



THE GAVEL

MONTEZUMA LODGE NO. 1 AF & AM

431 Paseo de Peralta

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-1958

Just west of the Scottish Rite Temple

Phone: 505-982-0971 - Email: hiram@montezumalodge.org

Volume 22 Issue 3

"The Oldest Masonic Lodge in the Rockies" Organized May 8, 1851

March 2022

From the East...



Brethren:

The Spanish founded La Villa Real de Santa Fe de San Francisco de Asis in 1610. Our historic city has had over 400 years of growth and change. This does not include the additional 800 years of prehistoric settlement that underlies the historic city. Walking down a commonplace sidewalk, driving a now paved historic road like Old Santa Fe Trail, or sitting on a park bench on the Plaza one never knows what might be buried and hidden beneath your feet. As an archaeologist, I have always been captivated by the layers of the past that we mechanically walk over every day. As an archaeologist, I have also experienced firsthand the unearthing of this archaeological record with the numerous disclosures the relics and antiquities unveil about past lifeways and cultures.

Perhaps the most poignant vestige of the past that might be hidden just below our feet are the skeletal remains of past human beings. The vast majority of the early dead of Santa Fe are invisible to our contemporary eyes. In fact, the earliest surviving grave marker dates from 1857. Earlier grave markers from the entire Spanish Colonial period have become lost. What were once designated formal burial grounds marked by wooden crosses and adobe enclosures decay and crumble through time and become covered by parking lots and crisscrossed by roads, building, foundations, and utilities. We take for granted that recognized burial grounds such as Santa Fe's military cemetery will be around forever. However, even these sacred depositories for the dead have their own unique histories. Time and the persistent march of urban development tends to cover even these sacred cultural landmarks. The dead of Santa Fe were once energetic men, women, and children from many historical time periods. The dead and their stories along with their burial grounds are unique and significant records of Santa Fe's long history.

Researchers are aware of at least 20 known and forgotten Historic burial grounds in Santa Fe. Even less is known about prehistoric interments. The pueblo of O'gha Po'oge, had long been lost below the parking lots and buildings of the old downtown Santa Fe High School, but during the construction of the Civic Center over 100 burials were unearthed, and probably as many remain undiscovered in the surrounding area. Many early elite Spanish citizenry were buried under the floors of chapels or in associated courtyards, which have now disappeared. These include San Miguel, Guadalupe, and even the Cathedral. One of Santa Fe's most famous missing graves is that of Don Diego de Vargas. He was most likely interred underneath the once military chapel at the east end of the Palace of the Governors. This area is now underneath Palace Avenue and Washington Avenue. Archaeologists continue to monitor this area during utility projects. Unmarked graves on Fort Marcy Hill continue to be exposed by construction in the area. Perhaps the largest nineteenth-century burial ground was the Old Saint Michael's Cemetery now below the PERA buildings eastern parking lot. Hundreds of unmarked graves probably lie beneath this parking lot. Other localities include the old Santa Fe Territorial Penitentiary, the Japanese American Internment Camp, various old hospitals, and boarding schools to name but a few localities throughout the city.

Continued on Page 3

Regular Meetings

RECURRENCE

First Monday
Fourth Wednesday
Second Tuesday
Third Tuesday
Second Wednesday
First Thursday

EVENT

Regular Communication at 7:00 PM, Dinner at 6:00 PM
Property Management Board at 6:00 PM
Regular Communication at 7:30 PM
Regular Communication at 5:30 PM
Regular Communication at 7:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM
Regular Communication at 7:00 PM, Dinner at 5:30 PM

ORGANIZATION

Montezuma Lodge No. 1
Montezuma Lodge No. 1
York Rite Bodies
Santa Fe Shrine Club
Cerrillos Lodge No. 19
Santa Fe No. 19 Eastern Star

We have been holding our Quest meetings every Saturday morning at 10:00 AM. Quest Club is a forum for everyone. Mason and non-Mason alike can voice ideas and discuss any topic.



Special Notices And Events

Property Management Board

The next monthly meeting of the Property Management Board will be held on **Wednesday, April 27th** at 6:00 PM. in the library.

Sickness & Distress

Bro. Jose Montano's wife, Carmen, had a knee replacement.

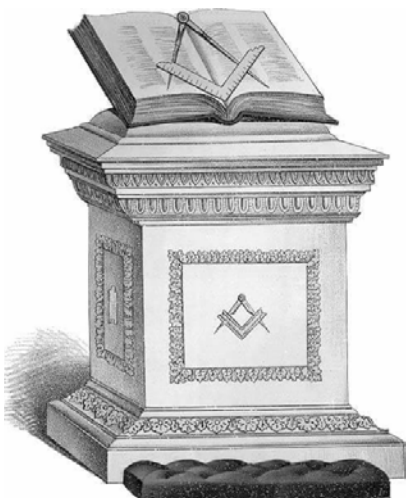
Bro. A.J. Rodriguez's sister had an operation on her hip and is now in a nursing home in Albuquerque.

