

In a "Grand Secretary's Column", Bro. E.A. Snell gave us the following beautiful set of words:

What a person believes has everything to do with what a person is and becomes. A simple statement of belief can describe so well a person and even a whole history of ideas. We hope that this creed may have some special meaning to you.

I BELIEVE

"I believe in the greatness of the individual and that I am in this world for a purpose, that purpose being to put back into life more than I have taken out;

I believe in the integrity of other people, assured that they try as hard to follow the gleam, even as I;

I believe in the gallantry of older people whose seasoned, experienced and steadfast devotion has preserved for me the precious heritage of the past;

I believe in the magnificence of the past, knowing that without its storied wealth I would possess nothing;

I believe in the challenge of the future and that I can spread it through cheerfulness, wholesome habits, sensible expenditure of energies and wise use of foods;

I believe in the nobility of work as the creative expression of the best within me and as my sharing in easing the common load of all;

I believe in the enrichment of play and laughter as the means of cleansing my body of staleness and my soul of bitterness;

I believe in God, who testifies all these beliefs; He is the still small voice within, ever urging me toward the unattained. Since He cares for these things, I believe that even death cannot steal these precious possessions from me;

And whatever more I believe is entwined in those precious feelings that lie too deep for words."

Published in THE TRACING BOARD; GRS;
December, 1977

Submitted by: D. Roy Murray
King Solomon Lodge, No. 58, GRS

Victoria Lodge, No. 13, GRA

THE INVISIBLE CRAFT

A paper presented at the 40th Banff Conference by
R.W.Bro. H. Astbury, D.G.M.. G.L. Saskatchewan.

I have entitled this paper "The Invisible Craft", and it refers, of course, to our own venerable order, Freemasonry. To some extent I propose to play the role of Devil's advocate; that is not to say that I believe there is anything 'fundamentally' wrong with this ancient institution of ours - it still is the finest, most moral, most honourable institution of its kind in existence today. But it does appear to me that we, its members, are doing our best to smother it to death.

Masonry was not always the Invisible Craft. It was, in fact, during the era of Operative Masonry and indeed for most of its history, highly visible - and highly respected. Its charter was granted from the king, and gentlemen and members of the aristocracy deemed it a prestigious honour to be associated with it. A lodge was known by its achievements - the soaring cathedrals, stately mansions; the solid grandeur of the edifices which it erected. To be a Mason was to be known as a man of industry, honour, and integrity. To such an extent was the prestige of the Craft recognized, that its very language became enshrined in everyday usage, and several popular phrases still in use today owe their origins to this source - being a "past-master", being "on the level", having "square dealings", being "black-balled", and so on.

Unfortunately, this former prominence of Freemasonry has been, and is now being reduced to a mere shadow of its historical greatness, especially in our larger cities - and we, as Masons, are to blame. During the past quarter-century particularly, we seem to have done everything possible to obliterate our order as a viable, effective organization. We have veiled ourselves in a cloak of secrecy far heavier than required for the concealment of our esoteric teachings. As an institution we have shunned not only publicity, but recognition. We have done little or nothing in the name of Masonry to aid and assist any segment of our communities at large - the aged, the sick, the disabled, the indigent, the youth, the Arts, the Letters, or any of the other threads woven into the fabric of our society. We have become inward-looking to a fault. We have lost our identity in the eyes of the Public, and with it, our ability to perpetuate and revitalize ourselves by the attraction of new members. Indicative of our lack of public identity is an incident related to me about a woman and her daughter who recently visited a cemetery containing a Masonic-plot. They pondered the square and compasses on the headstones for some time, then finally concluded they were a plot for convicts! Those who swell the ranks of the uninformed label us everything from a bunch of eccentrics to a cult of devil-worshippers!

What has caused us to become so remote, so faceless, so unknown that these myths can permeate the very society in which we live and work? The answer is simple. Masonry as an organization is no longer visible. We have hidden our light under a bushel. We have become

so protective of our secrets that almost our very existence is becoming a secret. We are becoming the Invisible Craft!

