

Templum Fidelis Lodge No. 746

Bath, Ontario

December 12, 2009

Bro. Elkins on behalf of M.W. Bro. Raymond S.J. Daniels, The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, I thank you very much for that toast to Grand Lodge.

Worshipful Master, members of Templum Fidelis, and visiting brethren,

I must applaud the efforts of the Worshipful Master and the brethren of this lodge in providing a non-threatening environment where masons can come together to share their ideas and have thoughtful and concerted discussions on the topics brought forth. I have listened to many of the papers presented in both lodge and in the Agape at Templum Fidelis and have seen how fruitful those discussions that develop can be. It provides an opportunity for us to share our insights and our perspectives as both the presenter and the listener and I have seen many of the thought and discussion provoking presentations in this lodge develop in some interesting ways and lead off on some very interesting tangents. I think that this is one of the most gratifying outcomes that has resulted from the development of this lodge.

We have all heard that time honoured statement that Freemasonry takes good men and makes them better. To some of us this means joining this worldwide fraternity, progressing through our three degrees, and then applying those ideals that we have learned to how we approach our lives. Others though attempt to take a more in depth look at themselves and do some serious work on the development of their interior selves. A book that I would like to refer to today is one that provides one perspective that we can sort of hang that framework of our Masonic philosophy upon in doing that so-called "interior work".

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The Way of the Craftsman is a book written by Kirk Macnulty and has as its subtitle, A Search for the Spiritual Essence of Freemasonry. This book specifically ties the process of that interior work to the psychological development of a Mason. It was W. Bro. Hampton who brought this book to my attention and I must say that I have read it through twice and still make no claim to being an expert on its contents, but have found both challenging and clarifying points throughout its text.

The author begins by specifying the prerequisites for becoming a Mason. These are as we know; belief in a supreme being, being a volunteer, and being mature and stable. The wording here is slightly different than that which we usually hear, but relates more directly to the psychological process described in this book. A fourth one is also added, that of being responsible for one's self. Each of these points are prerequisites that are required before beginning the interior development of the man himself. Belief in the supreme being; because one of the end results of this development is a better knowledge of the supreme being and our relationship to him. Being a volunteer; as it is important to be ready to undertake an examination of oneself as that self-examination may be long and requires a voluntary commitment. Being mature and stable; because that self-examination requires thoughtful and deep consideration. And finally being responsible for one's self is a requirement for beginning that examination, as a great impediment to that examination is the excuse that our situation in life can be blamed on those around us.

After the prerequisites for the beginning of this interior work have been defined we can then look at the main process of attempting to achieve the desired result. This result is the progress through

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various levels of awareness while developing the psyche. Two of the main premises contained within this book are that the lodge room is a representation of a man's psyche, or his interior self, and that masonry is a God centered philosophy. Within this structure of the Lodge room representing a man's psyche the main officer positions are used to represent the various stages of psychological development of that psyche. There are seven main officer positions represented including the Tyler, the Inner Guard, the two Deacons, the Wardens and the Master. These positions are all interconnected and show a progression from West to East as a psyche develops. The Tyler represents the connection of the psyche to the physical world and is the less evolved level of consciousness. It also represents the connection that the psyche has to the body. The inner guard is part of the actual psyche and communicates both with the Tyler and inward to the Junior Deacon. Both deacons act as messengers between the inner guard and the Junior Warden but also represent higher levels of consciousness with respect to the psychological development of the psyche. Each of these assistant officers is concerned in some way with the relationship between the psyche and the body.

As we move to the principal officers we see higher levels of consciousness. The Junior Warden represents the self, the Senior Warden represents the soul, and the Worshipful Master represents the spirit. The Junior Warden as being representative of the self is the level of awareness where you are in control of not only your physical state but you are also aware of your psychological state and how it affects those around you. The author also describes this as somewhat like being the manager. The Senior Warden as representing the soul is primarily concerned with morality and therefore sets the rules for the Junior Warden to follow. This position is suggested to be like that of a controller. The

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Worshipful Master position is like that of the Director being the one that establishes overall objectives and defines policies. At this level of awareness the developed psyche understands the needs of the many and works for the good of the tribe, the nation or possibly the race. This state of awareness is also placed within the spirit world and is the last stage in the progression where you come to understand and begin to comprehend some aspect of the divine.

The positions also represent how that psyche interacts with the physical, spiritual and divine worlds. This is another layer of information that is used to show the development of the psyche from one stage to another. As you can see by the diagram each of the circles represent one of these worlds and also the psyche that is interacting with these worlds. Where these circles overlap is where the connections between each are located. The officer positions are significantly placed all within the psyche with those that operate in one world or another being placed specifically in that world.

It can sometimes be dangerous to try and condense a book down to a 15 minute talk, but I've attempted to provide the major premise that the author is attempting to convey. Much more is discussed within the book that directly shows how the three degrees and the associated symbolism and working tools relate to the development of the psyche. One example given of this is the candidate's entry into the Lodge in the first degree. When looked at from the point of view of the craft as a sort of psychology we can look at that step as a transition from the physical world into the first part of the development of the psyche. Our very recognizable Masonic depiction of ourselves as temples that are to be constructed by the tools given us by the craft can be nicely laid over this diagram of psychological development. The diagram can then take on a three-dimensional effect as a

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representation of a three story temple with the Lodge being divided into three parts; the ground floor, the middle chamber, and the upper chamber or the holy of holies. Each of these levels are under the direction of one of the principal officers and are related to each degree.

I find an interesting parallel to how some of our religious institutions are adopting what I would consider a new age philosophy of what God is. The volume of the sacred law refers to mankind being made in the likeness of the supreme being. There is more of a change to an inward looking philosophy of what God is. In other words a change from where people usually refer to the supreme being as something up there in the sky or outside of their person, to a philosophy where it is more fitting to think of each person as having a spark of the maker within them and that spark is what connects us all spiritually. There is a suggestion in this book that this is one of the end results of our journey through masonry. To be able to develop our interior likeness of the Supreme Being and by developing that likeness be better able to have a better understanding of ourselves.

As I mentioned earlier in the introduction some of us take an in depth look at our interior selves as we progress through our lives and Freemasonry. As the author points out, for most of us progressing through the degrees and learning the required ritual is not a very onerous task, but the true work begins as we develop our psyche or self throughout the length of our lives. We receive our degrees in a short amount of time, in most lodges usually within the span of three months, but it is not necessarily the intention of the craft for us to assimilate all of that knowledge and totally understand it in that short amount of time. The degree work provides references and explanations for the actual experiences of the individual as he travels through his lifetime Masonic journey. Each degree is a

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representation of our lives and the learning associated with each of those stages. The first stage is the beginning where our knowledge is limited, the second stage where we work hard to gain that knowledge, and then the third where we make use of that knowledge to bring us to a better understanding of ourselves. I suggest that it is always important to keep an open mind when considering different theories or ideas. Even though you may not find some of the ideas that I've presented here today as ones that fit into your particular belief structure, I hope that they have provided you with some food for thought. I found this book to be very interesting and refreshing and it seemed to instill in me the interest to search for more light in Masonry.

Brethren, thank you for your kind attention this evening.