In Memoriam

MWB Mark Ven der Veer, Past Grand Master, passed away February 8, 2022.

Conferral of Degrees

On Friday, April 1, 2022 the Master Mason degree will be conferred on Brother Nathan W. Metheny.

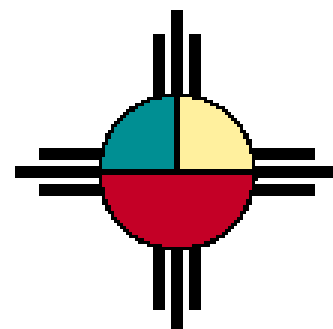


In This Issue

From the East	1
Special Notices and Events	2
Property Management Board	2
Sickness and Distress	2
In Memoriam	2
Conferral of Degrees	2
Photos from the Ritual Festival	4

From Southern California Research Lodge

SCRL - Cover Page	8
SCRL - Editor's Word	9
SCRL - Cover Story - Truth	10
SCRL - The Third Principal Temet - TRUTH	11
SCRL - Truth us Not Equal to Fact	12
SCRL - Fragments	13
SCRL - Masonic POP Culture	14
SCRL - A Toast to Truth	15
SCRL - Truth Comes First	16
SCRL - TRUTH	17
SCRL - Symbology	18
SCRL - Short Talk Bulletin - TRUTH	20
SCRL - The Masonic Quest for Truth	22
SCRL - Final Word	25
Dinner Menu	26
Lodge Officers	26



From the East (continued)

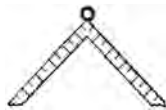


Continued from Page 1

Most importantly to our backyard was the Old Masons and Odd Fellows Cemetery occupying the area of our building, parking lots, and extending east to the Scottish Rite Temple. This cemetery was established as early as 1853 and was decommissioned around 1890. The process of moving bodies from this cemetery was declared over in 1903, but the process was apparently never completed. Recent work during the construction of the nearby apartment project unexpectedly encountered over 100 burials from this cemetery. There are hundreds of graves still likely to be intact beneath our parking lot. Again, you just never know what may lie just beneath your feet, or car even in our own backyard. During her recent work on “our” cemetery, archaeologist Alicia Abbott found the following description of the Old Masons and Odd Fellows Cemetery in an article in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* dated July 12, 1899: “Attention is being called to the dilapidated and disgraceful condition to the old cemetery in the rear of the federal building. The adobe wall is crumbling, several gravestones have been dragged around, and burros browse among the weeds that cover the ground. The cemetery might be turned into a beautiful park or else cultivated to advantage”.

In the final analysis, even burial grounds and the people they entomb can become lost regardless of their importance. The rediscovery of the lost dead are seldom planned for in our modern times. They are most often discovered unexpectedly during various construction projects. In actuality, this happens several times a year in Santa Fe’s constantly changing city scape. When human remains are unearthed during a project State law requires that initially law enforcement be contacted along with Investigators of the Medical Investigator. These officials start the investigation by determining whether the remains are part of a crime scene, or part of the archaeological record. The next step is coordinating with the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division. When discovered during development, construction must stop until the Preservation Division developments a plan to either preserve the graves in place or move them to a new locality. The discovery of human remains is an “inconvenient” occurrence for both the construction project as well as for the remains of those once vibrant men, women, and children that once walked the streets of Santa Fe.