In what way do we as an institution display those qualities which we have propounded in our mysteries? Some twenty-five years ago a Grand Master solicited funds from individual Masons to furnish a new wing in a hospital. He then had a suitable engraved plaque mounted on the door, indicating the furnishings had been supplied by Masons - not a particular lodge, or particular Grand Lodge, but by Masons. The furor created over this apparent breach of Masonic propriety was such that the plaque was shortly thereafter removed. To this day it has never been replaced, and no Masons, either individually or collectively, have ever received public recognition for this benevolent act.

Our ritual indicates that a candidate for our mysteries must be "-unbiased by the 'improper solicitation' of friends -", NOT "-unbiased by the 'solicitation' of friends -". Yet, in our own inimitable way we have interpreted that phrase to imply that 'all' solicitation is improper. I would suggest that solicitation of a man possessing the necessary qualifications for membership is entirely proper, and should be encouraged, provided it is done from pure motives and not without undue persuasion, coercion, or promise of financial, social, political, or other tangible gain. It is not, after all, reasonable or logical to assume that a rational and sincere man would attempt to join any organization about which he knows nothing, that he does not see at work in his community, whose achievements and accomplishments are hidden from view, and which he has not been invited to participate in or join. Nor is it reasonable or logical to assume that any man would or could have a preconceived opinion of our order, favourable or otherwise, if it is hidden from his view.

It is a well known psychological fact that one of man's most vitally important needs is recognition. Isolation and ostracism have been used for centuries to break down resistance and punish non-conformists. Lack of recognition - denial of the ego - have proven to be a kind of will-breaking, demoralizing torture which few men have been able to withstand over sustained periods. A parallel can be drawn with institutions and organizations, isolate them in their community, strip them of identity, deny them recognition, shroud their visibility - and surely in time they will wither into extinction. Throughout the centuries Masonry has been visible, masons have been the builders n society, and of society. They and the Craft were seen, recognized and known in their communities, through their work, their contribution, and their support. Wherever Masonry is flourishing today the same is still true. Can we, my brethren, say it is so in our jurisdiction? Are we flourishing? are we 'visible'? Or are we, in fact, becoming the Invisible Craft?

I would like to put forward the proposition that in some measure we are becoming sustained by those concurrent bodies who base their membership on Masonic Affiliation - bodies which, in our jurisdiction, we even have denied formal recognition. Some of these organizations have been highly visible, they have operated hospitals, built homes for the aged, encouraged education, supported charitable works. And, through people wishing to belong to these visible worthwhile organizations we have derived some members. In many cases, however, they are not active in our Blue Lodges, but do become deeply involve in the concurrent bodies where they feel they are making a worthwhile contribution.

There are a great man areas where we could be involved, and where our assistance is sorely needed - not just financially, but physically, emotionally, and morally. The old saw that such assistance is the responsibility of he individual mason solely, will no longer cut. If our Craft teaches relief and consolation to others, the Craft should be offering relief and consolation to others. If the Craft teaches universal beneficence and charity, the Craft should be taking the leadership in extending universal beneficence and charity. To do otherwise, or to fail as a group to conduct ourselves as we enjoin our individual members to conduct themselves is to be inconsistent with our own philosophical precepts.

What City Lodge in our jurisdiction in recently history has, as a Lodge, made any significant contribution to those around us? What Lodge has put on a concert for the aged? Taken patients for a stroll in the park? Attended a Job's Daughter's or DeMolay function? Delivered Meals on Wheels? Volunteered assistance during an emergency? Supported a Little Theatre Group? Helped a struggling artist? Helped shut-ins with shopping or personal care?

These are the things which can make us visible.

They give us identity and purpose. We don't have to wave banners, march through the streets, get into the press, or advertise our wares. We need not publicize our endeavours, but we do have to work! Out there - yes, in public, as an organization, doing what we profess to be all about. The alternative, Brethren, is clear. Unless we practice what we preach we will become an endangered species -- THE INVISIBLE CRAFT.

Published in MASONIC BULLETIN; B.C.R.;
February, 1981.

