

MY UNDERSTANDING OF MASONRY

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Section I

For the past 25 years I have been a student of Philosophic Masonry. During the past 19 years, as a member of the Class Director's staff or as Class Director of the Scottish Rite Bodies of Covington, I have made a diligent study of research in, and have been a student of the symbolism of Masonry. Due to such study and research, I have accumulated a large library. I have been able to purchase books on these subjects from all over the world. Likewise, I have taken the time to travel and study in such Masonic libraries as the Grand Lodge of Iowa, the House of the Temple at Washington, D. C., as well as other Grand Jurisdictions, including the library of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky.

From this consistent study, I have concluded that the literature of Philosophic Masonry is being enriched by sincere and thoughtful scholarship. To me it is of the utmost importance that the scholarship of Masonry should grow and unfold, and be deepened and enriched, along with the physical property of the Order. To me this is so because the true strength of the Craft is measured, not in terms of material accomplishments alone, but in terms of personal dedication to the service of those eternal truths veiled in symbols and taught by allegory to the Craft.

Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that to deny the Spirit of Masonry, to ignore its philosophy or to reject its esoteric doctrine is to deprive the Craft of its greatest glory. Masons today should support and sustain in every way those brethren who are inspired to seek further light on the Masonic Word. Through their generosity and untiring efforts, the literature of Philosophic Masonry is increasing and each new work is brought, like the first fruits of the harvest, to the altar of The Great Architect of the Universe.

Masonry, my brethren, is a quest, an eternal search for the answers of the riddle of life. Masonry is a universal college of education, built without the sound of hammer or the voice of workmen. Masonry is a spirit and those would truly understand its Mysteries must approach them in spirit and in truth. Masonry is a house of universal education because all knowledge leads to the Divine Presence.

By a true study of Masonry, the student comes to know and to appreciate the great teachers of the past, the noble philosophers, the inspired seers and the illuminated mystics; he comes to realize the place of Masonry in the decent of the sacred mysteries of antiquity and finally to at least partially, answer those deeper and persistent questions which present

themselves to every thinking mind: "What am I?" – "whence came I?" – "whither do I go?"

Strange as it may be, it seems, at least from my viewpoint, taken for granted that reception into the Masonic Order will automatically be accompanied by an ability to appreciate forthwith and at its full value, all that one there finds. And yet, from my experience, the contrary is true, for Masonry is "a system of morality, veiled in symbols and taught by allegories," and the cryptic experience of the difficult science of spiritual life, and the understanding of it, calls for special and informed guidance on the one hand, and on the other a genuine and earnest desire for knowledge of that spiritual life on the part of those seeking to be instructed. Thus frequently, we see and find brethren discontinuing their interest or even dropping their membership because they find that Masonry means nothing to them and that no explanation or guidance is vouchsafed for them.

Many of my brethren, having heard me teach or talk on this subject, have requested that it should be written down and made more available to the Craft. Hence the reason for this and future articles on the subject of "My Understanding of Masonry." I hope that those brethren who feel that Masonry enshrines something deeper and greater than they have been able to realize, may find further illumination.

This and future articles do not profess to be more than elementary, and certainly far from an exhaustive survey; many ideas and thoughts have been taken from my notes on more than one scholarly treatise. But I believe that to the average

Mason, an article expressed in single and untechnical terms and void of numerous literary references is, at least for the present, a more serviceable summary.

In preparing this and other articles for publication, care has been taken to observe due reticence in respect of essential matters. The general nature of the Masonic system is, however, nowadays widely known to outsiders and easily ascertained from many printed sources, while the large interest in and output of literature upon mystic religion and the science of the inward life, during the last ten years, has, as witnessed in my own library, familiarized many with a subject of which Masonry is but a specialized form.

To explain philosophical Masonry is not to divulge a subject which is entirely exclusive to its members. Truly, whether as expressed in Masonry or otherwise, is at all times open secret, but it is also a pillar of light to those able to receive a profit by it. And to all others but one of darkness and unintelligibility. The vital secrets of life, and of any system of expounding life, protect themselves even though shouted from the housetops, because they mean nothing to those as yet unqualified for the knowledge.