Fraternally,
Charles Hannaford
Worshipful Master



Photos from the Ritual Festival





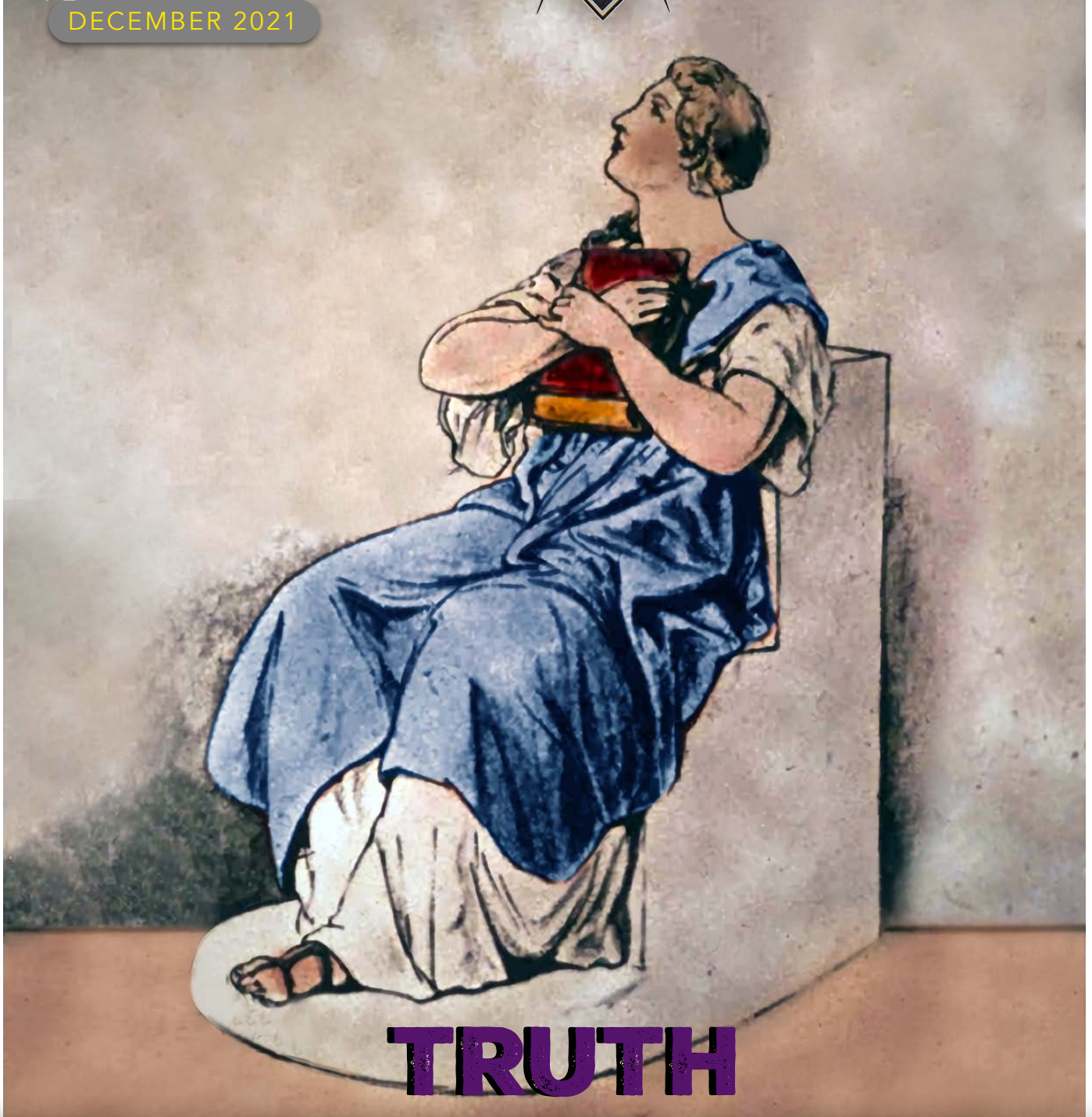




Southern California Research Lodge

Fraternal Review

DECEMBER 2021



EXPLORING THE FREEMASON'S QUEST FOR TRUTH



EDITOR'S WORD

Masonic Perspectives on Truth

This issue of the *Fraternal Review* completes our series on the Three Principal Tenets of Freemasonry. As we did with the October issue on *Brotherly Love* and the November issue on *Relief*, we are again fortunate to be able to publish original articles on the Tenet of the month, *Truth*, written especially for this issue by three contemporary Masonic authors.

M.W.Bro. Robert G. Davis, PGM graciously provided us his "Toast to Truth," written during a time when he must have been quite busy serving as Grand Master of Oklahoma. (p. 9) M.W.Bro. R. Stephen Doan, PGM explains that, metaphysically, Truth is the ultimate reality of existence. (p. 11) Bro. Jaime Paul Lamb tells us how ancient cultures have symbolized Truth as various goddesses. (pp. 12-13)

Truth seems to occupy an exalted position among Masonic tenets, principles, virtues and values. Perhaps this primacy is because a central endeavor of Freemasonry is the search for Light—symbolically both the Light of Knowledge and the Light of Truth. At one time or another, each of Masonry's principal tenets has been touted as the foremost of the three. In his 1914 book *Speculative Masonry* (p. 79), A.S. McBride reflects on the nature of love, concluding, "How appropriate then that Love should be placed as the first principle of Masonry." In a 1769 speech, Bro. Thomas Dunckerly seems to make Relief number one saying, "Charity is the basis of our order; it is for this purpose we have a Grand Lodge." However, in this *Fraternal Review*, we include an excerpt from 1923 that we believe to be most persuasive, as a Royal Arch Chaplain makes his case that "Truth Comes First." (p. 10) His case is strongly bolstered by the Master's statement in the Entered Apprentice degree that: "Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue." And, not to be outdone, in a *Short Talk Bulletin* on Truth, renowned Masonic author Carl H. Claudy writes beautifully of the many varieties of truth, that include logical, metaphysical, transcendental and eternal truth—along with the *real* truth, the *whole* truth and the *absolute truth*! (pp. 14-15)