Submitted by D. Roy Murray
King Solomon Lodge, No. 58, GRS
Victoria Lodge, No. 13, GRA

THE JEWEL OF "THE NINE WORTHIES"

Among the many fascinating works of Masonic literature available in the Grand Lodge Library and the District 2 Library are plates and illustrations of early medallions and jewels. One of the most intricate and expressive of the jewels is, to me, the jewel created for "The Nine Worthies".

On March 7, 1792, the Atholl Lodges of the London area were ordered to return one of the Excellent Brethren to assist the Grand Officers for the year. Nine Excellent Masters were then elected by the General Grand Chapter to visit the Lodges, "so that the general uniformity of Ancient Masonry be preserved . . . unchanged." (Were these the forerunners of the District Deputy Grand Masters?)

Special jewels were minted for the use of these "Nine Worthies" in 1792, at the grand cost of L2 12s, 6d. each, and were recalled on November 5, 1817. Seven of them exist among the treasures of the Grand Lodge at Freemasons' Hall, London, England.

The jewel itself is 2 inches in diameter and on one side is a building scene with the words "One of the Nine Worthies" impressed on the lower edge. Against a half-completed building on the left rests a long ladder up which a workman is climbing. In the building is an arch and above this is another Mason guiding the raising of a large block of stone to which a rope is attached, the loose end of which is held by a third workman on the ground. A fourth figure also looks over the top of the wall, and is also apparently helping. On the right side is a table at which a man (the Architect?) stands, directing the Master Builder, who is holding the square. Below is a group of working tools.

On the reverse, three steps lead to a pair of short pillars, around which are groups of Masonic tools. They form the entrance to a tessellated pavement from the sides of which spring three arches. Two of the arches are not completed, while a Mason is wrenching forth the 'keystone' from the third. His figure is held up by a rope which issues from a hand above it. At the sides are the Sun, the Moon, the Level, and the Plumb. At the lower edge is the motto, "Sit Lux et Lux fruit"

By: R.J.C.: Published in THE TRACING BOARD, GRS;
March, 1987.

Submitted by D. Roy Murray
King Solomon Lodge, NO. 58, GRS
Victoria Lodge, No. 13, GRA

THE LAMBSKIN OR LEATHERN APRON

From the inception of Masonry to the present day, no Mason could perform his duties or enter a Lodge unless he was "properly clothed." Does "Masonic Clothing" mean anything to us? Sometimes we perhaps chafe at having to put on our Aprons, sometimes we forge them and wear substitutes, sometimes we hide them under our jackets, whereas they should be worn on the outside. Such feelings and indifference are entirely due to lack of thought, and of proper knowledge of this subject.

Mackey, the great and well known Masonic writer says: "There is not one of the symbols of speculative Masonry more important in its teachings or more interesting in its history than the Lambskin or leathern apron." To the Mason this badge should be of the highest importance. It is the first gift that he receives. It is the first symbol that is explained to him. It is his first investiture. It is the badge of innocence and the bond of friendship and he is enjoined, "to ever wear and consider it as such." It marks the birth of his Masonic career and when mortal death, his inevitable destiny, overtakes him, it is buried with him. The Lambskin is emblematic of all that he is expected to be. Then Brethren, let us ever wear the Masonic apron, as the badge of innocence and the bond of friendship, never forgetting that it is our daily duty to assist in shaping, "living stones for their spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens," and as we wear it, let us, like the Operative Mason erecting a beautiful cathedral, ourselves raise a spiritual Temple worthy of the designs of the G.A.O.T.U.

By: W.S. Fitzsimmons, G.M. in his Grand Master's Message; Published in THE TRACING BOARD;GRS;
March, 1986.

Submitted by D. Roy Murray
King Solomon Lodge, No. 58, GRS
Victoria Lodge, NO. 13, GRA

Editor's Question Box

Published in Masonic Bulletin-BCY-November 1947

Lamb Skin 1

A past master from Nelson writes: "We speak of the lambskin apron of a Mason as being more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honourable than the Star and Garter or any other order in existence." I have been informed that there is no such order as the Star and Garter, and if so how do you explain its use in the ritual or to what does it refer?"

