith and hope and love; it links our perplexed meanings, and helps us to see, however dimly, or in a glass darkly, that there is a wise and good purpose in life, despite its sorrow and suffering, and that we are not at the mercy of Fate or the whim of Chance.

Does God speak to man, confirming his faith and hope? If so, how? Indeed yes! God is not the great I Was, but the great I Am, and He is neither deaf nor dumb. In Him we live and move and have our being - He Speaks to us in nature, in the moral law, and in our own hearts, if we have ears to hear. But He speaks most clearly in the Book of Holy Law which lies open upon our Alter.

Nor is that all. Some of us hold that the Word Of God "Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us, Full Of Grace and

## MASONIC EDUCATION

Truth," in a life the loveliest ever lived among men, showing us what life is, what it means, and to what fine issues it ascends when we do the Will of God on earth as it is done in Heaven, No one of us but grows wistful when he thinks of the life of Jesus, however far we fall below it.

Today men are asking the question: Does it do any good to pray? The man who actually prays does not ask such a question. As well ask if it does a bird any good to sing, or a flower to bloom? Prayer is natural and instinctive in man. We are made so. Man is made for prayer, as sparks ascending seek the sun. He would not need religious faith if the objects of it did not exist.

Are prayers ever answered? Yes, always, as Emerson taught us long ago. Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered - and that is as far as we need to go. The deepest desire, the ruling motive of a man, is his actual prayer, and it shapes his life after its form and color. In this sense all prayer is answered, and that is why we ought to be careful what we pray for - because in the end we always get it.

What, then is the good of prayer? It makes us repose on the unknown with hope; it makes us ready for life. It is a recognition of laws and the thread of our conjunction with them. It is not the purpose of prayer to beg or make God do what we want done. Its purpose is to bring us to do the Will of God, which is greater and wiser than our will. It is not to use God, but to be used by Him in the service of His plan.

Can man by prayer change the Will of God? No, and Yes. True prayer does not wish or seek to change the larger Will of God, which involves in its sweep and scope the duty and destiny of humanity. But it can and does change the Will of God concerning us, because it changes our will and attitude towards Him, which is the vital thing in prayer for us.

For example, if a man living a wicked life, we know what the Will of God will be for him. All evil ways have been often tried, and we know what the end is, just as we know the answer to a problem in geometry. But if a man who is living wickedly changes his way of living and his inner attitude, he changes the Will of God - if not His Will, at least His Intention. That is, he attains what even the Divine Will could not give him and do for him unless it had been effected by His Will and Prayer.

The place of Prayer in Masonry is not perfunctory. It is not a mere matter of form and rote. It is vital and profound. As a man enters the Lodge as an initiate, prayer is offered for him, to God, in whom he puts his trust. Later, in a crisis of his initiation, he must pray for himself, orally or mentally as his heart may elect. It is not just a ceremony; it is basic in the faith and spirit of Masonry. Still later, in a scene which no Mason ever forgets, when the shadow is darkest, and the most precious thing a Mason can desire or seek seems lost, in the perplexity and despair of the Lodge, a prayer is offered. As recorded in our Monitors, it is a mosaic of Bible words, in which the grim facts of life and death are set forth in stark reality, and appeal is made to the pity and light of God.

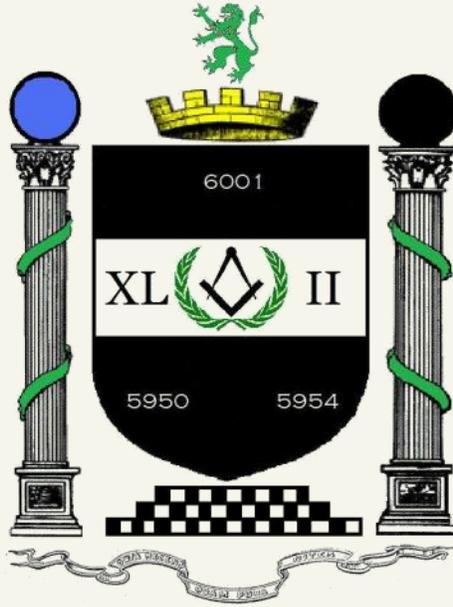
It is truly a great prayer, to join in which is to place ourselves in the very hands of God, as all must do in the end, trust His Will and way, following where no path is into the soft and fascinating darkness which men call death. And the response of the Lodge to that prayer, as to all others offered at its Altar, is the old, challenging phrase, "So Mote It Be!"

Brother, do not be ashamed to pray, as you are taught in the Lodge and the Church. It is a part of the sweetness and sanity of life, refreshing the soul and making clear the mind. There is more wisdom in a whispered prayer than in all the libraries of the world. It is not our business to instruct God. He knows what things we have need for before we ask him. He does not need our prayer, but we do - if only to make us acquainted with the best Friend we have.

The greatest of all teachers of the soul left us a little liturgy called the Lord's Prayer. He told us to use it each for himself, in the closet when the door is shut and the din and hum and litter of the world is outside. Try it Brother; it will sweeten life, make its load lighter, its joy brighter, and the way of duty plainer.

Two tiny prayers have floated down to us from ages ago, which are worth remembering; one by a great Saint, the other by two brothers. "Grant Me, Lord, ardently to desire, wisely to study, rightly to understand and perfectly to fulfill that which pleaseth Thee." And the second is after the manner: "May two brothers enjoy and serve Thee together, and so live today that we may be worthy to live tomorrow."

"SO MOTE IT BE"



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