Consistent with our prior issues on the Tenets, I have once again found a relevant excerpt from 18th century Masonic writings, this time using it as our Cover Story. (p. 4) In this month's Pop Culture section, two approaches to truth by Masonic scholars are presented in the form of two recommended books. (p. 8) *Seekers of Truth* represents the "authentic school"—an evidence-based study of history; while *Freemasonry: Material, Moral and Mystical* represents the "esoteric school," emphasizing the philosophical, symbolic, allegorical and spiritual aspects of our Craft.

Once again, I have commented on the tenet of the month in two essays. The first is a single page about teachings on Truth, as found in the language of Masonic ritual. (p. 5) The second, "The Masonic Quest for Truth," (pp. 16-19) concludes this month's issue with a summation of the many viewpoints presented. They include five psychological levels of Truth, and my speculations on two extraordinary symbols that I relate to Truth—the Kabbalistic God of Light with the God of Reflections, and the upside down tree. When it comes to Absolute Truth, I point to W.Bro. W.L. Wilmschurst's approach in *The Masonic Initiation* (pp. 39-41) where he affirms that contemplation can take us beyond focusing on symbols and ideas *about* Truth into an exalted state of spiritual identity and awareness that is the *direct experience* of Truth itself.

With All Best Wishes for the Holidays and the Coming Year,

C. Douglas Russell, Editor in Chief and former Master of SCRL

©2021 SCRL FRATERNAL REVIEW: *Truth*

NOTICE: SCRL invites Masonic Lodges to reprint *Fraternal Review* articles for such uses as their Trestle Boards; however, we ask that you refrain from distributing entire issues to non-subscribers.

SCRL *Fraternal Review*

December 2021

Volume 62 Number 11

PUBLICATION STAFF

Editor In Chief - C. Douglas Russell

Managing Editor - Dago Rodriguez, PM

Copy Editors - Brett Fisher, Jeriel Smith

Events/Calendar Editor - Jeriel Smith

Pop Culture Editor - Michael Laidlaw

Layouts: Dago Rodriguez, PM

COVER IMAGE:
Truth Lantern Slide
By Joseph Boggs Beale
Circa 1900

SCRL OFFICERS

Master - Dago Rodriguez, PM

Senior Warden - Daniel Rivera, PM

Junior Warden - Michael Laidlaw

Secretary - Tom Sheehan

Asst. Secretaries - Roger Soriano, PM
& John Seletos

Treasurer - C. Douglas Russell

Chaplain - Charlie Fisher, PM

Senior Deacon - Justin Colella

Junior Deacon - Geno Nadirov

Senior Steward - Ian E. Laurelin

Junior Steward - Mark Poliner

Marshal - Johnny Arias

Tiler - Johnny Lebrilla

Text and images herein are used for educational and research purposes only. Complete attributions are provided for all items where the source is known.



VISIT US

www.TheResearchLodge.com

The official SCRL website. Read past issues and renew your subscription

CONTACT US:

secretary@TheResearchLodge.com



FOLLOW US

Instagram: Sneak peaks of upcoming issues: SoCalResearchLodge



Get up-to-date information on upcoming issues and lectures.
<https://www.facebook.com/Southern-California-Research-Lodge-116782435016421/>

The articles herein do not necessarily express the views of SCRL or the Grand Lodge of California. They are solely the writers' points of view.

COVER STORY



Francisco de Goya. *Truth, Rescued by Time, Witnessed by History*, 1812-1814, Oil on canvas 294 x 244 cm
National Museum, Stockholm, Sweden.

In all our Pursuits of Knowledge we make Truths in the Particular the Summit of our Aim, for when we have attained to that we can go no further. Towards this glorious Height our Natures, if not depressed, are continually soaring. Then open wide your mental Eyes, ye generous Fellows, let Truth's bright Radiations enter. He is most knowing that knows most of Truth, and he is wise, who acts according to it. Was it not Truth that formed the wide Expanse of Nature, and ranged in such Beauty and Harmony? In fine, it was Truth that gave to every Being to be what it is.