Not all of our rituals use the words "Star and Garter." In many of the English and Scottish workings the term used is "The Garter," while in the Bath or west of England work the reference is to "the Star, or Garter, or any other, etc. Even some of the American workings vary in this respect. The Grand Lodge of New York, for instance, has it "more honourable than the Star, or Garter when worthily worn."

The Order of the Garter was founded by Edward 111 in 1348, and according to the story originated in the famous incident at the royal ball and the apt response of the king to the ribald comments of some of his couriers, "Honi soit qui mal y pense," or "evil be to him who evil thinks."

It is Britain's most exclusive order and for many centuries was restricted to the Sovereign and 25 Knights of the realm. About 100 years ago it was extended so that the Sovereign has now the right to invest with it people of outstanding merit who are outside the former restriction. At the end of the last war the honour was offered to the great leader of that campaign, Bro. Winston S. Churchill, but he begged leave to refuse it.

The Order had been from the beginning under the immediate protection of St. George and the mantle worn by Knights of the Garter bore the well known insignia of the red cross on a white field. Various sovereigns conferred additional decorations on their favourite Order, and one of these was the Star conferred by Charles 1 which was formed by encircling the St. George's badge with eight points of silver, thus making the splendid insignia complete as it is today.

The Order is invariably referred to as "The Garter," and therefore, that is the appropriate term to use in our ritual. Though the "Star and Garter" was a recognized phrase amongst our predecessors, and still occurs in some American and other rituals, it is probable that it was a popular term derived from the star and garter as the prominent details of the insignia rather than a reference to the title of the most illustrious Order of British chivalry itself. The oldest ritual available (1730) gives it as "Star and Garter." There were many old English inns known by the sign of "The Star and Garter" which would have been familiar to the Freemasons of that period, and it is interesting to note that the Prince of Wales was initiated a Mason at the "Star and Garter Hotel" in Feb, 1867.

On the other hand it is possible that the term is derived from an erroneous rendering of the phrase as occurring in some of the rituals which give "The Star, or Garter, etc." While it is true there is no Order of the Star in the list of British honours, nevertheless there was an Order of the Star founded by King John of France in 1350 expressly as a rival to the English order of the Garter which had been instituted a few years previously by Edward 111.

This "Order of the Star, or of the Nobel House" soon fell into disrepute and towards the end of the 15th century the Order of St. Michael founded by Louis XI took its place, but it is doubtful if this Order of the Star was sufficiently well known to the Craft of the Speculative 17th century period to justify the reference to it in the familiar apron charge.

If there is any question as to why the "distinguishing badge of a Mason" is more honourable than these illustrious and coveted distinctions perhaps the answer is to be found in the fact that these knightly orders were conferred upon men whose aristocratic disdain for labour of any kind was proverbial, while the Mason's badge is an emblem of the worth and dignity of honest toil conscientiously performed for the improvement of society and the welfare and benefit of all.

Ron Bushby, PM
Mt. St. Paul 109
Kamloops, B.C.

This information may be freely given to Masons, however the following recognition is requested. The information contained in this educational paper was taken from the following books:

Beyond the Pillars issued by the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario

From the many papers put forth by Quatuor Coronati Lodge

The FreeMason's Guide and Compendium by Bernard Jones

It was compiled and edited by Bro. Barry D. Thom, P.M. Lodge Mackay #1129.

Lamb Skin 2

This is a very ancient form of garment, in as much as stone-workers are as old as civilization itself. The apron of the British operative mason was commonly a tanned sheepskin reaching well below the knees. It had a bib or flap held up by a leather thong around the neck. Two other thongs secured it around the waist. The apron can claim a greater antiquity than the heraldic symbols of riches and power, that being the Golden Fleece and the Roman Eagle.

