

Reading, Writing & Apathy

The Rise and Fall of Masonic Education

Stephen DaFoe



Stephen Dafoe's essay presentation on the rise and fall of Masonic education stands as one of the most comprehensive examinations and contextual study of what has happened to Masonic education over the last century.

Understanding how Masonic education was offered in the past, and why so much of it fell by the way side over the decades presents opportunity to further examine ways in which it may be best presented now as well as the future.

Dafoe's scholarship is comprehensive and exemplary. His criticisms, based on his study in context, may appear harsh to a few, yet there is no known response offering legitimate disagreement with his positions.

Introduction

Tonight my Brethren I would like to talk to you about several topics. First, Raphael's Cartoons; those seven tapestries commissioned by Pope Leo X, which latterly became the property of the Royal Collection of England at Hampton Court. Second, I'd like to speak to you about the water clock, which was invented by Ctesibius of Alexandria and mentioned by Vitruvius from whom this lodge takes its name. If neither of those topics is of interest to you, then I'd like to talk to you about the progress of wool from the sheep's back all the way to the consumer.

As I say, I would like to talk to you about these subjects, but my lack of knowledge prevents me from doing so. However, if I were a member of the Old King's Arms Lodge in 1730s England, I would have learned of those types of subjects, because those are the types of subjects regularly rehearsed by that lodge in those days. 1

Let me share with you an excerpt from a book about Freemasonry, published in 1726:

“They have in their Lodge several Gentlemen, sons of Art, each very

eminent in his Profession: These Gentlemen, at the Command of the Master, are obliged to read a Lecture upon whatsoever Topic he shall direct. This gives the Brethren of the Lodge an insight into all Arts and Sciences, and furnishes them with a Competency of Universal Knowledge, so necessary and commendable in a Gentleman; ..." 2

That excerpt was taken from "The Freemasons Accusations and Defence," an anti-masonic tract which went through five editions including a pirated version. Yes once upon a time Freemasons consisted largely of gentlemen and intellectuals who discussed the marvels of science and the important events of the day. It was this type of intellectual inquiry that made up the bulk of a Masonic meeting in those days. In his 2004 Prestonian Lecture, Bro. Trevor Stewart speaks of the Art of 18th Century Conversation:

"One of the key indicators of whether a man was educated and a gentleman was if he could participate fluently in rational discourse with his peers. It was a basic assumption then that through polite discourse, a corporate interchange, which could be simultaneously challenging, stimulating and pleasing to the intellect, something like 'self-improvement' could be achieved." 3

That is the way it was 300 years ago and I am not a product of the Freemasonry of that generation. No, unfortunately, I am a product of the Freemasonry of the 1990s; a decade in which Freemasonry reached its all-time low as far as Masonic Education. I say the 1990s were our lowest point only because the first decade of the 21st century is only half over but the prognosis for improvement does not look any better for the second half than it does for the first; so I

am comforted only by the fact that it looks like I will no longer have been 'raised' in the most embarrassing decade in Freemasonry's history. As a product of 1990s' Freemasonry I am able to participate fluently in a rational discourse about such topics as how many light bulbs your lodge needs to purchase, how best to affix the brass plaque on whatever it is we are donating with much fanfare this week or enter into a debate about which batter recipes are best for your next fund raising fish fry.

In the first degree ritual of the Canadian Rite, the candidate is charged to educate himself. The charge to the new Apprentice Mason is as follows:

"And, as a last general recommendation, let me exhort you to dedicate yourself to such pursuits as may enable you to become at once respectable in your rank of life, useful to mankind, and an ornament to the society of which you have this day been admitted a member; to devote your leisure hours more especially to the study of such of the liberal arts and sciences as may lie within the compass of your attainment, and without neglecting the ordinary duties of your station to consider yourself called on to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge." 4

Fortunately for me, I was one of the few who took the words of the charge seriously. Today I stand before you a Masonic researcher, author and publisher, which in and of itself means nothing but does put me in a unique position to speak on the subject, I've been asked to talk about.

Brethren, I am going to talk to you tonight about Masonic Education from the perspective of Masonic Publishing over the years since the days when such intellectual matters as I previously mentioned were regularly discussed in lodges. I will be focusing on North American Masonry and particularly Masonic Magazines published in the United States during the 20th century.

But first, we start with a little history.

Early Masonic Publications

The earliest known Masonic Magazine was called “Der Freimaurer” and commenced publication in Leipzig, Germany in 1738, the same decade that our English Masons were talking about intellectual and philosophical matters. Other publications soon followed suit with “Der Bedahtiae” appearing in 1742, “Aufmerksam Freimaurer” in 1743, the “Freimaurerzeitung” in 1783 and “Fur Freimaurer” in 1785. 5

These last two publications lasted six months and three years respectively; a track record that is echoed in the history of similar English language publications since that time.

According to Mackeys Encyclopedia, the first English Language Magazine was “The Freemasons' Magazine,” which began in 1793. The “Masonic Mirror” was established in England in 1854, but by 1857 we find a publication called “The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror” indicating that the two periodicals had teamed up by this time. “The Masonic Record,” which seems to have suspended publication in 1970, absorbed the former “Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror” at some point on the road to periodical purgatory. If the information presented seems vague, it is because the details on these periodicals are few. It is my hope that at some future point enough information will be collected to give them the place in our recorded history that they deserve.

Post Morgan Masonic Literature

In the years between 1826 and 1840, we do not see a great deal being published about Freemasonry, at least not of a positive

nature. The disappearance of William Morgan in Batavia, New York would give rise to an anti-masonic fervor the likes of which has not been seen since. This period of Masonic history also saw Freemasonry nearly exterminated in the United States. Even after the Anti-Masonic Party died out, anti-masonic publications such as “The Broken Seal” by Samuel D. Greene, published in 1873, continued to appear off the presses. Even Morgan's exposure, which started it all, continued to be printed long after his disappearance and is available to this day.

It was during this anti-masonic era that a 34 year old doctor from South Carolina was initiated, passed and raised. He was elected Worshipful Master after only one year in the craft; no doubt due to a combination of his dedication to Freemasonry and the fact that the anti-masonic times had depleted the number of masons and thus the number of potential lodge officers. His name was Albert Gallatin Mackey and he is remembered as one of Freemasonry's most prolific writers. His first published book, “A Lexicon of Freemasonry,” published in 1845, and still in print, was penned by Mackey after he was in the craft but three short years. In total Mackey wrote over a dozen books, which are still in print today.