In view of the great popularity of Masonry, both Blue Lodge and higher craft Masonry, when there are hundreds of Blue Lodges in the State of Kentucky, and many thousands more throughout the United States, it is well to consider its present bearing and its future possibilities. The Masonic Order is a semi-secret, semi-public institution: secret in respect its activities "intra-molnia," but otherwise of full public notoriety, with its doors open to any

applicant for admission who is a good character and reputation.

Those who enter it, as the majority do, entirely ignorant of what they will find there, do so because they have friends there or know Masonry to be an institution devoted to high ideals. Too often, however, their initiation remains but a formality. Have you ever really thought what "initiation" really means?

From all the information I have been able to study on this subject, it means a new beginning (from the Latin verb "initium") – a breaking away from old methods and order of life and the entrance upon a new order of larger self. It means a transition from the merely natural state and standards of life toward a regeneration. It means a turning away from the pursuits of the popular ideas of the outer world, in the conviction that those are but shadows, images and temporal substitutions for the eternal reality and the final recovery of those genuine secrets of our being which lie buried and hidden at the central part of our souls. (All definitions have been taken from the various writings on the Ancient Mysteries.)

In Masonry it (initiation) means the awakening of those hitherto dormant higher faculties of the soul which endue their possessor with Light: it means that the candidate will henceforth dedicate and devote his life to the Divine, rather than to his own or other service, so that by the principles of the Order he may be better enabled to display that beauty of Godliness which previously, perhaps, has not manifested itself through him.

The true candidate must indeed be, as the word from Latin indicates – (Candidus) "white within" as symbolically he is vested in white without, and if he is really desirous of learning the secrets and mysteries of his own being, he must be prepared to divest himself of all past preconceptions and thoughts, habits, and with childlike meekness, surrender his mind to the reception of truth which initiation promises to impart and which will more fully be unfolded to those properly prepared to receive them.

"Know Thyself" was the injunction inscribed over the portals of the ancient Greek temples of initiation, for with that knowledge was promised, the knowledge of all secrets and mysteries. And Masonry was designed to each self-knowledge more deeply than is popularly conceived. This knowledge was not intended to be acquired by the formal passage through three degrees in as many months; it is knowledge impossible to fully achieve except along a path of life, long and rugged, beset by many obstacles, and that which finally leads its follower to its attainment.

The wisest and most advanced of us are perhaps, still but Entered Apprentices at this knowledge, however high our titular rank. Here and there, one may be worthy of being hailed a Fellow of the Craft of this knowledge. But the full Master Mason, the just man made perfect, who has actually and not merely ceremonially traveled the entire path, endured all the tests and ordeals and become raised onto consciousness and 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.

Section II

At the very beginning of the preceding section, I wrote that I have been a student of Philosophic Masonry, without defining the term.

By Philosophic Masonry, I mean "A school of thought, studying the truth and principals underlying Masonic knowledge and the Ancient Mysteries, which follows the practice of attaching multiple meanings to Masonic Symbols and Allegories, the material and moral explanations of which are not secret, but whose recondite or hard-to-understand meanings are taught by degrees only, and are expanded as the student advances.

"Its chief object is to teach the doctrine of One God, the resurrection of man to eternal life, the dignity of the human soul, and to the people to see the shadow of the Diety in the beauty, magnificence and splendor of the Universe."

With the above definition in mind, this Section will contain some of my ideas on the religious aspect of Masonry.

"Masonry is not a religion but is deeply religious." This admonition I have given to every class of candidates for the Scottish Rite since becoming the Class Director. And I say further, as in Scottish Rite, so too, in Blue Lodge Masonry.

Now I know that Masonry has at all times been careful to explain that it is not a religion and in no way does it intend to take the place of the church in man's life. And

the fact that in Masonry some members have found a new way of life, does not make it so.

If one were to take the time to look up the definition of each, he would find a vast difference.

