

THE TWOFOLD NATURE OF FREEMASONRY

by
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Among the Craft, very little is known about the origins of Freemasonry; the designed purpose of its exoteric, or outer work; and even less about the esoteric aspect of its ritualistic work.

How better to begin than to open the First Great Light in Masonry to page one.¹ "In the beginning God created" the 'Above' and the 'Below'. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God said, 'Let there be light; and there was Light'" Thus is stated two Divine Laws: (1) the Hermetic Law: "as above, so below; as within, so without"; and (2), a corollary of the first; the Law of Duality.

The six days of Creation is really a declaration of the evolutionary-devolutionary process which governs all of Creation, including the destiny of the Soul of Man.

Then follows the story of Adam's creation and his ouster from the Garden of Eden. Symbolically, Eden was that temporary state of suspension, of inaction, before the inbreathing of the Spirit of God upon His "waters". Eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil was a programmed necessity. It was a predestined event. The moment Adam partook of that sacrament two things happened: (1) He became subject to two conflicting inner drives: the constructive and the destructive; (2) He became subject to the Law of Personal Responsibility for his choices, i.e. his actions. Thus, did God launch Man upon the long road towards his eventual destiny; eternal salvation as God's co-creator, or eternal oblivion as the price of refusal to accept his builder's responsibilities.

Thus, from the beginning, was created the Inner and the Outer; the Above and the Below. From the beginning Man, like Prometheus has been bound to that necessity. Also, like Prometheus, Man's only unbinding from the limits of the

Lower Law will come through his total obedience of the Higher Law wherein lies a FREEDOM never promised by Satan and all of his ruffians. He must curb his "undue passions" by the horizontal plane of the Level. He must erect his aspiring goals heavenward by the perfect vertical of the Plumb Line. Thus, the Mason may complete the work of the Entered Apprentice and the Fellowcraft by the completion of the Right Angle.

The Master Mason degree is a representation of the finished Work. It is the transformation of the Right Angle into the Right Triangle by connecting the ends of the horizontal and the vertical planes with the Hypotenuse, a representation of Infinity. It represents the completion of the "Temple Not Made with Hands". And in that completion is found the "Philosopher's Stone", or the True Word of the Master Mason. Yet, as we all know, we are invested with a substitute word. Why, then, are we faced with this disappointing climax?

The answer is that each Entered Apprentice must first build his horizontal level. Each Fellowcraft must erect his vertical pillar of goals and aspirations; set his "Jacob's Ladder" thereupon; and climb, rung by rung of experience, until he arises to that level where he may find that Special Path which leads to the building of his "hypotenuse". This is God's evolutionary Law. There is no possibility of escape. His only option is unthinkable: Drown in the depths of eternal oblivion!

Because of the foregoing, we can better understand that subjective disciplines have two aspects. Remember the Law of Duality! One is the objective, exoteric, or outer appearances. The other is the hidden, esoteric, or inner obscure meanings. Esoteric philosophy obscures inner truth, in part by necessity, and in part by deliberate purpose.

Freemasonry also has an esoteric aspect and its exoteric work. The esoteric aspect is embodied by its secret signs, tokens, and ritual. The ritual is really a type of Ancient Mystery Play². Its plot is the age-old Legend of the Fall of Man. The Legend also intimates the existence of a Path by which Man may re-arise to sublime heights, if he will accept the challenge and successfully run the gauntlet. This plot and the Sacred Law is basic to all time-tested religions. This is the common bond by which Masonic Brethren may kneel about the Three Great Lights in Masonry and offer up their supplications to Deity. In this manner fraternal harmony is established within the Craft. In this fashion acceptability of The Craft is established in outer society.

Let me quote from "The Meaning of Masonry" by W. L. Wilmshurst, an English Mason of high rank who bridged the 19th and 20th centuries. By the depth of his insight into the subjective nature of Masonry, and by his manner of expression we may well suspect that he was also a Spiritual Mason, as well. This book is a "must" for every Master Mason who is strongly drawn towards the goal of esoteric, or Spiritual Masonry.