A listing of his works will give some indication as to the types of books published in the second half of the 19th century: History of Freemasonry in seven volumes, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry in two volumes, Symbolism of Freemasonry, Masonic Jurisprudence, Manual of the Lodge, Book of the Chapter, Principles of Masonic Law, Mystic Tie and the aforementioned Lexicon of Freemasonry.

He was also involved in a number of Masonic periodicals in the capacities of contributor, editor and even publisher. His first foray into the field came in 1849 when he established the “Southern and Western Masonic Miscellany,” which he edited until 1854. Four years later, Mackey decided to

publish a Masonic Magazine of his own called the "American Review of Masonry." This publication began in 1858 and suspended publication in 1860. Commenting on the demise of the publication, Bro. Mackey remained optimistic about the future of Masonic Education when he wrote the following words:

"It was an experiment, commenced with a view of ascertaining how far a Masonic magazine of a very elevated character would be sustained by the craft in this country. For two years this experiment has been made, and it is plain that the "Quarterly" was in advance of the Masonic age. Doubtless it was supported better than such a work would have been twenty years ago, but not so well as a similar one will be ten years hence, for the literary character of the order is improving. The editor feels some satisfaction in believing that that work, during its brief existence, has done no little in hastening that improvement." 6

Mackey was of course suggesting that two decades previous, America was still in the midst of the anti-masonic furor then sweeping the country as a result of the 'Morgan Affair.'

Following the demise of his quarterly "American Review of Masonry," Mackey took over the helm of the "American Freemason" as editor, but held the position for only one year.

In 1871 Dr. Mackey decided to give masonic publishing another go and in October of that year, "Mackey's National Freemason" was born. It managed to do a little better than his previous effort, but suspended publication in 1874, after only three short years.

Mackey's earlier prediction about the prospects of a literate Masonic populace improving over the next decade proved to be false. In 1875, a year after the demise of his second magazine and during the last decade of his life, (Mackey died in 1881) he penned a less optimistic prognosis for Freemasonry:

"If this indifference, instead of being checked, becomes more widely spread, the result is too apparent. Freemasonry must step down from the elevated position which she has been struggling, through the efforts of her scholars, to maintain, and our lodges, instead of becoming resorts for speculative and philosophical thought, will deteriorate into social clubs or mere benefit societies. With so many rivals in that field, her struggle for a prosperous life will be a hard one." 7

Sadly this prophecy laid out by Mackey in his article entitled, "Reading Masons and Masons who do not Read" was more accurate. So much so that nearly a half century later, in 1924, "The Master Mason" magazine felt the need to reprint the article in its entirety.

Another Masonic scholar and author who had a profound effect on 19th century American Freemasonry was General Albert Pike, who was initiated into the fraternity in 1850. Brother Pike is best known for his reconstruction of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (Southern Jurisdiction), of which he was its leader from 1859 (after only nine years in the craft) until his death in April of 1891. Although Pike wrote several books, including "The Meaning of Masonry," (not to be confused with the better known but equally less read book of the same name by W. L. Wilmhurst) his best known work is "Morals and Dogma;" a book that is probably the most recognized but least read book in Masonic literature. It is a toss-up as to whether anti-masonic authors refer more to Pike's "Morals and Dogma," or "The Holy Bible," both of which are misquoted with equal disregard to context. For the Freemason, especially those of the

Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite, Pike's book is a wonderful publication full of philosophical, historical, and esoteric information, but is virtually impossible to read by today's Freemason. Pike presupposed that his reader would have some basic knowledge of the concepts covered in the book; a grounding in ancient history, some understanding of Greek and Latin and a familiarity with mathematics. In essence he assumed that his reader would have some understanding of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, which all Masons are charged to study.

Of course this lack of understanding of Pike's book was not always the case with Masons. In his 1917 article, "Albert Pike: A Master Genius of Masonry," Rev. Bro. Joseph Fort Newton wrote of the simplicity and lucidity of Pike's work:

"One may almost say that Pike found Masonry in a log cabin and left it in a temple. In his life as a pioneer he saw the Masonic lodge as a silent partner of the home, the church, and the school, toiling in behalf of law, society and good order among men, and he perceived its possibilities as a field in which to use his varied gifts for the good of his fellow man. No one ever discerned the mission of Masonry more clearly; no one ever toiled for its advancement more tirelessly. If he had done nothing more than write 'Morals and Dogma,' his name would be entitled to our lasting and grateful remembrance. That is an amazing book-- amazing alike for the wealth of its learning, the breadth and sanity of its teachings, and the lucidity and beauty of its style which not even Ruskin could excel. Its style, indeed, cast in the mold of classic simplicity, rivals in its grace and ease the noblest pages of man. No one can lay aside that book without feeling that he has visited the high places of wisdom and of truth, led by a master of those who know." 8

Not all 19th century Masonic authors are as respected as Brothers Mackey and Pike,

whose contributions to the body of Masonic literature were always educational and frequently prophetic.

Dr. George Oliver was one such author, who can well be consider the "Knight and Lomas" of his day in that while his books were widely read and quoted, they are often discredited by serious scholars today. Born in 1782 at Pepplewick, England, Oliver was initiated into Freemasonry as a Lewis in 1801, at the age of 19. 9 He was the author of many books on Freemasonry; his first entitled "The Antiquities of Freemasonry." The titles of some of his books give us an indication of the direction his contributions to Freemasonry took: A Mirror for the Johannite Masons, The Theocratic Philosophy of Freemasonry, The Pythagorean Triangle and his best known, Revelations of a Square.

It is the book "Revelations of a Square," which perhaps more than any other has caused his efforts to be discredited by Masonic scholars. In his 1906 article, "The Mission of the Masonic Press," Robert Freke Gould said of Oliver's book:

"All the works of Dr. Oliver would be put into an Index Purgatorius, that is to say, if the scholars of Masonry were empowered to draw up 'A Catalogue of Books prohibited to be read.' The book of his that has probably done the most harm is The Revelations of a Square, a sort of Masonic Romance, professing to detail, though in a fictitious form, many of the usages of the last centuries, with anecdotes of the leading Masons of that period. Most of the articles on the English Ritual of the eighteenth century, written since the publication of this work, have been based on the illusory 'Revelations' of Dr. Oliver's imaginary 'Square.'" 10

Brother Gould was not the only masonic scholar to discredit Dr. Oliver's contributions to the body of 19th century Masonic literature. Gilbert W. Daynes, the author of "The Untrodden Paths of Masonic