Religion is defined as the recognition of man's relation to a Devine Power to whom obedience and reverence are due.

It is the outward practices and acts of life by which men indicate their recognition of such relationship. It is the final effect of man to attain the goodness of God.

Creed, on the other hand, is the formal phrased confession of faith; a brief authoritative summarizing statement of religious belief.

As such, Masonry is not a creed in the same way that creed is not a religion.

Masonry is, however, "a beautiful system of morals, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."

Morals is "the capability of understanding good from bad; the discrimination between right and wrong."

While allegory is "a description of one thing in which a teaching is conveyed under an image of another symbolically, it presents a truth under the guise of fictitious description."

Symbol, on the other hand, is "something that stands for, represents, or recalls something else, not by exact

resemblance, but by suggestion or association.”

Of all the definitions of Masonry that I have read, I firmly believe that the one defined by the late Ill. Brother Albert Pike, 33°, in his “Morals and Dogma,” best describes the religious aspect of Masonry. “Masonry is the subjugation of the human that is in man by the Divine, the conquest of the appetites and passions by the moral sense and reason; it is a continuing warfare against the material and sensual by the spiritual. That victory,” Pike adds, (the spiritual over the physical, material and sensual) “when it has been achieved, IS THE HOLY EMPIRE.”

What Pike is saying to me is: “Until I seek and find and learn that deeper religious meaning to Masonry and apply it spiritually, Masonry is not even religious. It only becomes religious when one finds religion in it; otherwise it remains, for others, only a ritual and at best only a system of morals.”

Where then shall we turn to find religion, or the religious aspect of Masonry? Where else but the Holy Bible?

Certain conclusions must be reached by the Mason who devotes even a little time of serious thought to the prominent position of the Bible in Masonry.

We are repeatedly warned to study the Book, - not just read it. It is declared to be the Great Light of Masonry; it is recommended to us as the rule and guide of our faith and practice. We are admonished to study it with reverence; it is God’s inestimable gift to man.

Certainly, if Morals and ethics alone were the Bible’s only merit to the Mason, he need not have to study the whole Bible. The entire worth of the Bible, AS A GUIDE TO MORALS AND ETHICS, would be found in the Decalogue; THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT AND THE GOLDEN RULE.

It seems to me the above could easily have been incorporated into Masonic ritual and thus saving the candidate the labor of seeking them out for himself.

Logically then, I must conclude that the Mason is expected to discover something more in the Bible which transcends this moral and ethical teaching, great as those teachings are.

Thus, taken in conjunction with our instruction to ask, seek and knock, together with the statement that “all the Light of Masonry cannot be conferred in a Masonic Lodge,” you now must make a discovery; ask, seek and knock within the pages of the Holy Bible, where the Mason shall attain to that Light which cannot be conferred in the Lodge.

A proper study of the Great Light will verify, confirm, and elaborate the trust of which Masonry informs us in its degrees. It is to me, in fact, THE KEY TO THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF MASONRY. Thus, - “Seek and ye shall find.”

In this respect, the Bible, like Masonry, is an allegory. Now by this statement, I do not mean to detract from general understanding held by you as to the worth of the Bible in terms of morality and virtue. What I am saying is that, when read as a whole, the Holy Bible is a description of one thing in the image of another; it is a

narrative or story in which a teaching is conveyed symbolically.

This allegory, which is hidden both in Masonry and the Bible, is the story of the evolution of Physical Man into Complete Man and then into Perfect Man.

Both Masonry and the Bible, from this viewpoint, contain within their teachings, the whole purpose of man's existence and the method of attaining the end of Creative Spirit in personalizing itself through Man.

All the symbols of Masonry, like those of the Bible, actually depict man's journey back to his lost perfection and is intended to assist him to accelerate his progress by teaching him how to more quickly accomplish this purpose.

The Bible refers to man as a composite being, composed of (1) Body, (2) Soul, and (3) Spirit. Orthodox Christianity ignores the three-fold composition and uses Soul and Spirit synonymously. This teaching makes Man a two-fold being, composed of Body and Soul or Spirit.