An early Greek legend recounts how Jason and the Argonauts sailed off in search of the Golden Fleece; the ancient tradition put the date of this expedition at about 1200 B.C. The name became symbolic of treasure, and was given to a new order of knighthood founded in 1429 by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. His descendants intermarried with other royal families, and in due course the Golden Fleece came to be the highest order of chivalry in both Spain and Austria. The eagle, on the other hand, was in ancient times sacred to the Roman god Jupiter, who was King of the Gods. At an early date it was adopted as one of the five totems or emblems of the divisions of the Roman army. In 104 B.C. the others were discarded, and the eagle became the badge borne on the standard of every Roman legion, or regiment. As a result it came to stand for the Roman Empire, and was taken over in time by various emperors who liked to think of themselves as successors of the Romans. But not only is the Mason's apron ancient. It also bestows as much honour as do the trappings of the highest distinctions conferred by kings and princes. Perhaps the oldest of these is the Most Noble Order of the Garter, instituted about 1348 by King Edward III of England. It is the highest order of knighthood in England. Its insignia include an eight-pointed silver star and a garter of dark blue velvet. The Order of the Star was created by King John II of France around the same time.

The Freemason's apron is patterned after the apron worn by operative masons to protect their clothing and their bodies from the abrasive surface of the stones. The triangular flap is all that remains of the bib, or upper portion. Instead of reaching upwards, it has been folded forward over the rope girdle. For the speculative Mason the apron has a twofold significance; it marks his rank, and also illustrates certain fundamental principles and basic symbols of the order.

The white lambskin apron of the E.A. is completely undecorated, and serves as a reminder of blameless purity.

The apron of the F.C. is similar to that of the E.A., except that two rosettes are added to distinguish it as the badge of the Second Degree. The apron of the M.M. is more ornate. It is bordered by a ribbon of sky blue, in five separate segments, three on the apron and two on the flap. The colour reminds us of the heavens. The triangular flap with its border, reminds us of the mason's square. The three rosettes indicate the Third Degree. The two free-hanging vertical ribbons, one on each side, depict the two great pillars which stood at the P.W. or E. of K.S.T. To each ribbon are attached metallic tassels, of seven separate chains. Seven denotes the seven liberal arts and sciences. Note the recurrent Masonic numbers, three, five and seven.

In many lodges of today, officers wear white gloves and while it is proper with tails, it is incorrect to be worn with a tuxedo or business suit. Why then do the officers of some lodges wear gloves? The reason for the wearing of gloves is a carry over from the days in an operative lodge. As part of the initiation the apprentice had to give each member of the lodge one apron and one pair of gloves of which both were made from leather. He had to pay a fee as well as cover the cost of the feast that evening.

The colours of Masonic regalia were taken from other Orders. The dark blue used by Grand Lodge was taken from the Order of the Garter. The light blue was chosen merely to contrast the dark blue. Colours, however, do have symbolism. White denotes purity, truth, innocence and fidelity. The dark blue denotes immortality, eternity, and chastity. The pale blue represents, prudence and goodness. Gold symbolizes the sun, while silver the moon.

Published in Masonic Bulletin-BCY-December 1949

LECTURE GIVEN BY BRO. R. J. MEEK,

at Whitehorse Lodge, No. 46, at Whitehorse, Y.T., April, 1948.

Almost a year ago to the day, my wife presented me with a baby daughter. When the child was eventually handed to me, I took her, like perhaps millions of fathers throughout the world have taken their firstborn, and held her like this: (due guard). She was very beautiful and we called her Freya. Now Freya is the name of a Norse goddess, appropriately the goddess of sunshine and rain and flowers and beauty. She is one of the triumvirate: Odin, Thor and Freya. Odin was the wisest of all the gods, and Thor, the god of thunder, the strongest. At the ancient temple of Upsala in Denmark, the three divinities therein were Odin, Thor and Freya, who were supposed to support the universe. To the initiated these represent Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. It was significant that the column of Freya stood at the south side of the temple where it has ever represented Beauty or Plenty. In this temple the south side is the station of the J.W., and in many Lodges throughout the world, suspended above his chair is a sheaf of wheat, denoting plenty.