Research,” wrote an article published in the October 1926 issue of “The Builder.” The article was entitled “Dr. Oliver: A Warning.” In the article Bro. Daynes points out the importance of critical thinking, which began to surface in the Masonic education of the early 20th century when the following words were written:

“During his Masonic career Dr. Oliver probably wrote more books upon Freemasonry than any other brother has done. But, written in an uncritical age, it behooves us to test the reliability of statements made in those books by such outside evidence as may come to our knowledge.” 11

Bro. Daynes proceeds during the course of the article to dissect claims made by Dr. Oliver in a lecture he gave in 1863 in the Witham Lodge in Lincoln on 10th century Masonic rituals. Oliver's lecture was primarily on “The Halliwell Manuscript” or “Regius Poem,” which had been discovered by J. O. Halliwell Phillipps three decades earlier in 1839. Oliver of course makes no mention of Halliwell in his lecture, only that the manuscript was in the possession of the British Museum, where it remains to this day. “The Regius Poem,” although referring to matters in the time of King Athelstane, who certainly lived in the 10th century, is generally believed by historians to date from c. 1390 and not the 10th century as Oliver suggested.

This was not the only inaccuracy in Oliver's lecture, entitled, “A Lecture on the Various Rituals of Freemasonry from the Tenth Century,” as Brother Danes points out in his article. Quoting Oliver, Danes writes:

“The first catechismal formula was introduced by Grand Master Sir Christopher Wren about the year 1685 and was called an Examination.” Bro. Danes then proceeds to disclose that the ritual Oliver claimed was introduced by Wren was actually an early Masonic exposure called, “The Grand Mystery of the Free Masons Discover'd,”

which was published in 1724, a year after Wren died.

As correct as Bro. Daynes was in his assessment of Dr. Oliver's work, Oliver's name remains familiar to many Masonic readers today while the name of Gilbert W. Daynes is an obscure one known to but a handful of Masonic researchers. In fact Dr. Oliver's, lecture, “A Lecture on the Various Rituals of Freemasonry from the Tenth Century,” is found on many Masonic education web sites, including The Grand Lodge of New Brunswick, where it is presented as Masonic Education 13 and also on The University of Bradford's “The Web of Hiram,” 14 set up in conjunction with Brother Robert Lomas; thus proving that a lack of critical thinking is as prevalent in Freemasonry today as it was when Oliver wrote his lecture.

The 19th century was an interesting century for Freemasonry, which saw the union of the Antients and the Moderns in 1813, the near extinction of Freemasonry in the United States through anti-masonic political pressure resulting from the Morgan affair of 1826, the raising of Dr. George Oliver in 1801, Albert Gallatin Mackey in 1841, and General Albert Pike in 1850; three Masonic authors whose work has affected Masonic literature ever since, albeit in very different directions.

As the century neared to a close, the prophecy of Mackey about an educated Masonic populace is best summed up by the last lines of his 1875 article, “Reading Masons and Masons who do not Read:”

“The ultimate success of Masonry depends on the intelligence of her disciples.” 15

Turn of the Century to Depression Era Masonic Publications

The early 1900s brought a renewed interest in the occult and esoteric matters as we have seen and are still seeing in the early years of this century. Books like the Da Vinci Code and Harry Potter probably would not have done nearly as well in the 1980s as they are doing presently. One need only visit any video store to see the abundance of horror films on the shelves. Why it is that the turn of the century always increases interest in such subjects is a topic for another research project, but the early 1900s did see a revival of interest in the occult. It should be pointed out here that by occult I am referring to that which is 'secretive' or 'hidden.'

Along with this interest in the esoteric and spiritual came a renewed interest in Masonic books and periodicals and the early years of the 20th century had a goodly number of them, many of which were shorter than the tomes of Mackey and Pike seen in the previous century.

Such titles as "Freemasonry: An Historical Sketch" by P. F. Piper, "The Story of Freemasonry" by W. G. Sibley and "Arithmetic of Freemasonry" by F. de P. Castells, all published in the early years of the 20th century, prior to WWI, were under 120 pages in length. To suppose upon how well these well written little books did when they first came off the presses would be a matter of pure speculation on my part, for we have no way of knowing, a century later, what the sales projections and realizations were and the original editions of those books contain no data as to how many copies were printed, as books of that era and genre often did. What I can say with all clarity, and the reason why I chose to speak about these three books in particular, is that they do not do very well today. All three of these great little Masonic books of the past are published by my company. Since 1998, when I first began to reintroduce them, they have sold less than a combined total of

2,000 copies. To put this in a bit of perspective, according to Author's Guild statistics, a non-fiction book is considered successful in the United States if it sells 7,500 copies. 16 Less than 2,000 copies of three books is hardly a success in any publisher's eyes, for it hardly pays the time and effort of reintroducing them. But the matter of why Masonic books go unsold and unread is a matter to be discussed in due course. What is important to the present discussion is that in the early pre-war America of the 20th century, Masonic books were readily available to the student interested in a study of Freemasonry.

A New Kind Of Masonic Education

In the same year that the First World War began, a new Masonic society was born in Iowa. This society had no ritual or regalia, but for 17 years it did a great deal to shape Masonry in the United States and beyond. It was called the "National Masonic Research Society" and was the brainchild of Brother George L. Schoonover (GM of Iowa 1918). Brother Schoonover was impressed with the percentage of America's, then numbering about 3,000,000, Masons who were not merely members of lodges, but students of Freemasonry. Schoonover saw in the newly raised Masons a desire to "know what it was all about." It was Schoonover's belief that what the United States needed was a National, rather than a regional, organization similar to the Research Lodges of England, complete with its own monthly high-quality educational journal.

This new publication would be but one of the benefits a member in this new educational society could expect to receive. In addition, the member of the society would receive pamphlets, booklets and other materials specially published by the new society. And if that was not enough to be worthy of a Brother's annual membership of \$2.50, he could have his questions answered, receive advise on

Lodge education programs and even guidance and assistance in his personal research efforts.

Brother Schoonover presented his ideas to the Grand Lodge of Iowa, who were only too happy to give their blessing on the project. Soon after a three story building was built in Anamosa, Iowa to house the new society (built with Schoonover's own funds) and arrangements were made to secure Joseph Fort Newton as the first Editor-in-Chief of the society's new Masonic journal, "The Builder."