Great is the God of Truth, the only Fountain of true living Pleasures, unfading Joys, and never ending Bliss, such only worth the Quest, of all that know and love themselves, such only do as set a true Value on their own immortal Souls, and are not content to lie groveling in the present transitory Pleasures, which the corporeal Life affords, but look further, even into Eternity, and by that Means in some Measure [have a foretaste of] those Soul enchanting Joys that surround the ineffable Throne of Heaven.

The Universe is that great Volume to which we alone confine our Studies, in which, each Line, each Letter, speaks the Almighty Architect, and in sweet Melody declares his Excellence. These are the Studies in which those immortal Youths that compose the Celestial Hierarchy, those Divine Philosophers that tread the Azure Empirean Plains of Heaven, and stand in the Presence of their great Original, continually are exercised. By them the infinite Perfections of the Deity are continually traced through all the Footsteps of his Handiwork, both in the upper and inferior Natures; thus do they happy live in an eternal Increase of Knowledge; the more they know of Him the greater is their Love, the more they love the greater is their Fruition. Thus are their Minds and Bliss continually enlarged, and each new Entity by them discovered, or a new Scene of Nature open laid, proves a sweet Instrument for their skillful Touches to sound melodiously their Author's Praise. These glorious Patterns let us Masters strive to imitate, that even, while confined to this narrow and gloomy Prison of our Bodies, we may open to ourselves a Kind of Heaven here below, til that dear Time, when (having finished well our Parts in this Lodge militant) we are called to that triumphant one above.

Gloria Deo Veritatis. (Glory to the God of Truth.)

[William Smith, "Lecture II," *The Book M: or, Masonry Triumphant*. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Leonard Umfreville and Company, 1736), 11-12. Some archaic punctuation, and an archaic word are changed to modern English style.]

The Third Principal Tenet TRUTH

By C. Douglas Russell

This is not the first time we've referred to "truth," or to what is "true," in this three-part *Fraternal Review* series. Some text from our October issue is worth repeating. A "tenet" is defined as "some teaching so obviously true, so universally accepted, that we believe it without question and always take it for granted. ... Freemasonry does not tell us that Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth ought to be true, that it would be better for us all if they were true; it tells us that they are true. They are tremendous realities in human life."¹ As we did with the other two tenets, we again present examples of ritual language—this time about truth—from each of the three degrees of Craft Masonry.

In the 1st degree, we learn that Masonic rules and regulations describe men who are accepted for initiation as "true." This word has been used for centuries to indicate that a person is loyal and trustworthy; faithful to his word; constant, steadfast.² A Lodge that is chartered to confer legitimate Masonic degrees must determine that these good qualities are present in every man who applies for membership. "A Charter is an instrument emanating from a grand lodge, and, in this Jurisdiction, signed by the Grand Master and Grand Secretary, authorizing certain brethren therein named, when duly assembled, to initiate, pass, and raise all good men and true who may apply for the purpose and whom they may find worthy."³ During the degree ceremony, a prayer is offered asking that the candidate, after being made a Mason, continue to be trustworthy and true to his word. "Vouchsafe Thine aid, Almighty Father of the Universe, to this, our present convention, and grant that this candidate for Freemasonry may dedicate and devote his life to Thy service, and become a true and faithful brother among us."⁴

Also in the 1st degree, the Master defines this tenet, explaining that "Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue."⁵ There is more to this definition, quoted in full at the top of page 11. Detailed directions delivered to the candidate near the end of the ceremony include being acquainted with spiritual teachings. "As a Mason, you are to regard the Volume of the Sacred Law as the great Light in your profession; to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice; and to regulate your actions by the divine precepts it contains."⁶

In the 2nd degree, the candidate is told explicitly that Masonic teachings have been passed down through the ages by word of mouth and are illustrated by memorable symbols. "The attentive ear receives the sound from the instructive tongue, and the mysteries of Masonry are safely lodged in the repository of faithful breasts. Tools and implements of architecture most expressive are selected by the Fraternity to imprint upon the memory wise and serious truths; and thus, through the succession of ages, are transmitted unimpaired the most excellent tenets of our Institution."⁷ The candidate is directed to "study of the liberal arts and sciences, especially of the noble science of Geometry, which forms the basis of Freemasonry, and which, being of a divine and moral nature, is enriched with the most useful knowledge; for, while it proves the wonderful properties of nature, it demonstrates the more important truths of morality."⁸

In the 3rd degree, at a crucial moment in the ceremony, the brothers pray to the "Lord of all" to "fill our hearts with truth and love."⁹ Near the end, the candidate is charged "to be faithful to every trust; to support the dignity of your character on all occasions; and strenuously to enforce, by precept and example, a steady obedience to the tenets of Freemasonry."¹⁰ The candidate is also charged to "be true and faithful."¹¹ He is then reminded of this in the Master's closing remarks. "The eyes of the Fraternity are now upon you; be just, be faithful, be true, and convince the world, by your acts, that on becoming a Master Mason you have become a better man."¹²

¹ "The Tenets of Masonry" in *Fraternal Review*, October 2021, 13.