From page 5: ". . . It seems taken for granted that reception into the Order will automatically be accompanied by an ability to appreciate forthwith and at its full value all that one there finds. The contrary is the case, for Masonry is a veiled and cryptic expression of the difficult science of spiritual life, and the understanding of it calls for a special an informed guidance on one hand, and on the other a genuine and earnest interest on the part of those seeking to be instructed;. . . not infrequently one finds the Brethren discontinuing their membership because they find that Masonry means nothing to them and that no explanation or guidance is vouchsafed to them . . ."³ Brethren, harken to those words! Investiture of the "substitute" Master Mason's Word is a disappointment. Future generations can never find out the "right" within any Masonic body. The originators of Freemasonry never vested that special knowledge within their creation!

Spiritual Initiates of authentic Arcane Secret Societies were the founders of Freemasonry. It seems that they labored at least two centuries, evolving operative guild masonry of the Middle Ages into what became Freemasonry as it emerged about the middle of the 17th century. These illumined men foresaw the coming of the Renaissance, its special opportunity for Man, and its singular needs. They built into Freemasonry the basic idealism and moral requirements which they knew to be essential to the success of the work Freemasonry was to perform. However, they reserved exclusively to themselves the esoteric, Arcane process which was and still is required to realize the goal which the True Word of the Master Mason signifies. In the words of Wilmshurst: "I emphasize that the method was necessarily to be not a haphazard, but scientific one".⁴ It is interesting to note that, in Europe, after the appearance of Freemasonry, many of the Arcane Societies required that their applicants be Masons, Primitive or Speculative.⁵ However, in the United States Masonic membership has never been an admission requirement.

The esoteric aspect of Freemasonry was designed to operate on two planes. The first plane is that of the collective, or group function. The second plane is that of the inner being of the individual Mason. Wilmshurst emphasizes this in his "Meaning of Masonry": ". . . 'Know thyself!' was the injunction inscribed over the portals of ancient Temples of Initiation, for with that knowledge was promised the knowledge of all secrets and all mysteries. And Masonry was designed to teach knowledge much deeper, vaster and more difficult than is popularly conceived. The wisest and most advanced of us is perhaps still but an Entered Apprentice at this knowledge, however high his titular rank. Here and there may be one worthy of being hailed as a Fellow-Craft in the true sense. The full Master Mason — the just man made perfect who has actually travelled the entire path, endured all its tests and ordeals, and becomes raised into conscious union with the Author and Giver of Life and able to mediate and impart that life to others — is at all times hard to find."⁶

Every coin has two sides. This is but another vernacular statement of the Law of Duality. It is universal and all pervading. The Supreme Architect designed Man to conquer his external environment and to expand it in evolutionary fashion by use of his five physical senses and objective mind. But he also endowed Man with a subconscious capacity to function as a bridge which crosses the obscure boundary between the outer material world and the unseen inner spiritual world. Likewise, the originators of Freemasonry designed our Fraternity to perform a double function: (1) To supply and apply the idealistic and ethical mortar for securely binding the unfolding social organizations of Man on the West side of the foreseen Renaissance; (2) To serve as the concealed connector to the illuminated Spiritual Initiates and their Arcane Societies. This last point is affirmed by Wilmshurst: ". . . Nevertheless to point to that path of self-perfecting to those who care and dare to follow it . . . modern Speculative Masonry was instituted. . . ."⁷

But just who were the originators of Freemasonry? For the answer, let us now turn to a work by another high ranking English Mason, Bro. Rev. F. deP. Castells. This book, "Our Ancient Brethren, The Originators of Freemasonry" is truly a remarkable work. It is now out of print. His thesis, stated in the preface, is "that Freemasonry came through the movement initiated by the Christian Kabbalists. . . . The Jewish Brotherhood . . . gave rise successively to several secret associations, chief of which were the Orders of the Holy Cross, the Rosy Cross, and the Freemasonry of the middle seventeenth century."

Beginning with Chapter III, the rest of the book deals primarily with the Rosicrucians, and a number of their personalities, their works and their connections with Freemasonry. Chapter VIII deals with the FAMA FRATERNITAS; and Chapter IX deals with the CONFESSION of the Rosicrucians.⁸

The worth of this work becomes highlighted when we compare it with the world's most authentic history of the Fraternitas Rosae Crucis: "The Book of ROSICRUCIAE". The 3

volumes are available through the Philosophical Publishing Co., PO Box 220 at Quakertown, PA 18951. This work was compiled by the late Supreme Grand Master, Dr. R. Swinburne Clymer who held that office from 1905 until 1966. Dr. Clymer was also a 32nd Degree Mason, and a descendant of George Clymer, one of the signers of our Declaration of Independence. Most of Dr. Clymer's many works will be found in the Library of the Scottish Rite Supreme Council in Washington, D.C.