In January of 1915 the first issue of "The Builder" rolled off the presses and a new era in Masonic education was born. In Newton's editorial in the first issue, he spoke of the motives of the members of the society who made the publication a reality:

"Some things need to be set down plainly, by way of preface, in behalf of a frank and full understanding. Let it be said once for all that this movement has back of it no motive of personal aggrandizement, much less of pecuniary profit. Instead of trying to make money out of Masonry, the founders of this Society are putting time, money and energy into it, thinking little and caring less of any returns other than to find the truth and tell it. They have no axe to grind, no vanity to vent, no fad to air. Were it possible, they would prefer to remain unnamed, and be known only by their work--like the old cathedral builders, whose labors live but whose names are lost. Their solitary aim is to diffuse Masonic light and understanding, and thus to extend the influence and power of this the greatest order of men upon earth."

"That is to say, they refuse to think of Masonry as a mere collection of social and faintly beneficent clubs, and they regard such a view of it as a pitiful apostasy from the faith of our fathers. They believe that Masonry is a form of the Divine life upon earth, an order of men initiated, sworn and trained to make righteousness, sweet

reasonableness and the will of God prevail. They see in it latent powers and possibilities as yet unguessed, still less realized--a great liberalizing and humanizing fraternity, whose mission it is to soften prejudice, to refine thought and sympathy and service, and so help to prepare the race for a nobler manhood and a more just and merciful social order. Hence their honorable ambition for its service, not only by interpreting it to the world at large, but by broadening and deepening the interest of Masons themselves in the faith, philosophy, history and practical aims of the fraternity. Surely such a labor may well appeal to men who would fain serve their fellows, and do a little good before they die." 17

In its entire existence, the National Masonic Research Society remained faithful to its mission and motives. It was designed to educate masons and assist those who would do the same. Although the publication was available around the globe and eventually had subscribers in more than 40 countries, its focus was on educating the young American Mason, as Schoonover had desired when he set the wheels in motion. Writing in the same editorial from the premier edition, we read the following words of Brother Newton:

"Time was, and not so long ago, when it required courage for a man to be a Mason. Feeling against the Order was intense, often fanatical, and its innocent secrets were imagined by the ignorant or malicious to hide some dark design. How different it is now, when the Order is everywhere held in honor, and justly so, for the benignity of its spirit and the nobility of its principles. No wonder its temple gates are thronged with elect young men, eager to enter its ancient fellowship. But those young men must know what Masonry is, whence it came, what it cost in the sacrifice of brave men, and what it is trying to do in the world. Otherwise they cannot realize in what a benign tradition they stand, much less be able to give a reason for their faith. Every argument in favor of any kind of education has equal

force in behalf of the education of young Masons in the truths of Masonry. So and only so can they ever hope to know what the ritual really means, and what high and haunting beauties lie hidden in the of all emblems.” 19

Brother Newton remained Editor-in-Chief until he was called to London to take over a church there, but even after his departure, he was a frequent contributor. Newton was replaced by a number of fill in editors, until H. L. Haywood took over the job. Haywood worked for two years on the publication without salary and became the publication's Editor-in-Chief in 1921.

Throughout the teens and 20s, “The Builder” consistently provided a depth of Masonic education, the likes of which has not been seen since. For those who may be unfamiliar with the types of articles written during its time at the forefront of American Masonic literature, a select listing of some of the articles covered in its pages may be in order:

The Symbolism of the Three Degrees by Oliver Day Street ran over four editions from August to November 1918. In total the article is nearly 30,000 words in length.

Deeper Aspects of Masonic Symbolism by Arthur Edward Waite ran over three editions from April to June 1916 and was nearly 7,000 words in length.

Between 1917 and 1919 Bro. Hal Riviere contributed a three part series (one per year) on each of the three degrees entitled, “What an Entered Apprentice Ought to Know,” etc. Each article was about 3,000 words in length.

I point out the length of these articles, not to bore you with numerical minutia, but to illustrate that in the days of “The Builder” the craft was not afraid to publish longer pieces of research to educate Freemasons. These longer pieces did not harm the success of either the society or the publication it produced. Indeed the contrary

is true for slowly but surely membership in the society surpassed 20,000 paid members, many of which were individual lodges representing a far greater number of Freemasons.

In addition to the longer in depth research articles, “The Builder” also offered its reader Masonic poems, book reviews and a section called “The Question Box” in which members of the society could ask and have their Masonic questions answered; each of which was answered with class and illumination.

But all great things must come to an end and in May of 1930, the 185th and final issue of “The Builder,” the brightest light ever to shine in Masonic literature, rolled off the presses. The Depression which was sweeping the land depleted the society of members just as it was depleting the lodges throughout the United States. In 1930 there were 3,279,778 Freemasons in the United States; by 1941, when America entered the Second World War, there were only 2,457,263; a loss of 25%. One cannot help but wonder what the face of North American Masonic education would look like if the depression had never occurred and “The Builder” had continued to build.

The MSANA Short Talks: A Study in 8 Decades Of Masonic Publication

Relatively concurrent with the “National Masonic Research Society” was another new association to rise up out of Iowa during the second decade of the 20th century. This society started with a different purpose than its predecessor, but nonetheless soon endeavored to provide similar services for the benefit of Freemasons and the cause of Masonic Education. In 1918, three years after the first issue of “The Builder” saw ink; “The Masonic Service Association” was born in Cedar Rapids. According to M. W. Bro. Richard Fletcher, executive secretary, the

MSA (Now called the MSANA) was formed as a result of the refusal of the US Federal government to work with the 49 separate Grand Lodges then in existence who wished to assist WWI troops. In an article on the association Bro. Fletcher wrote:

“The Masonic Service Association came into existence as a result of this decision and, because it was finally recognized that there were cases where a national organization, working on behalf of all Freemasons, could serve a useful purpose. It happened in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1918. Initially, the primary function of the MSA was to support our military personnel. From that modest beginning the long road to where MSA is today was undertaken.” 20

Today the Masonic Service Association of North America is involved in four separate programs. These include, Masonic education via its Short Talk Bulletins, VA Hospital Visitations, Disaster Relief and Public and Media Relations. It is the Short Talk Bulletin produced by the MSANA that is of interest to the present research for through it, we have a traceable history of the path that Masonic Research has taken in North America, but particularly the United States for much of the 20th century. Since the Short Talk Bulletin is sent to every lodge in its member jurisdictions and has been published every month since its first issue was released in January of 1923, we can very easily follow what topics have been published over the years and see if there has been a shift in the focus of Masonic education since its inception.