² "true, adj." OED Online. September 2021. Oxford University Press. Accessed 11/15/21.

³ California Monitor & Officers' Manual, 12. ⁴ Ibid., 9. ⁵ Ibid., 18. ⁶ Ibid., 21. ⁷ Ibid., 30-31. ⁸ Ibid., 32.

⁹ Ibid., 36. ¹⁰ Ibid., 46. ¹¹ Ibid., 47. ¹² Ibid.

TRUTH IS NOT EQUAL TO FACT

BY BRO. JAMES TRACY TRESNER II

Implicit in this excerpt is Bro. Tresner's view that Masonic teachings, in the form of myths or allegories, may not be factually accurate, but they point toward truth. —Ed.

First, let's clarify the terms "truth" and "fact" as we'll be using them here. A statement of fact is a provable, often measurable, statement of objective reality. If we say, "Under normal conditions, water freezes at 32° Fahrenheit," we can get a thermometer and test, or we can go to a recognized objective authority such as a textbook or a handbook of physics and look it up.

If we make an assertion of historical fact, for example, "On September 11, 2001, terrorists flew two airplanes into the World Trade Center," we can verify that statement from newspapers, recordings of television shows, history books, and the memories of those still living. Events further back in history can be verified from military reports, the recorded proceedings of governments and organizations, private diaries, public monuments, and other sources.

A statement of truth is not testable in the same way. If we say, "Honor and integrity are important qualities in a person," there is no objective thermometer we can use. Instead, we test truth, consciously or not, by a series of questions:

Does it fit with other things I believe to be true?

Does it seem right?

Do others, whom I accept as being mentors or advisors, agree?

Does it seem to call out the best in me rather than the worst in me?

Does it seem that it would lead to happiness for most people?

Does it seem to be fair?

And so on. Obviously, these questions and judgements are subjective, nothing at all like the "hard-edged" questions we ask about fact. Also obviously, we use different levels of testing depending on the importance of the truth being expressed. If we are dealing with a statement of religious faith or political position, it is to be hoped that we would insist on very high levels of testing.

But if our friend, Jerry, says, "I had a great time skiing last weekend," we'd probably accept it with no more than the passing thought that, "Yes, Jerry always enjoys skiing."

This is not, in any way, to suggest that fact is superior to truth, or vice versa, any more than an orange is superior to a pear. But they are different, and those differences are significant. We "know" facts. But we "believe" truths. I know that five and five make ten, I believe that lying is wrong.

Society in general tolerates much wider variation in truth than in fact. Most of us are willing to grant others the right to follow the religious truth of their preference, even if it is one we do not believe. We are willing to allow someone to believe that lying is all right, as long as he does not put that belief into action and lie to people—that is seen as doing potential harm to others. In many areas, we're willing to say, "Well, I don't agree, but he's entitled to his opinion."

We are less tolerant about fact, because a person who refuses to accept a fact is regarded as either profoundly ignorant, or not of sound mind, or devious. Thus, you may be a follower of Buddha and I may be an adherent of Christianity, and we will accept the similarities in the ways in which we see the Truth and be tolerant of the differences. But both of us will react, at least with suspicion if not hostility or ridicule to the person who insists that the earth is actually flat and square, or that the Holocaust never took place, or that tomatoes are poisonous, or that a person is a better driver when they have had a few drinks than when they are sober.

Or, as one person said, "If you tell me that two plus two makes five, you had better be introducing a new form of mathematics." ...

If I think of the tenets of my religion as statements of fact rather than truths, then I am likely to feel suspicion and contempt for anyone who doesn't agree with me. I may think of them as willfully wrong and deliberately obstructionist. I may think that they are either deliberately or unintentionally leading others astray. Once I have demonized a person to that extent, it is only a short step to attack, whether that means shunning, the rack, or the stake. And again and again in our history, it has only been a slightly longer step to war.

Let us be clear, then, that when we are dealing with myth, we are dealing with truths. There may or may not be a sprinkling of fact in the myth. For our purposes, that is unimportant. Our concern is with the truth.

[Excerpted from James Tracy Tresner II, 33°, Grand Cross, *But I Digress...* (Colorado Springs, CO: Starr Publishing, LLC, 2012), 299-303.]