We receive most of this symbolism in the first degree, and most of the symbolism is female. For instance the first sign we make is known as the due guard-"your left hand supporting the V.S.L., square and compasses, your right hand covering the same," it is the sign often seen given by the Virgin Mary, Isis, and other goddesses, and I offer the theory that it is a sign originating from the natural manner in holding a newborn infant-the first sign in our natural and Masonic lives.

In the lecture at the first tracing board we learn that "a Masonic Lodge is supported by three great pillars, W., S., and B., W to contrive, S to support and B to adorn. W to conduct us in all our undertakings, S to support us under all our difficulties, and B to adorn the inward man." Let us always remember that Freemasonry seeks ever to cultivate the inner qualities inherent in all of us. The column of B, depicted as a Corinthian column- the lightest, most ornamental of Greek architecture further represented H.A.B., who embellished K.S. temple with curious and cunning workmanship.

The south side of the Lodge is occupied by the J.W. who represents the sun at its meridian, the day in its full bloom of beauty. -It is the J.W. who calls the Lodge from labour to refreshment. It is the J.W. who closes the Lodge by command of the W.M., and the Corinthian column on his pedestal is raised to show that the Lodge is now dormant, while that of the S.W., known as the Doric Order, is lowered to show the Lodge is passive-without strength. Masonry, a beautiful system of morality, shows consistency in all its symbolism, and is well illustrated by the entrance of the candidate in darkness, the due guard sign, the several female symbols of the first degree, the Corinthian column of B. and the brightest character in the annals of Freemasonry: H.A.

LEGEND OF ENOCH FALSE BUT FASCINATING

Some of the more fascinating "historical facts" about Freemasonry concerns events which modern scholars believe are pure figments of imagination.

The Legend of Enoch, for instance, makes great reading although there is not a shred of evidence to substantiate it.

In his huge "History of Freemasonry" Mackey included such stories for the record, and for the opportunity to demolish their premises. He viewed these legends as allegorical attempts to symbolize certain ethical or religious ideas and wrote:

"Their symbolic interpretation cannot be rejected unless we reject the whole fabric of Freemasonry into which they have been closely interwoven."

The Legend of Enoch, seventh of the biblical patriarchs, is one which appears in many forms and in many lands.

Inspired by a vision from the Most High, Enoch is said to have built a system of nine brick vaults in the bosom of Mount Moriah. The vaults were beneath each other and entered through holes in the arches.

Inside the ninth and innermost vault, Enoch placed a cubical block of marble in which was set a triangular plate of gold, encrusted with precious stones and engraved with the ineffable name of God. The entrance to the vaults was sealed with a stone door and covered with earth.

While Enoch lived, he entered the vaults once a year, but told no one of their whereabouts. Consequently, after his death, the vaults were not located until workmen began digging the foundations for the temple of King Solomon.

The legend says that after Enoch finished building the vaults, he had another vision, of the great flood yet to come. To preserve the knowledge he had cultivated, he erected a marble pillar to resist fire and brass pillar to resist corrosion.

On the brass pillar, Enoch engraved the history of creation, principles of the arts and sciences, and the doctrines of Speculative Masonry. On the marble pillar he inscribed, in hieroglyphics, the information that a precious treasure was hidden in a subterranean vault.

This legend, of course, has not the slightest historical support but possesses value as a symbolic idea, the germ of which, Mackey said, is the preservation of the Ineffable Name through the efforts of an antediluvian Patriarch..

There is no hint of this story in the Legend of the Craft. Nor does the name Enoch appear in the old manuscript Constitutions which indicates the legend was probably fabricated some years after the first Grand Lodge of Speculative Masons was formed in 1717.

But outside Masonry there are references to caves in Mount Moriah. A Talmudist tradition holds that King Solomon, when building the temple, constructed underground vaults in which the ark was later hidden, placed on a cubical stone.

The Arabians (Mohammedans) have a tradition which tells how Abraham found a sacred stone which he used in the temple which Jehovah ordered him to erect.