The data from the examination of the 984 editions of the Short Talk Bulletin the MSANA has published to date is extremely interesting to Masonic educators, for it shows a sure and steady decline in the quality of the publications being disseminated to our lodges for the purposes

of Masonic education. This is not intended to be a criticism or a belittlement of the work the MSANA is doing, for we would be in an even worse state without the Short Talk Bulletin than we are with it; for some education is far better than no education. I will not herein cover all the information of the statistics, for full details are contained in the six appendixes contained in the back of this lecture; however some are of particular interest and illustrate the point quite well.

As we have previously covered during the course of this research into Masonic education and the publications that have supported it, an understanding of the three degrees is fundamental to the progress of a Freemason. I speak not here of mechanics of the ritual, but rather the symbolism and philosophy of them, for any man of modest intellect can memorize a short poem in French though he cannot comprehend a word of that language. Understanding the poem is another matter altogether.

In the 1920s, nearly 40% of the 84 short talks published in that decade were about Esoteric Symbolism or the Three Degrees. Throughout the 1930s that percentage had fallen to just 26.67%. During the 1940s, a decade that saw the largest influx of men into Freemasonry in all recorded history, the percentage of papers on Esoteric Symbolism fell to just 14.17%. One would think that with such a huge increase, the need to provide basic education on Freemasonry and what it means would have been of greater concern. Sadly it was not then and has not been since those days when the craft became obese with members. With the exception of the 1950's which saw a slight increase in esoteric subjects being covered in “The Short Talk Bulletins” the discussion of the Degrees has been on a steady decline as our membership has ever since. In the 1980s and 1990s less than 5% of the Short Talks were on the symbolism of the Degrees and thus far in this decade that percentage has dropped to an all-time low of just 3.33%. To put this in a slightly different light; in the last 24 years, the MSANA has

only published 12 editions out of 300 on the Degrees or general Masonic symbolism.

Now many will say that there is more to Masonry than its symbolism, and I would be inclined to agree, however so drastic a decrease in one aspect of Masonic education, must surely give rise to an increase in another area. For with respect to the "Short Talk Bulletins," they must fill their publication with something. The question is what?

Well let's take a look at the category I've called "Lodge Workings," which encompasses ritual mechanics, leadership and stuff like Grand Honors and protocol.

In the 1920s, 11.9% of the articles were of this type, 28.33% in the 30s, 26.67% in the 40s, 20.83% in the 50s, 34.17% in the 60s, 24.17% in the 70s, 30.83% in the 80s, 18.33% in the 90s and back down to 11.67% in this decade. In looking at the figures for this category, it can be seen that there is an increase and then a sharp decrease in the desire to discuss essentially protocol and mechanics. Although I have little evidence to support this assertion, it is my belief that the rise in discussion about protocol and mechanics, not only in the presently discussed publication, but in Freemasonry in general is directly proportional to the rise and fall of men who flooded the fraternity following World War Two. Freemasonry in the United States was in a steady decline from 1930 until 1941, due to the depression. Between 1941 and 1949, American Freemasonry increased its membership by over 40%. These men, largely military men, were attracted to that part of Freemasonry that was ritualistic and militaristic and as a result, the ritual, its memorization and perfect performance became the reason for existence in much of the craft. As those veterans began to die off in the 1990s we see a decline not only in the discussion of the subject, but in the overall quality and regard for well-done ritual in our lodges.

We have seen thus far that we stopped educating about the Degrees and its symbolism sometime in the late 1950s. The old ritualists are dying off in the 1990s. So what is left to talk about in Freemasonry from an educational standpoint; Famous Masons and fluff?

Let's look at the stats once again. From the 1920s to the 1960s the editions on either Famous Masons or Fluff topics were in the combined total ranges of about 9 to 10%, a little higher in the 70s and 80s ranging between 17 to 20%. But in the 1990s, that total shot up to nearly 32% and thus far in this decade, that combined total is 50%.

Clearly, as the enclosed statistical graphs show, (vide Appendix 6) the state of Masonic Education being offered to North American Freemasons by the "Short Talk Bulletin" has declined drastically over the years. Again, it is not my intention to be ungrateful towards the work they are trying to do to educate Masons. Clearly the MSANA is publishing what is being contributed by Masons and those contributions are based on a steady decline in general Masonic knowledge. It is a Catch-22. If you desire to educate masons you need educated masons to do the job, but we have not been educating masons since the end of WWII, at least not the way we were in the glory days of "The Builder" and the early "Short Talk Bulletins."

Modern Masonic Grand Lodge Publications: A Disgusting Trend

Thus far we have seen that since its 1717 Revival days Freemasonry has gone from gatherings of 18th century gentlemen capable of conversing on many excellent philosophical topics, to a hand full of dedicated but varyingly credible 19th century authors publishing in a post 'Morgan Affair' fraternity that nearly became extinct. We have seen the 20th

century start off with excellent prospects in the publications of the National Masonic Research Society and the early years of the MSA's Short Talks; the former destroyed by the depression, the latter a mere shadow of what it once was, much like the fraternity it aims to educate.

But no Masonic Publication could be of any greater danger to those young Masonic minds, which Brother Schoonover once desired to mold via "The Builder," than our modern North American Grand Lodge publications. With very few exceptions, and I am fortunate that my jurisdiction of Alberta is one of them, Grand Lodge publications are little more than self-aggrandizing vanity publications. I make no apology for this statement, for it is a matter of fact for anyone with even the most rudimentary of Masonic intellect that the pages of most Grand Lodge publications in North America would be best served to wrap the fish, which their glossy pages so often inform us have been fried to raise funds for this cause or that.

Groucho Marx once said as he inhaled on a large stogie, "There is nothing like a good cigar; and this is nothing like a good cigar." One could easily paraphrase Groucho in reflecting over the dross that passes for Masonic Magazines put out by many North American Grand Lodges today. It is a comforting fact that the likes of Bro. Robert Freke Gould are not alive today, for most assuredly he would condemn these publications to the 'Index Purgatorius' he referred to in his 1906 article, "Mission of the Masonic Press."

A cursory glance at most of these Masonic Magazines, and as a publisher I feel dirty even using the same nomenclature to describe them, shows that they are 1% paper and ink and 99% fluff and filler. The subscriber to "The Builder" would have surely revoked his membership in the society if ever he received such a publication. Yes a Grand Lodge publication needs to inform its members of happenings in the jurisdiction, past, present and future,

but somewhere amongst all the 'Grip and Grin' photo opportunities, there must be room for something to enlighten the mind of those few who desire to make a daily advancement in Masonic education.