FRAGMENTS

By Truth, the last of the Principal Tenets, is meant something more than the search for truths in the intellectual sense, though that is included necessarily, and is one of the things meant by Freemasonry's motto "Let there be Light." By Truth is meant that if we are to have a permanent Brotherhood, its members must be truthful in character and habit, dependable, men of honour as well as of honesty, men on whom ye can rely to be faithful fellows and loyal friends. No argument is needed to prove that Truth, as thus understood, is a necessity, that it is required in the nature of things if a Brotherhood is to exist. It is something we must all take for granted as being beyond question.

["The Tenets of Masonry," Grand Lodge of Scotland Yearbook, 1964, published online here: <https://www.facebook.com/GrandLodgeScotland/posts/the-tenets-of-freemasonry-brotherly-love-relief-and-truththe-principal-or-chief-/2007784835973754/>, dated November 19, 2018, accessed on 3/27/2021.]

If investigation is confined to the words of the ritual, only a partial explanation of the teaching will be obtained. The ritual itself is in many respects allegorical, but it is supplemented by symbols and underlying each symbol there is embodied some profound spiritual truth. In addition, there are actions made during the ceremonies and those actions have also a spiritual significance. This method of teaching corresponds closely to that of the ancient Egyptians, who held that for religious instruction words should always be accompanied by actions, so that sound and sight might mutually assist each other in making a lasting impression on the minds of the listeners.

[W.Bro. G.S. Shepherd-Jones, O.B.E., "What is Freemasonry? The Prestonian Lecture for 1953," Harry Carr, Ed., *The Collected Prestonian Lectures 1925-1960*. (London: Lewis Masonic, Second Edition, 1984), 377-378.]

"Knowing you know nothing" is one of the key concepts of Neoplatonism. In his essay on "Learned Ignorance" (1440), Nicholas of Cusa reiterated the ancient saying, introduced by Socrates to explain that, when attempting to solve a problem far removed from one's knowledge, for example relating to the nature of God, man must be ready to confess his inability to comprehend. A learned ignorance therefore is born of the awareness of the limits of human knowledge; if truth may be likened to a circle, human intellect is similar to a polygon inscribed inside the circle; and however much we increase the number of sides, these will never coincide with the circumference. In the same way, however, as much as knowledge may advance the human mind, it will never be in a position to fully comprehend the truth so precisely and in such a definitive manner. God is beyond human reason and may only be understood by means of conjectures, geometrical analogies that assist us in comprehending the differences between the finite and the infinite. As an example, straight lines and circles are different forms (finite), but if one extends a circle infinitely it becomes impossible to distinguish it from a straight line. Consequently, it may be affirmed that God, as an infinite being, is both one and the other, simultaneously straight line and circle. God therefore embraces an encounter of opposites; God is more and less, the centre and the circumference.

[Fabio Venzi, *Studies on Traditional Freemasonry*. (Hersham, Surrey, U.K.: Lewis Masonic, 2013), 138.]

The Apostle James says that every benefaction and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, who, of His own Will, begat us, *by means of the Word of Truth*; and the Wisdom from above is in man. Hermes says in *Asclepios*, "The Intelligence of the Divine Being, the consciousness of the Supreme God, is the only Truth; and this Truth cannot be discovered—no, nor so much as its Shadow—in this world full of illusion, of changeable appearances, and of error, where things are known only in the dimension of time." "*Truth is the Supreme Virtue, the Sovereign Good*," which is not obscured by matter, nor circumscribed by the body; the naked Good, evident, unalterable, august, immutable." "Look on only the Eternal and the Good as the Real. ... Nothing is real, save that which is identical with itself." "What, then, is the Primordial Reality?" "He, who is One and alone, O Tat, He who is not made of matter, nor in any body, who has neither colour, nor form, nor changes not, nor is transmuted, but Who always IS. ... Eternal is The Real: the other is a reflected Shadow." Elias Ashmole says, in *The Way to Bliss*, published in 1658, when he had been twelve years a Freemason, "The Minde and Wit of man is but a spark of the Divine and Great Minde." ...

The Truth that is great and mighty above all things, is Divine Wisdom immanent in the Deity, whereby He was deemed to have created the Universe.

[Arturo De Hoyos, Ed., *Albert Pike's Esoterika*. (Washington D.C.: The Scottish Rite Research Society, 2008), 231-232.]

MASONIC POP CULTURE

READ IT

Freemasonry: Material, Moral, and Mystical

By Tony Baker, PM

Lewis Masonic, U.K. 170 pages ©2020



This book explores three levels of *Meaning* in Masonic ceremonies, and has a chapter titled, “What does Freemasonry Mean by ‘Truth’”? The author argues that the superficial layers of meaning are easy to see—both for the Freemason and the outside world—but there is a deeper layer intended for Freemasons alone.