Nicephorus Callistus, a fourteenth century Greek writer, recounted quite an elaborate tale. Workmen rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem found the opening to a cave and lowered a man on a rope to investigate. Water covered the floor of the cubical cave, but safe and dry atop a pillar was found a book - the Gospel.

Enoch was first introduced to Freemasonry as one of the founders of geometry and masonry by the historian Anderson in his 1723 Constitutions. Subsequent writers did not add to the bare facts, leading Mackey to believe the legend was of continental origin, possibly from the fertile brain of Chevalier Ramsay who fabricated so many of the earliest "high degrees."

In 1749 Ramsay wrote of a tradition of all nations - a great man or legislator, before the flood who was the first author of sacred symbols and hieroglyphics, and who taught the people sacred mysteries and religious rites.

This man held Ramsay, was called Thaut by the Phoenicians; Hermes by the Greeks; Edris by the Arabians; all of which names are synonymous with Enoch.

And just to give the legend a final touch of mystery, the Bible records that Enoch lived 365 years, a sacred number in early history.

By: Bro. Harry M. Furniss, Prince of Wales Lodge, No. 100; Published in MASONIC BULLETIN, BRC; January, 1974.

Submitted by D. Roy Murray
King Solomon Lodge, No. 58, GRS
Victoria Lodge, No. 13, GRA

LEND ME A MAN "CUNNING TO WORK" SAID SOLOMON

The most important legend in Freemasonry is that of Hiram Abif, the skillful architect of King Solomon's temple.

Like other legends that we have examined, this one is equally short on historical substantiation. However, for reasons we can all appreciate, it is one legend we are most happy to accept.

"The Legend of the Temple Builder" is told in Kings and Chronicles, and is briefly this:

On the death of his father King David, Solomon resolved to execute his wish for a temple on mount Moriah. The Jewish people were mainly agriculturists, so Solomon asked his ally, Hiram, King of Tyre to trade artisans and timber for oil, corn and wine from Judea.

Solomon also asked for the services of a man "cunning to work in gold and silver and brass and iron and in purple and in crimson and blue and that can skill to grave (engrave)". In response, King Hiram sent Hiram Abif, a widow's son, whose name meant "master workman."

Old manuscripts confuse Hiram Abif and Adonirum, as the latter name is used in Kings. The Masonic historian Mackey did not believe the two were the same, and in his "History of Freemasonry" referred to Adonirum as the chief of the cedar workmen on Mount Lebanon.

Hiram Abif first appeared in Masonic history in Anderson's Constitutions in 1723 and the legend was rounded out in later revisions, making him one of the three Grand Masters at the building of the temple, as well as architect and chief builder.

The historical aspect of this Hiramic legend is not as interesting to scholars as the reason why Masons of the Middle Ages chose to incorporate a worker in metals into their legend, for Hiram Abif was a smith, not a stonemason.

There are many legendary smiths in antiquity. The Greeks had the mighty Hephaestus who forged the weapons on the Gods and armor for Achilles; the Romans had Vulcan, often called the God of blacksmiths, who with his Cyclops journeymen on the Isle of Lemnos beat out spears, helmets and armor.

The Scandinavians had Loki, and the Germans Wieland, smiths who could fashion a sword or a dainty diadem with equal skill. Curiously, many legendary smiths were lame and carried out their work in remote caves.

Vulcan is often confused with Tubal Cain, who is called in Genesis "an instructor in every artificer in brass and iron."

The word Cain is now held to mean "worldly possessions" but Mackey said its true derivation is "an instructor of iron that has been forged." This definition, of course, allies Tubal Cain with the "smiths" who hold prominent positions in all traditions. Tubal Cain was accorded the invention of the smith craft of gold and silver, iron, copper and steel, in the Legend of the Craft in the old manuscript constitutions.

Hiram Abif was a smith, too. Old legendists often called him a stonemason, or an architect, but Mackey believed this was due to faulty translations of the Bible. The modern version makes it quite clear that Hiram Abif labored in brass, precious stones, carving and building - he was in that respect the decorator, not the builder, of the temple.