I realize that the preceding paragraphs are nothing more than pure editorial opinion on the part of the author, but I feel little need to illustrate that which is easily provable by skimming through almost any grand Lodge Magazine published in North America today. They are offering nothing in the way of Masonic education.

Perhaps Modern Freemasons do not want to be educated. Perhaps we are what we have become, or worse, what we have allowed the fraternity to become; a pale imitation of the service clubs - 'The Rotary in Regalia or 'Freemasonarians' to use one of the turns of phrase I am best known for. Perhaps Mackey was correct, 'Freemasons do not read.' This was certainly the case in his day, when despite its excellent content, two of his Masonic Magazines failed to catch the interests of mid-late 19th century Freemasons.

But what of today! We have certainly seen that the quality of Masonic Publications being offered up by those whose mandate it is to educate the craft has been in a steady decline over the last few decades.

In June of 1985, Masonic scholar, Alphonse Cerza, was asked to write a follow up bulletin on "Good Masonic Books" for the MSANA. This request was to reintroduce and update a subject last discussed forty years earlier in 1945:

"A Short Talk Bulletin with the same subject was published in November, 1945. Needing something more current, M.S.A. asked Worshipful Brother Cerza, noted Masonic scholar, to provide an update. M.S.A. is indebted to Brother Cerza for this effort." 22 The preceding words are sufficient to make a Masonic publisher shake his head and trust me; I am as I write these words. For in

a perfect Masonic world, such a publication would appear annually informing all North American Masons as to which books had been published in the preceding year and which of those were of the greatest value to the craft. But even in an imperfect Masonic world, one would think that such a topic would surface with slightly more frequency than once every four decades.

I feel this is a prime example of how low a regard the craft places on its literature and those who write it.

Worshipful Brother Cerza had an interesting theory as to why Masons do not read:

“One way of getting more out of your Masonic membership is to read good Masonic books. Unfortunately, because of part of the Obligation, many new members assume there can be no books dealing with Freemasonry, and too often they are not told there are good books available on all phases of the subject.” 23

This may have been the case in the mid-1980s in the days prior to the Internet; it is certainly not the case today. Any Mason with Internet access, need only type in the words 'Masonic Books' to find an extremely wide selection to choose from.

On July 10th of 2005 I decided to find out what the bestselling books on Freemasonry were. I chose Amazon, Barnes and Noble and Chapters (Canada's largest book chain.) In essence in the two US book sellers surveyed, the top ten were predominantly in the speculative variety with such books as “The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail” by Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln, or “The Hiram Key” by Knight and Lomas being the most popular. In the one (and really only) Canadian bookseller surveyed, the bestselling books on Freemasonry were more in the academic realm with books on the history of Freemasonry doing well.

This survey is far from scientific, for we have no way of knowing how many of those books were purchased by Freemasons as opposed to those simply curious about Freemasonry. Assuming however, that some of those books were purchased by men looking for answers prior to petitioning, what type of preconceived notions will they have about the fraternity prior to their initiation into it?

Another unscientific survey came in the form of a question recently asked on *TheLodgeRoom.com* Masonic Discussion forum, where a Brother inquired:

“I'm just starting to build my Masonic Library and would appreciate the opinions of the esteemed and learned bretheren (sic) of the Lodge Room as to what books they would consider "required reading" for one seeking more masonic light.”

Of the 1,000 plus members of the forum, 24 recommendations were made in answer to the question:

3 = The Da Vinci Code

3 = The Hiram Key 3 = Born in Blood

2 = The Meaning of Masonry 2 = A Pilgrim's Path

1 = Masonic Initiation

1 = Everything I Needed To Know About Freemasonry

1 = Freemasonry: Its Hidden Meaning

1 = Royal Arch: Its Hidden Meaning 1 = History of Freemasonry (Gould)

1 = The Men's House (Newton)

1 = Why This Confusion in the Temple? (Smith)

1 = Freemason's Guide and Compendium (Jones) 1 = American Freemason

1 = Secret History of Freemasonry

Although unscientific, it does collaborate well with the list of best sellers on the web sites of the three major booksellers surveyed.

Although our Masonic Libraries are literally full of thousands of excellent books on freemasonry, it would appear that our

Brethren are inclined to read, when they do at all, works of fiction and those works of non-fiction which may just as well be in the aforementioned genre.

In 1996, Brother Michael S. Kaulback wrote a Short Talk bulletin entitled, "The Value of Masonic Libraries." In the article, Bro. Kaulback wrote of the Masonic Library in Boston, which at that time had over 100,000 books on Freemasonry and half as much again on other topics. He lamented about how unused the facility was:

"Our Masonic Libraries are begging for Masons to make more use of them, but the sad truth is that the vast majority of Masons do not read or study about the Fraternity or its history." 24

One hundred and twenty years after Bro. Mackey wrote in a Masonic publication of the sad fact that Masons do not read, we find another Mason writing nearly the same words. Sadly it seems that the only ones to read the words of either writer are those who least needs to hear them.

The Problems Facing Masonic Education & Publishing Today

There is an old joke about writers, which was told by Canadian Science Fiction author Spider Robinson.

"The principal difference between a writer and a large pepperoni pizza is that the pizza can feed a family of four."

The same can be said of the Masonic writer, or publisher for that matter. As we have seen, Masons do not read. That is a problem for those of us who would teach about Masonry and a bigger problem for those

who earn their living writing and publishing about Masonry.

I am reluctant to use the politically correct terminology of "challenges" to discuss our present day Masonic Education problems. I also refuse to use the even worse, but

"One hundred and twenty years after Bro. Mackey wrote in a Masonic publication of the sad fact that Masons do not read, we find another Mason writing nearly the same words. Sadly it seems that the only ones to read the words of either writer are those who least needs to hear them.

fashionable, term "issues" to discuss the problem. Magazines have "issues" - Freemasons do not buy any of them. That is not an "issue;" it is a problem and a big one of our own making.

As the MSANA Short Talk Bulletin statistics clearly show, in the 1920s, 38% of their published educational material was on explaining our degrees or masonic symbolism. In this decade, now nearly half over, less than 4% of the articles in the same publication has covered that most essential and important topic, while 25% of the content has been devoted to famous men who saw fit to gird on an apron and another 25% has been devoted to what I call fluff pieces.

But where is the problem and why does it exist?

Sadly the simple fact is that Masonic publishers publish what is submitted to them and what they think Masons want to read. What was once of great interest to our

“This blind obedience to ritual as the rule and guide of our faith is combined with an anti-intellectualism found in many lodges that have substituted philosophical and intellectual inquiry for the familiar trappings of the service club.”

