

THE GENESIS OF FREEMASONRY

BY: DAVID HARRISON

Reviewed by Keith W. Gunkel, P. M., Orion Lodge No. 222
Junior Deacon, William O. Ware Lodge of Research

This book, *The Genesis of Freemasonry*, is a wonderful read for all Masons, and especially those that seek answers as to why, as present-day Masons, we do what we do.

The book is divided into three parts. The ritual of Freemasonry, the architecture of Freemasonry, and the politics of Freemasonry.

The ritual of Freemasonry describes the origins of English Freemasonry and the men involved. It reveals documented evidence of early Freemasonry in Scotland, as well as in England. In the 16th century, the Scottish lodges, such as Edinburgh and Kilwinning, were permanent; whereas the English Lodges, held in taverns and coffee houses, were temporary.

In addition, the book clearly explains that there were only two degrees, the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft, until approximately 1728. It shows the timetable of where Operative Masons transformed over to Speculative membership in the early 18th century.

Dr. Harrison's references to James Anderson's Constitution of the Freemasons in 1723 are used to present the regulations of the Premier Grand Lodge in London. The ritual of Freemasonry is part of the moral code, symbols of silence and secrecy.

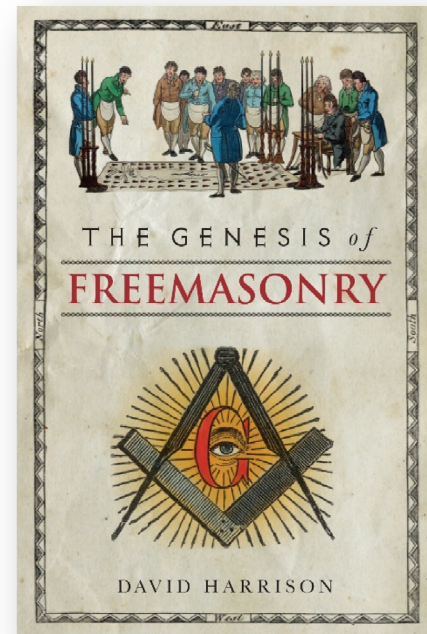
Solomon's Temple, including the furnishings and the décor, is described in detail. Mr. Harrison sheds light that we, as Masons, may interpret to build God's world through the promotion of natural philosophy, love, education, moralistic attitudes.

The history of the third degree ritual includes, to my surprise, mention of Noah and the Ark, as well as Jesus's resurrection and the story of Hiram Abiff. The degree of Master Mason symbolizes death, and the awareness of mortality to all.

Part two refers to the architecture of Freemasonry. Its focus is on King Solomon's Temple and, for example, Sir Isaac Newton's obsession with the Biblical dimensions of Solomon's creation.

Sir Christopher Wren used ideas from Solomon's Temple in rebuilding St. Paul's Cathedral. Other Masons introduced carvings and figures in their personal private lodges.

In addition, part two explains the beginning of the Enlightenment Era and the birth of modern Freemasonry. Dr. John Desaguliers, James Anderson and Isaac Newton set in place the rejuvenation of the Craft,



and published in 1723 a new book of constitutions. In 1738, a new edition appeared in which the regulations note the new third degree and the offices of Treasurer, Secretary, and a Tyler to look after the door.

Part three, as mentioned, describes the politics of Freemasonry, delving into the personalities of the people in leadership and their relationships. The first Grand Master of the Premier or Modern Grand Lodge, Anthony Sayre, was a bookseller.

Connecting or linking religion, politics, and education, Freemasonry bridged all men to obtain insight into accessing divine knowledge and sharing in society all rights and privileges to all members. This chapter also mentions conflicts at the time between the Whig and Tory parties, and how their differences were settled over time. Freemasonry had established boundaries for a non-political space within the closed lodge doors; peace and harmony were present for all brothers.

In closing on my review of this book, I find Freemasonry a brotherhood of like-minded men, seeking to improve one's-self and seeking to be better one day at a time. Our purpose is to spread the cement of brotherly love to hold and unite one another through time immortal.

The Genesis of Freemasonry is available from online booksellers, as well as on the author's website, www.dr-david-harrison.com.