Masonry, in its allegory, teaches that Man is a composite being consisting of the (1) Material, (2) Psychical and (3) the Spiritual; that the material is the physical body; the Psychical is the Mind or Mental Body and the Spiritual that Divine spark which makes Man an image and Likeness of his Creator. Thus, when Blue Lodge and Higher Craft Masonry are studied in the light of Philosophic Masonry, one finds that the degrees of Masonry symbolize the spiritual evolution of Man from physical brute man to perfect spiritual being.

All of us started on a very low plane of purely physical being, symbolized by the horizontal line "traveling on that level of time." We were then passed to the psychical, illustrated by the perpendicular line, symbolizing and indicating the upward aspirations of the human soul. It was here that we should have discovered the joining of the horizontal and perpendicular lines, symbolizing the perfect angle (right angle) described as an angle of 90 degrees or the fourth part of a circle. This joining is analogous to the perfect union of the mentality of man with his physical body.

The addition of the spiritual indicates the joining of the perpendicular and the horizontal with a line called the hypotenuse, thus making a right-angle triangle (the 47th problem of Euclid). This type of triangle has always been in the Ancient Mysteries as well as in Masonry, a symbol of complete man, that is, one having a physical, mental, and spiritual body (Masonic); one having body and soul (Biblical).

Thus, the supreme fact concerning Man's being is that the physical and the mental bodies are but passing phases in Man's spiritual evolution back to God or toward Perfection. By proper study of the allegory and the symbols of both the Bible and Masonry, man will learn that basically and intrinsically, he is inherently and of necessity, if he be actually in the image and likeness of God, essentially a spiritual being.

Man then, if we believe the Great Light, made in the image and likeness of God, cannot be material (physical body only) or psychical (the mental body) for the Bible tells us that God is Spirit and we must worship Him in Spirit and the Truth.

Section III

Since the Bible teaches us that God is Spirit and we must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth and further, since Masonry teaches us the truth of the Biblical statement that Divinity is within and not without, the real Spiritual state of man must be Divine (Biblical) or Spiritual Perfection (Masonic). Thus, the only place to seek and to find it is within ourselves. The Bible admonishes us that "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free." But you ask: "Free of What?" Masonry teaches us that we will be free from the dominance of the material or physical body; free of the animal instincts and true passions; free from the psychical or mental body that causes us to think of Sin. Masonry as well as the Bible tells us that there must come a time when we must release the Spiritual Body from its material and mental tomb and that therefore Death is but the natural escape, provided by nature for the release of the Spiritual Body of Man from its earthly tomb. Thus, by proper study, both the Bible and Masonry will teach us the method of accomplishing this transition before traveling through the Valley of the Shadow.

This, I believe, is what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he said: "Behold, I show you a Mystery." Now notice, St. Paul did not say: "Behold I show you a Miracle." For a Miracle is something Man cannot understand readily because it is the work of Divine Power. But a Mystery is something that when studied can be explained. "Not all shall sleep. Oh, Death where is thy sting, Oh Grave where is thy victory."

Thus, as I understand the above passage from St. Paul, Death is merely an Illusion; it is an unreal image seemingly presented to the senses; it has a misleading appearance. Death is the fulfillment of a Natural Law, created by God, whereby the "Ever Living" Presence, that part of man that shall not go back to the dust for whence it came, can leave its tomb and return to Him who give it, to live with Him in the eons of eternity.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THIS SUPREME FACT ABOUT MAN: That the material or physical and the psychical or mental are but passing phases of Man's evolution toward Perfection (Masonic) or Divinity (Biblical).

As Masons, we have openly admitted that we are inherently a Spiritual being. Now I know that many of you right here are trying to remember when you made such a confession within a Lodge. Let me refresh your memory. Do you remember the answer to the first question in the Catechism? You were asked: "Whence came you? Your answer: From a L.H.S.J.J. Now I ask you in all sincerity, did you actually come from there? No, of course you did not actually come from a L.H.S.J.J. However, this does not mean that your answer does not have meaning.