Brethren in the 1920s is unfortunately seen as mumbo-jumbo to the bulk of modern day masons. What other reason do we have to not publish material about it? What other reason do Masons have for not writing about it for publication?

About the only Masonic publication that is regularly read today is the ritual, which we have allowed to become the sole curriculum of Masonic Education in most of North American Freemasonry.

In 1919 the Los Angeles Masonic Library had the following to say about the ritual and its importance:

“True, ritualism has its place in the economy of the institution - but it is of a subordinate character; and its object is to awaken the dormant faculties in the votary. But, on the other hand, reading tends to educate and cause the neophyte to reflect upon the possibilities within the scope of its work for the up-building of character, and enlarging opportunity for the exercise of those glorious virtues which have emblazoned its escutcheon for untold ages.” 25 Try to tell your average 21st Century Past Master that the ritual is of a secondary nature. Chances are you will be disbelieved, laughed at, or worse, accused of Masonic heresy.

The reason for this emphasis on the mechanics and infallibility of the ritual over any cerebration towards an understanding of what the ritual actually means and how to apply it to one's life is illustrated by the blind obedience to the dogmatic mantra of “Well we've always done it that way before.” The Mason of today, for the most part, has no understanding of why we do what we do. He is like a monkey pushing a little 'red button' to receive a banana. He has no comprehension of where the banana comes from, who designed the little red button and why or how the banana actually gets in his hand. He only knows that pushing the little red thing will result in a banana. The candidate is initiated and given his 'red button' of ritual to memorize verbatim. If he pushes the 'red button' just right he gets the banana of being moved along to the next degree. It is not his fault; he is being mentored and trained by other Masonic monkeys who have been likewise trained, who if questioned about any aspect of the 'red button / banana' process will respond with, “well we've always pushed the 'red button' before.”

This blind obedience to ritual as the rule and guide of our faith is combined with an anti-intellectualism found in many lodges that have substituted philosophical and intellectual inquiry for the familiar trappings of the service club.

It is my belief that the influx of men into the craft following the conclusion of WWII, much applauded by the leaders of the craft today, was the death knell for intellectualism in Freemasonry. These men, for the most part were not looking for philosophical inquiry; they were looking for camaraderie of the type found in the barracks. Being men of military background they were accustomed to and in many cases attracted to the formality of the ceremonies.

Circumambulation substituted for marching drills and slowly but surely the mechanics of the ritual has been allowed to take hold of the craft creating a ceremony over substance

that has driven the intellectual out of Freemasonry.

In 2004 filmmaker Albert Nerenberg's produced a documentary entitled "Stupidity." Nerenberg's film examined the unique characteristic in modern homo-sapiens to exhibit a chronic resistance to intelligence: anti- intellectualism if you will; mostly illustrated by our popular forms of entertainment.

During the film, one of the interviewees, a psychologist, was speaking about how many people, particularly religious fundamentalists, process new information to their personal schemas. A schema, according to the Merriam Webster online dictionary is defined as follows:

"2 : a mental codification of experience that includes a particular organized way of perceiving cognitively and responding to a complex situation or set of stimuli." 26

According to the interviewee, people are either willing to accept or reject new information, based on what they already know or believe. If the new data fits their schema, it is accepted; if it does not fit the schema, it is rejected.

This is best understood in a Masonic setting by anyone who has tried to convince an anti-mason that the myths about Freemasonry are false. Since the truth of the matter does not fit their schema, it is rejected, no matter how logical and sound the new information is.

But it is not the anti-mason that is halting the spread of Masonic Light, it is our rulers and leaders, who for the most part have been raised in a fraternity long since removed from the glory days of 1920s and 30s Masonic Enlightenment.

Many of our present Masonic leaders refuse to accept that the increase in numbers following the conclusion of WWII were an

anomaly. The 1940s saw an increase of nearly 43% from the previous decade while the 1920s and 1950s saw a modest increase of 4% and 15% respectively from their previous decades. Still no rational presentation of facts nor analysis of statistical data will convince them that the craft cannot and should not be that big again. The facts simply do not fit their schema and are rejected.

In his article "The Mission of the Masonic Press," Bro. Robert Freke Gould phrased it thusly:

"It has been well said, that it is not so difficult a task to plant new truths, as to root out old errors; for there is this paradox in men, they run after that which is new, but are prejudiced in favor of that which is old." 27

So instead of investing our time and energies in educating our brethren in what it means to be a mason we devote our time to publishing articles about every famous person who ever wore an apron, photographs of every fish fry and fundraiser in our jurisdictions and we continue to editorialize on our philanthropy by deceptively riding the coattails of the Shrine laying claim to the \$2,000,000 a day we Freemasons give to charitable causes. Often people want to be told what they want to hear. It fits their schema. Masons are no different. We want to hear that great and famous men were Masons, so we tell them about it. They want to hear that we give all kinds of money away to help this cause and that, so we show them. It makes them feel good about themselves.

In my home province of Alberta our Research Lodge, Fiat Lux, publishes *Vox Lucis*, an annual collection of its research papers. In 2004 our 24th edition consisted of 134 pages of material and 13 papers. With approximately 8,000 masons in Alberta that is one paper for every 615 Members. We published 250 copies of the 24th edition and if every copy sold, that would be a

representation of only 3% of our membership who support a home grown education publication. We are actually not doing badly. I have heard of other research lodges who did not receive a single submission for publication.

The writing has been on the wall for decades with respect to this decline in Masonic education, as the statistics clearly show. In his 1962 article, "Whither Are We Traveling?" Most Worshipful Brother Dwight L. Smith, a Past Grand Master of Indiana asked:

"Hasn't the so-called 'Century of the Common Man' contributed to making our Fraternity a little too common?" 28

Many of us who would wish that it were not so have answered that question with the answer, "yes it has and we are sorry." But as much as Most Worshipful Brother Smith was a prophet, he was not the first to warn of the dangers of which we have now felt the effects of for decades. In the September 1923 issue of *The Builder* we read the following:

"To carry on our work as Masons without a clear understanding of what we are about and how to do it, is as impossible as to run a business, with no understanding of trade or commerce." 29

In the September 1928 edition of the MSA Short Talk Bulletin we read the following words:

"...Masonry, as now organized and employed, is not adequate to the demands of a realistic generation, and that to go on making men Masons, as we are doing, wholesale, without giving them an intelligent and authentic knowledge of what Masonry is, or what it means,

with no definite objects beyond fellowship and philanthropy - objects to which other orders are equally devoted - is for Masonry to lose, by ignorance or neglect, what has been distinctive in its history and genius, and invite degeneration, if not disaster." 30

And later in the same article we read:

"The future of Masonry, if it is to have a future worthy of its past, will be determined by its historic genius and purpose, not in lavish adherence to details, but by local and constructive obedience to its peculiar spirit and tenants. Otherwise our Lodges will become mere clubs, like a thousand other such organizations - useful and delightful in their degree, but in nowise distinctive - far removed from the original meaning and intent of the Craft." 31

As Masonic researchers, writers and publishers, the question remains: how do we get Masonic Education back to the way it once was; back to the discussion about esoteric symbolism, nuances of the degrees, philosophy; the stuff that was commonly published in the 1920s and 30s during the days when "The Builder" was building strong masonic minds and the MSA was publishing truly educational materials?