The high honor paid Hiram Abif by making him the chief architect in the Legend was no doubt soundly based on extraordinary talents which caused the two Kings to unhesitatingly recognize him as the "master workman."

Whether smith or mason, Hiram Abif represents the symbolism of Freemasonry - man laboring in the temple of life.

Quite understandably, there has been a great deal of discussion about how Hiram Abif went about his task of building the temple. Some years ago the Masonic Bulletin reported the interesting conclusions of several Brethren who are modern-day builders and architects.

On the basis of the description of the work in the seventh chapter of Kings, these Brethren felt that the temple, which was put together without nails or tools such as axes, and hammers, must have been ingeniously prefabricated.

While a scheme such as that must have created many problems, it is probable that the fabrication of the two huge pillars planned for the entrance of the temple gave Hiram Abif his greatest number of sleepless nights. The technology had just not been invented.

The conclusion of the Brethren was that the pillars must have been built up around centre posts of wood. Boards could have been nailed on, lengthwise, until the proper diameter was reached, and then the entire pillar banded with a series of brass rings. The chapters were poured of molten brass, a technique known to Hiram's workmen.

Exact size of the pillars still remains uncertain, despite much research. They are mentioned three times in the Bible, twice with a height of 18 cubits and once of 35 cubits. Historians tend to favor the 18 cubit height as it relates better to the other dimensions of the temple. Thus, given a cubit of 25 inches, the pillars would have stood 37 1/2 feet high. When topped by a capital of 5 cubits, the total height would have been an impressive 48 feet.

By: Bro. Harry M. Furniss, in his review of Mackey's 60 year old History of Freemasonry; Published in MASONIC BULLETIN; B.C.R. February, 1974.

LEVEL, PLUMB AND SQUARE

How often we hear the phrase, "Meet on the Level, act by the Plumb, and part upon the Square." How little thought we give to its importance. How easy it is not to consider the meaning behind it.

We all know the Plumb, Square and Level are the "Working Tools" of a Fellowcraft. The Ritual tells us why each is used by Operative Masons; the Plumb to try perpendiculars, the Square to square their work, the Level to prove horizontals. Speculative Masons use the Plumb to walk uprightly before God and man; the Square to remind them all men are created equal and have one Almighty Parent.

LEVEL - Throughout the ages there has been conclusive proof that Masons have met on the Level. Actually, we need look no further back than the present. The Master obligates a candidate on the Level. It is not uncommon for the owner of a business to sit in a Lodge of which one of his employees is Master. A Masonic Lodge is such that no man would, or should, feel any Mason, or any man, is beneath, or above him. That is one of the many beauties of Masonry! No other Fraternity stresses, practices, or teaches the equality of man as forcefully as does Freemasonry.

PLUMB - A Plumb is one of the most intriguing instruments used by an operative workman. It exerts the utmost freedom until it reaches its goal. Masonry teaches that same freedom. It requires no man to be a slave to the Order, or any man, or any creed. It allows each Mason to worship his God as he sees fit; to belong to any Church or organization his conscience will permit. he is taught to respect the beliefs of others, ever remembering that a Mason may be found in every climb, and that Mason may refer to his God by an entirely different name. The Landmarks of Masonry must not be violated, but by no stretch of the imagination do they prohibit freedom - they proclaim it!

SQUARE - The Square is an exacting instrument and in the hands of a Master accents Morality. When we "part upon the Square" we are reminded to keep Morality always with us. Always walk and act so those we meet and associate with will say, "There is a good man." A Mason who is true to the lessons of Masonry is certain to be a man loved by his neighbours. As a Square assists a workman to perform his talks with accuracy, so should its Moral application assist a Mason to live in harmony with his fellowman.

LIVE

The Square, the Level, and the Plumb teaches us to live so that we may all meet in the Supreme Grand Lodge, where only the inward qualifications of man are important. Where the "wicked cease from troubling and where the weary shall find rest."

From The Wisconsin Masonic Journal; Published in MASONIC BULLETIN; BCR.; April 75