If we attempt to interpret the various words of the answer, we shall see that we arrive at a very clear and definite meaning.

Let us take the word Jerusalem. The Holy Bible refers to two Jerusalems; one the Holy City of that name (the material) and the other the symbolical Holy City, (the Spiritual). The meaning of the Hebrew name, Jerusalem, as generally translated is

given as a place or city of Perfect Peace. But the last syllable of the Hebrew name for Jerusalem, Shalom, does not convey its true Hebrew meaning when translated by the English word peace. It implies far more, such as wholeness, completeness in all parts, inferring Perfection or Completeness of Being.

The Hebrew word for John is Yockonan meaning favored of or by God. And since there was no actual Lodge from whence you came, the word Lodge must refer to the State of Being rather than a definite place. Thus a L.H.S.J.J. would be a State of Existence, in completeness of Being, favored by God.

Now then, do you remember the second Question in the Catechism? "What came ye here to do?" And Oh, my Brothers, how this answer is butchered by nearly 80% of the Apprentices taking the examination. Most generally you hear the candidate muttering in a rapid voice: "To learn to subdue my passions and improve myself in Masonry." I submit that this type of answer has no real meaning and does not make sense either Masonic or Biblical. The proper way to answer this question is as follows: "To Learn." (period); "To subdue my passions." (period); "To improve myself in Masonry." (period).

Just as the Bible teaches us how man must first come to a realization of his own Divinity and then try to regain it, so too, Masonry teaches us how to realize and regain our Spiritual Perfection. This is the ultimate object of Masonry as illustrated in the first three degrees of Masonry, for the teaching of the three degrees deals with the three planes of man's Being. Thus, "To Learn," recognizes the Mental or Psychological

body of man; the F. C. Degree is the mental advancement of Man. "To subdue my passions," recognizes the physical body of man; the E. A. Degree teaches us the control and subjugation of the Material Body. "To improve myself in Masonry," recognizes the Spiritual Body of man and concerns the Spiritual Unfoldment toward Perfection.

Thus, Whence came Ye and what came ye here to do can be answered as follows: "I came from a State of Existence, in Completeness of Being, favored by God. I must regain the Spiritual Completeness of Being by Spiritually evolving myself back to God."

Just as it is the supreme tax of everyone to obtain that Divinity (Biblical) so too is it the supreme task of every Mason to attain the Spiritual Perfection by his own free will and accord and by his own individual efforts. For to obtain Spiritual Perfection, one must ASK, SEEK and KNOCK, not on one but many portals. And as a Mason, you said you would do just that and further promised that you would work for it, that you desired it and that you deserved it. Again, I can hear some of you saying, Brother Stubbs, where did I make that promise?

You said you desired Spiritual Perfection. (Is it your own free will and accord that you make this request?) What request? To gain admission into a Lodge of Masons? Yes, certainly, if you would accept the open and literal meaning. But remember we are studying allegory. If I am correct that the teachings of the degrees of Masonry show us how to research Spiritual Perfection, then your request of your own

free will and accord is to desire Spiritual Perfection.

You said that you deserved Spiritual Perfection. (Is he duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified?) Duly and truly prepared for what? For inspection to see if he is robed in the right manner to take the degree? Yes, if you accept the outward meaning. Worthy enough to merit the approval of the Brethren and well qualified sufficiently to be fitted or adapted to our Fraternity? Yes, if you accept the outward meaning.

But as to the hidden meaning, is he Duly and Truly Prepared to learn that he is essentially a Spiritual Being; that he is more than matter Vilified; that death is not the annihilation of the Intellect; that the mental and physical bodies of man are not all there is to us. Is he worthy to merit the approval of His Creator; is he well qualified to start preparing his Spiritual Body, in this life so that by such preparation, it may stand before the Great White Throne of God in the next world, to hear the commendation: Well done Thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make Thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.

Section IV

The preceding Section ended on the thought that as Masons, we promised that we desired and deserved Spiritual Perfection.

We also promised that we would work for it. "Has he made the necessary proficiency in the proceeding Degree...?"