Near the start of the 16th century Paracelsus began what was to become the Fraternitas Rosae Crucis by the turn of the 17th century. See Volume I, Preface, BOOK OF ROSICRUCIAE, pages 18 and 19. "The records of the Fraternitas are proof of this . . ." ". . . we have drawn a parallel in juxtaposition between the lives, travels and experiences of the legendary Father C.R.C. and Paracelsus . . . the father of the Confederation which later became the Fraternitas Rosae Crucis and continues to be such unto this day."⁹ It should here be noted that the Kabbalists which had so profoundly influenced the formation of Freemasonry were a part of this early confederation.

It appears that the Masonic evolution started somewhat before the 16th century. Since the formation of the modern Fraternitas Rosae Crucis occupied all of the 16th century, it is likely that the Kabbalists were involved in Masonic formation for some period prior to the start of the 16th century. The Fraternitas Rosae Crucis which emerged at the beginning of the 17th century was a blend of Arcane Societies or groups which included the Kabbalists, Hermeticists, and Alchemists.

Let's now change the scene to the New World. The Supreme World Council of the Fraternitas in Europe established the Council of Nine at Philadelphia in 1773, just before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. This was the first organizational appearance of the Fraternitas in America.¹⁰ An imposing list of Americans who were Rosicrucians begins on page 101 of Volume II, BOOK OF ROSICRUCIAE.

Biographical sketches of these men continue to the end of that volume.

You will note that 3 revolutionary Americans were members of the World Council: (1) Thomas Paine; (2) Benjamin Franklin, a Mason; and (3) George Washington, also a Mason. To most fully appreciate the stature of these great men; to realize the source of the grand concepts of The United States and the magnificence of its founding documents, every Mason should really study and absorb Volume II, BOOK OF ROSICRUCIAE, page 101 to its end. Further, every Mason should study George Lippard's "Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross". This is also obtainable from the Philosophical Publishing Co. at Quakertown, PA. See the Addendum at the end of this paper. Dr. Clymer's Introduction to this work should be read and re-read until its message is burned in fire upon every Masonic heart!

In 1858 the World Council established the first Rosicrucian Grand Jurisdiction in the New World, and installed Dr. P. Beverly Randolph as the first American Grand Master.¹¹ General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, George Lippard, and Abraham Lincoln were contemporaries of Dr. Randolph. Finally, in 1884, the European Supreme World Council was closed forever when Dr. Freeman B. Dowd was made Supreme Grand Master in The United States.

Let it here be noted that the name, "Fraternitas Rosae Crucis" with many of its symbols were registered with the U. S. Library of Congress. Therefore, by Fraternal Law, the Fraternitas Rosae Crucis with its SEE at Quakertown, PA, is the only authentic Rosicrucian in The United States today.

While the Fraternitas and Freemasonry worked in Europe separately, but side-by-side from the 17th century; both fraternities existed concurrently, at least from the time of our American Revolution. The Fraternitas worked silently and inwardly. Freemasonry also worked quietly, but performed the outer work of building our great nation. One was the left hand; the other was the right hand. And, Brethren, I sincerely believe that our singular

national structure could have never been erected without those two sides of the fraternal equation.

Today's Masonic Challenge and Opportunity

As we turn to the present, we find two major problems which confront Freemasonry in The United States. One is that membership is either static, or actually declining. Two is a marked decline of Masonic influence upon the quality and direction of our local and national life. From our American Revolution through World War I, the Masonic Fraternity exerted a vital, formative force in the building of the United States as a citadel of human freedom and the World's greatest political and economic power.

The advent of the "technological" revolution during World War II has wrought an avalanche of unforeseen changes in our individual and national lives with the speed of a tornado. During these 40 ensuing years we have literally adjourned to Masonic Refreshment, except for ritualistic work. We have become content to rest upon the laurels of our Masonic forbears. We have indulged in celebration of our new scientific panacea. However, we have also been accepting layer upon layer of unnatural stress until it seems that we cannot much longer control the technological monster which our 20th century Dr. Frankensteins have created.