In nearly a decade as a Masonic publisher and Internet educator, it is my belief that we cannot go back to the way it was; at least not for the masses, because Freemasonry was never meant for the masses, although we have allowed them in. It has often been said, "you cannot teach an old dog new tricks" and frankly many of us in the trade grow tired of fetching our own sticks to toss them again and again to unappreciative dogs.

The glory days of the Masonic Intellectual are gone. Never again will we sit in our lodges and discuss the Raphael Cartoons, Alexandrian Water Clocks or the finer points of the woolen trade as our Brethren of the 1730s once did. Gone are the days when we will sit in lodge and dissect a degree; explaining to the candidate what Circumambulation, Disalceation and the Rite of Divestiture is.

It took many years for Freemasonry to turn from an apple to an orange, and it will take many years to put the fruit back on the tree. There are too many who stand to place roadblocks on the path to knowledge, preferring ceremony over substance and self-aggrandizing philanthropy over introspective philosophy.

The Masonic educator tries to use the industry of the bee, but is confronted at every turn by the sting of the Masonic wasp, which, like his insect counterpart, is well capable of stinging more than once.

This terminology is not new. Brother Mackey referred to these uneducated leaders in Masonry as wasps, the enemy of the masonic bee. Once again from his article "Reading Masons and Masons who do not Read" we read the following:

"These men do great injury to Masonry. They have been called its drones. But they are more than that. They are the wasps, the deadly enemy of the industrious bees. They set a bad example to the younger Masons - they discourage the growth of Masonic literature - they drive intellectual men, who would be willing to cultivate Masonic science, into other fields of labor - they depress the energies of our writers - and they debase the character of Speculative Masonry as a branch of mental and moral philosophy." 32

All of Bro. Mackey's words quoted above are quite profound, but especially of interest to the Masonic educator is, "They set a bad example to the younger Masons" and it is the younger mason who our focus should be on, just as it was for Bro. Schoonover, founder of "The Builder." For the generation of Masons now entering the craft are different than any generation of recent history. They are of the character of those seekers after light last seen in the 20s and 30s; the ones who belonged to the study clubs made popular by and supported by The National Masonic Research Society, who published "The Builder." Our mission as Masonic educators, writers and publishers is to educate them and keep them, in as much as possible, from the wasps lest they feel the sting of their apathy. These young men are our future leaders.

In a 1923 editorial in "The Builder" then editor, H. L. Haywood spoke of curing false leadership in the craft:

"The cure for false leadership lies in a Masonic education that will build itself into the whole rank and file of the membership, from the top down, so that everywhere members will know what Freemasonry is and what it is doing, and what it is going to do, and how it is to be done. To the extent that such a thing is done our members will know whom to select for their leaders; when to approve the action of their leaders; how to remove false leaders; and whom to train to become future leaders." 33

Brother Haywood offers some great words of wisdom, but in our current situation we need to reverse the order and instead of working from the top down we need to work from the bottom up. The initiate of today is the leader of tomorrow. We cannot mold the minds of the leaders whose schemas have already been molded by the apathy of the past. They either accept or reject the need for an educated Masonic populace. Many get it, many more do not. Let those who get it educate along with us and those who do not get it; leave them alone to chase after the 'Holy Grail of membership,' which they have lusted for since what seems like time immemorial.

Is It All For Naught?

Many good men have labored over the years in the quarries of masonic research, writing and publishing to offer up the fruits of their labors. But the fruit of those labors often rots on the vine unpicked by the masons who could be nourished by it. True enough. As Bro. Mackey lamented in his oft quoted article, the Masons of today do not read. Excepting for those brief decades of enlightenment in the early decades of the 20th century little has changed since 1875. The following words of 129 years ago are as accurate today as they were then:

“Now, because there are so few Masons that read, Masonic books hardly do more than pay the publishers the expense of printing, while the authors get nothing; and Masonic journals are being year after year carried off into the literary Academia, where the corpses of defunct periodicals are deposited; and, worst of all, Masonry endures depressing blows.” 34

Indeed, the fruit of the Masonic scholar rots on the vine, but like all unpicked fruit, it eventually turns

to seed, briefly lying unused on the ground where it eventually rises up to spawn a new generation of fruit. In the first issue of “The Builder” Brother Joseph Fort Newton wrote in reference to Mackey's 1858-1860 publication, the “American Review of Masonry:”

“The men who wrote for the "Review" have now passed to where, beyond these voices, there is peace, but their work remains. One has only to open its yellow pages to read the articles of Pike on the Mysteries, and the essays of Mackey on Symbolism--which afterwards formed the chapters of his book in exposition of the "Symbolism of Freemasonry"--written in a style which may well be a model of lucidity. Those men did not fail; they were sowers who did their work and trusted the far off harvest of years. Remembering their faith, their sacrifice, their high devotion, we would build on their

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to knowledge,
preferring ceremony
over substance and
self-aggrandizing
philanthropy over
introspective
philosophy.”*

foundations, linking the past with a greater tomorrow.” 35

The Christian Testament says, “Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” 36 I've always found it interesting that the words 'ask, seek and knock' consist of three, four and five letters respectively; it seems quite Masonic. Brethren, if I may paraphrase what Bro. Newton said in the introductory edition of that great Masonic publication, “The Builder,” the road to Masonic Knowledge has been paved with many quality books and periodicals produced by the labors of many great masonic educators over the years. Sadly they have gone unread by the masses, but they are there for those scattered few who would one day pick the fruit from the vine by asking, seeking and knocking upon the door of Masonic inquiry.

In closing, I leave you with an old Chinese proverb that is quite fitting:

“Teachers open the door. You enter by yourself.”

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