Thus, by Work, is meant to study Masonry; to study is to learn; and to learn is to know that the teaching of the first three Degrees of Masonry deals with the three planes of Man's Being and that we should have activity on each Plane.

We promised in our Catechism to do three things, each one effecting a separate Plane of Man's Being: (a) To subdue our passions: "to learn to and subjugate our physical and material Bodies – "The Entered Apprentice Degree. (b) To learn: "the advancement of our mental Body" – The Fellowcraft Degree. (c) To improve myself. : "the unfoldment of our spiritual Nature" – Master Mason Degree. The latter, both from the Biblical as well as from the Masonic viewpoint is the most important.

The Holy Bible, when studied and not merely read, evinces little interest in Man's devolution, for having accepted the fact which is briefly touched upon in the first Book of the Great Light, its preferred objective and sole interest is to assist man by relating how he may regain his Spiritual Estate or "That Which was Lost."

Thus, to me, the Bible teaches how Man must first come to realize his own Divinity and then regain that Divinity.

Masonry likewise has the same objective and its teachings therefore do not concern themselves with Man's devolution.

However, as I have pointed out previously, one portion of the Ritual when analyzed, furnishes clear and convincing evidence that Masonic Philosophy is cognizant of the fact of Devolution. This is contained in the very first question of the Catechism, together with its Answer and

thus coupled with the answer to the second question indicates a definite knowledge of the fact of Devolution and the remedy.

Masonry then, is a system of Religious Philosophy in that it provides us with a Doctrine of God's Universe and our plan in it. It indicates to us "Whence we have come" and "Whither we may Return." Its purpose is to show us that Man has fallen from Grace, (Biblical Devolution); that Man has fallen from a High and Holy Center of the Point within the Circle of the Circumference and then to declare the way by which that Center of the Circle may be found again, (Masonic).

Thus, to me, the Masonic Doctrine of the Point within the Circle, is the same as the Biblical Kingdom of Heaven. Both are within you.

Lest it be thought by some that I am attributing deeper meaning to Masonic teaching than exists or was intended by its founders, I should like, at this time, to quote several passages. First from Brother Arthur Edward Waite, in his Book "Emblematic Freemasonry," at page 253: "It has been recognized throughout that there is a higher mind of Masonry; that a wider meaning attaches to its chief allegory than that which appears on the surface and that the essential greatness of certain degrees and rites has been realized by few only of the multitude who know them at first hand." Second, I quote from "The Master's Lectures; page 36 under the Chapter titled: "TRUTH": "Signs are not wanting, that a higher Masonic consciousness is awakening in the Craft. Many of our Members are gradually becoming alive to the fact that much more than meets the eye and ear lies beneath the

surface of Masonic Doctrine and Symbols The Truths of Freemasonry are purposely veiled in allegory and symbol, and their deeper meanings do not appear upon the surface of the Ritual. Our ceremonies are full of cunningly hidden suggestions of these immortal truths – so much so that one is almost inclined at times to claim for Freemasonry an inspiration from the Great Architect Himself."

As Albert Pike defined Freemasonry, in his *Morals and Dogma*, page 854, "the subjugation of the Human that is in Man by the Divine; the conquest of the appetites and passions by the Moral Sense and the Reason; it is a continuing Warfare against the Material and Sensual by the Spiritual. That Victory when it has been achieved IS THE TRUE HOLY EMPIRE."

In Section II, I construed the above statement by Albert Pike to mean that: "Until I seek and find and learn that deeper meaning to Masonry and apply it spiritually, Masonry is not even Religious; it is only religion when one finds religion in it; otherwise it remains for others only a ritual and at best only a system of Morals."

This is exactly what I believe the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote in I Corinthians 11:14: "But the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are Spiritually discerned."

To me this is very strong corroboration of my statement, and it is from a source we Masons are taught to study with reverence. Paul's Natural Man – the Material and Mental Man, is he who is without Spiritual Experience and to him

things Spiritual are “foolishness, neither can he know them.”