For more than 20 years I have been deeply involved in the geometry of our securities markets. These markets move in steps, or cycles; both as to price and time segments. Over extended period of time, these cycles appear to have a direct correlation with the vicissitudes of cultures and nations in much the same way as tree-rings record past climatic conditions. However, many consider the action of these markets as leading indicators. I have found that the projection of future price/time segments is feasible with almost unbelievable accuracy. From this mathematical base I foresee an economic event fully as formidable as the threat of nuclear war. It is likely to crest just as we pass into the 21st century. No man can foretell the precise pattern of human events,

especially during periods of turbulence and chaos.

But history tells me that wars and social upheavals always have an economic base. It also tells me that human, economic, political and spiritual freedom are most at jeopardy during such cycles. The Red Revolution of Russia and the rise of Germany's Hitler are two glaring modern examples.

The lessons of history, just cited, plus the above mentioned two Masonic problems clearly set forth a most worthy challenge upon our trestleboard. It also confronts Freemasonry with a magnificent opportunity for dedicated service to mankind.

As Bro. Wilmshurst has indicated,¹² many of the Brethren have withered away because they found not the Light which they sought. This, then, points up the urgent need for Freemasonry to develop a dynamic program of Masonic Education, plus a format of creative Masonic participation in the warp and woof of our local, state, and national life.

Therefore, let me suggest that this A. Douglas Smith Lodge of Research develop a two-fold program: (1) for Masonic Education; and (2) for Masonic Civic Action. The educational program should be designed for the study of exoteric and esoteric Masonic philosophy by means of regular round table discussion groups. Hopefully, this will lead to the development of new contemporary speakers and writers from the present ranks of the Brethren. Between the Macoy Publishing Co., in Richmond, VA, and the Philosophical Publishing Co, in Quakertown, PA, there presently exists an abundance of working materials. Special round table meetings should also be established of Masonic families and related organizations such as the Eastern Star, DeMolay, and Job's Daughters. Secondly, a separate series of round table meetings should be established to study American history, civics, and government. The centerpiece of this work must be an understanding and practical acceptance of the idealistic and philosophical purposes for which

these United States were founded. Finally, there must be formulated a program of specific procedures by which our national life can be re-programmed back within the metes and bounds set forth by our founding documents.

This, it seems to me, is the Masonic challenge of our day. It is monumental. If you find this challenge worthy of acceptance, the only way the work will get done is to make the start. The sooner, the better. And if it be good and proper, inch by inch, the human resources and essential wisdom will come with the effort.

Brethren, Virginia was the Mother of our United States. Virginia was also the Mother of George Washington, the Mason and the Spiritual Initiate. Where better to begin the revitalization of Freemasonry and the re-direction of America? This is a magnificent possibility. It can also become a glorious reality. The difference will depend, Brethren, upon your collective Will and Desire!

Now in closing, let me pose you a question: Are you ready - are you ready to accept this challenge; and are you willing to secure a living future for yourselves and your descendants? You have TWO futures to ponder. One is the "future" which yet remains to us in this present vale of tears. The second is your "future" in that Foreign Country, beyond the pillars of Jachin and Boaz, where you may well discover that you are your own Great Grandfather!

Harken, Brethren, for the call of your Worshipful Master from Refreshment to Labor. That call should remind you that the Temple within AND the Temple without have yet to be completed according to that Grand Design of the Supreme Architect: "As within, so without; As above, so below!"

Notes

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1. The Holy Bible (King James Version)
 2. "Meanings of Masonry", W. L. Wilmshurst, Chapter V.
 3. "Meanings of Masonry", W. L. Wilmshurst, page 5.
 4. "Meanings of Masonry", W. L. Wilmshurst, page 174.
 5. "The Book of ROSICRUCIAE", R. Swinburne Clymer, Vol. III, pages 80 - 81.
 6. "Meanings of Masonry", W. L. Wilmshurst, page 12.
 7. "Meanings of Masonry", W. L. Wilmshurst, page 13.
 8. "The Book of ROSICRUCIAE", R. Swinburne Clymer, Vol. I, pages 227 - 286 and Vol. II, pages 1 - 29.
 9. "The Book of ROSICRUCIAE", R. Swinburne Clymer, Vol. I Preface, pages xviii - xix.
 10. "Brotherhood of The Rosy Cross", George Lippard, page 22.
 11. "The Book of ROSICRUCIAE", R. Swinburne Clymer, Vol. II, page 191.
 12. "Meanings of Masonry", W. L. Wilmshurst, pages 5 - 6.