Permit me now to paraphrase Brother Waite’s passage, quoted above, by substituting the Holy Bible for the word Masonry. “It has been recognized that there is a deeper meaning from the study of Holy Writ that which appears on the surface and that the Secret Doctrines of both the Old and New Testament have been understood by only a few in comparison to the hundreds of thousands who have read them.”

Your writer was astonished when he first discovered this to be true. As a devout attendant at Church services for over forty five years, and after many years of Bible reading directed by the leaders of Protestant Church thought, it seemed to him almost unbelievable that such important facts, regarding the secret doctrines of the Holy Bible, should have been overlooked by the keenest of the analytical students of the Bible or concealed from the public for some reason which might have appeared good and sufficient.

As soon as the Key to support these facts, revealed itself, by years of research and study, many puzzling passages of the Bible as well as in Masonic Ritual became plain and understandable to the writer.

The next Section will deal with the subject of Masonic and Biblical Morality and how I interpret the Moral Code of the New Testament, as set out by Jesus of Nazareth.

Section V

In Section II, I wrote: “Certain conclusions must be reached by the Mason who devotes even a little time of serious thought to the prominent position of the Holy Bible in Masonry. Logically then, I must conclude that the Mason is expected to discover something more in the Holy Bible which transcends this Moral and Ethical Code and Teaching, great as these teachings are.”

Throughout Masonry, as well as throughout the Bible, one of the most fundamental principles, one of the most interesting and most puzzling principles to understand, deals with the Moral and Ethical Code. Certainly, it is generally acknowledged that the Moral Code of the Bible and that of Masonry, is more or less ideal, unquestionably an outstanding feature, and yet I feel that it is not comprehensive enough to be understood by the average Bible reader or Mason.

Time upon time, we read that Masonry is a system of Morality; but nowhere do we find a clear definition of Morality.

For the past 15 years I have attempted a study of the Moral Code of Jesus Christ, as compared to the Older Philosophies and the Pagan Religions of that day. To say the least, I have learned that Jesus’ Code of Morals appeared to be astonishing strange to the Philosophers and especially to the Jewish Religionists of that time.

The Student of New Testament knows very well that early in the missionary work of Jesus and throughout His career He gave great emphasis to the matter of Morality; it was by the Moral Code that

Jesus measured the standard and quality of the character as well as the nature of those individuals whom He called to be His Disciples. And His Moral Code became the yardstick for every individual to determine his or her fitness in becoming interested in His Teachings.

Let us review the Moral Code as it relates to the ancient people and even among the pagans of Jesus' own day. The Moral Code generally accepted and in application, was a form of Rules or Regulations directing the individual to pay respect to the requirements and necessities of the **Community**.

Such a Moral Code Constituted a sort of Civic Duty. It was wholly an impersonal thing; it was based upon the fact that the essential element of man's existence insofar as personal conduct was concerned was the outer objective self of man. They thought and believed that all Sin and certainly all Immorality was the Outer Man, through his Mortal, World Senses, Even the "Sins of all Sins" and the any sin against a god or gods were of the outer self.

It must be understood however that in the comprehension and understanding of the Pagan, there was but one manifest, tangible, visible Self. This was the Body and Brain and Mortal Senses of man. Only among those who had studied the Ancient Philosophies and Mysteries was there the generally accepted belief of the existence of a Soul within that Body.

Thus, the only possible sin against the gods of the Pagans was to deny the existence or the power or the possible wrath of the community gods or the tribal god. Whatever else one did to a human

individual was immoral because it was against the best interest of the community. Therefore, the Code of Morality was not based upon any Divine commandment. It was a Code gradually created and acknowledged accepted by the rulers of community and its citizens.

Immoral behavior involved a challenge against the Civil Rules and Regulations and brought upon the perpetrator of the physical self in the hands of the tribe or community. Immoral and sinful acts, therefore, did not bring upon the perpetrator any Divine condemnation or spiritual exclusion in a religious sense. If the body suffered sufficient torture and punishment for the violation of the Civil Code or morals, it was considered that just compensation had been made and that the sin was blotted out.

The only exception to this was the sin of a god or gods, constituting blasphemy and a denial of the power or existence of that god or gods, in which case the perpetrator had to suffer death in order to satisfy the special requirements of the Moral Code through which the wrath of the god was expressed.

Now if we look at the Moral Code that Jesus referred to in so many of His parables and allegories, we see at once that there was a very great difference between His Moral Code and that which had been in existence for so many years. It is true that the Moral Code taught by Jesus had many elements in it that were duplicates of those found in the Moral Code of the Jews, but still the Jews did not teach even their most learned disciples the mystical element back of the Code and by virtue of which the Code became truly a Spiritual, Moral Code.

In the first place, Jesus distinguishes His Code of Morality by making it plain that morality consist of “a duty to God,” and not a duty to the community. Jesus labored constantly in His parables, allegories and actions to show that morality was as duty to God because it was a private matter between a man’s inner self and his God,” - that the true moral code was not a mere public matter or system and that the chief inspiration in the Moral Code was not the principle of cooperation with one’s fellow man or the helping of one’s brother, but the saving of one’s own soul.”

From my study of this subject I have come to the conclusion that this Moral Code, as expressed by Jesus, attempted in a very subtle way or manner to introduce the idea that man was dual in a different sense than a mere body of earthly elements and a spiritual soul, imprisoned within it. I believe that Jesus tried to establish the realization that just a man had an outer self with all of its urges, sensations, and susceptibility to the influence of resonating and thinking and of worldly impulse and temptation, so man had another self, and INNER SELF, distinct from the body and only partly associated with the Soul.

And why I am convinced of this? Jesus adhered to the fact that the Soul in Man was Immortal, Most Perfect, Divine Thing, composed of the consciousness of God, and breathed into man’s physical body in order to make him, “a living image of God.” Therefore, I have concluded that wherever and whenever Jesus gave emphasis to the salvation of the Spiritual

part of man, it was to the third part, the Inner Man, distinct from the outer physical self and only associated temporarily with the Soul while the Soul was incarnate in the physical body.

This Inner Self constituted the Universal Individuality, the distinct entity, the Perpetual Self. Now is it not true, that if the Soul in Man had its origin and its source in the consciousness and mind of God, it was not only immortal but beyond condemnation. It could therefore be saved from nothing and Jesus did not come to earth, not preach, and perform, suffer upon the Cross and offer His life to “Save” the Soul of Man. The Soul need not be saved; it is beyond sinfulness; there is nothing of that Soul that can be saved; it is without blemish; therefore, it must be something else of Man that needs saving. Because of this, it is very hard to distinguish between the Soul, Inner Self and Out Self, as they relate to Jesus’ teaching about Morals.

But please, my reader, do not attempt to find in these thoughts the idea that I am saying Jesus negated the idea of cooperation and the importance of each one helping his neighbor, for He taught and demonstrated the principle of each man being his Brother’s Keeper and helping a Brother in need. But more important that establishing and maintain a Civil Code whose ultimate purpose and sold aim was to make a livable community, an idealistic nation among men, was the Salvation of One’s Inner Self through a Moral Code that was based upon One’s duty of God, to the Creator, to the Father of One’s Existence.

Editor's Note

Bro. Omer H. Stubbs had a distinguished career both as a public man and a Mason. Born in 1905, Bro. Stubbs was a graduate of Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky and the University of Cincinnati College of Law. Bro. Stubbs served as police court judge for the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, for many years. He was a member and Past Master of Unity Lodge No. 478 (since consolidated into Col. Clay Lodge No. 159). He was initiated as an Entered Apprentice on December 2, 1937, passed to the Degree of a Fellow Craft on January 20, 1938 and raised to the sublime Degree of a Master Mason on March 12, 1938. He was also a member of the A. A. S. R., Valley of Covington, where he was coroneted a 33° Scottish Rite Mason. He was also an active member of the Rotary Club and the Elks Club. Bro. Stubbs died on July 25, 1967.

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