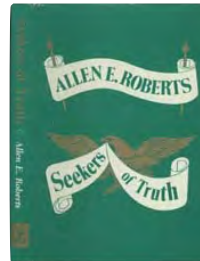
Material: An explanation of a passage of Masonic ritual may be about the origin of the practice among stonemasons. *Moral*: An elaboration of the meaning of [Masonic symbols] as being about basic morality. The rituals themselves, however, are fairly clear on this level of interpretation. *Mystical*: The ritual itself tells us that Freemasonry is “veiled in allegory”—so we know that the surface meaning of the words and actions is not what we are intended to get out of the ceremonies. But what deeper meaning might we be intended to hear? This question is addressed in depth by W.Bro. Baker, a Past Master of Quatuor Coronati [Research] Lodge No. 2076, London.

—Paraphrased from the publisher’s notes on the book’s back cover.

Seekers of Truth: The Story of the Philalethes Society 1928-1988

By Allen E. Roberts

Anchor Communications 225 pages ©1988



This is a detailed history of the Philalethes Society—its leaders and activities during its first 60 years. It is one of the world’s oldest and largest Masonic research societies, established in 1928 by a small group of Masonic writers who were some of the most renowned Freemasons of their day. The word “philalethes” (pronounced “fill ah LAY thees”) was used by ancient Greek writers and means “*a lover of truth*.” The word came into Masonic circles through alchemical mystic Robert Samber (1682–1745), who used the pseudonym Eugenius Philalethes. A Rite of Philaléthes was founded in Paris in 1772, devoted to the study of esotericism. Founding President Cyrus Willard wrote in 1937 that the Philalethes Society took its name from the Parisian Philaléthes. The Society’s quarterly journal is *Philalethes: The Review of Masonic Research and Letters*. It was established in 1946 “to effectively serve the needs of those in search of deeper insight into the history, rituals and symbolism of Freemasonry.”

—Paraphrased from <https://philalethes.myshopify.com/pages/history>, where subscription and other information is available.



HEAR IT

Short Talk Bulletin Podcast
The First Lesson (Truth)
16 minutes, Sept. 1961

A reading of the Short Talk Bulletin by Masonic author William Moseley Brown, PGM (Virginia) who writes, “Man’s sole responsibility in this world is to discover, to ascertain, and to know the TRUTH.”

<https://shorttalkbulletin.com/the-first-lesson-v39n9/>



HEAR IT

Whence Came You? Podcast
Truth and Freemasonry
Episode 0344
45 minutes, May 13, 2018

Robert Johnson in conversation with George R. Adams, 33° PGM (Washington D.C.) about Truth, Freemasonry and symbolism contained within the craft.

<https://www.stitcher.com/show/whence-came-you/episode/whence-came-you-0344-truth-and-freemasonry-54456567>

A TOAST TO TRUTH

BY M.W. BRO. ROBERT G. DAVIS, PGM (OKLAHOMA)

One thing we can affirm about truth is that it is always based on faith in an idea. I've always been fascinated by Socrates' bold statement that "an unexamined life is not worth living." He doesn't say that an unexamined life is "less meaningful than it could be." He clearly says that it is not worth living. Why would he make such a strong, unequivocal statement? Socrates believed the purpose of human life was to grow personally and spiritually. And he knew that man was unable to grow toward a greater understanding of his true nature if he did not take the time to examine and reflect upon his own life. He admonishes us to ask the questions of ourselves: What have we learned? How have we been taught? Who taught us? What do we know? How do we know that what we know is the truth? How do we validate our concepts of truth?

Socrates says an unexamined life takes us down a path of unconscious repetition. It is only the regularly examined life that allows us to seek out and find the truth of our own existence. Truth, then, becomes a quest that revolves around our life experience, our knowledge, our behaviors and our commitment always to be open to the change and growth which is possible within us. We are supposed to live a dynamic life. We intuitively know our perceptions of truth will be entirely different at age 15 than they are at age 30; and entirely different again at age 70, or even older. But whatever our perceptions, these are our truths.

My Brothers, I can assure you that you will never be completely fulfilled by assuming that living someone else's perceptions and expectations will bring you wisdom. It is a radical act to stop and contemplate our own life. But the many lessons given us in all the stages of Masonry show us very clearly and very profoundly that a life of self-examination is the only game that really matters. The discoveries we make on such a quest become us. We are what we think, after all.

Unlike all other animals, we can actually ponder our moral condition. So, the drama of our life is, in the end, played out between what we know to be right and how we choose to behave. We can rise above our natural instincts; and do what is unnatural until it becomes our nature. In Masonry, this means putting our principles ahead of our self. And I think, as Masons, this is our truth. It defines who we are and distinguishes us from the rest of the community. For us, the examined life is truly the only life worth living.

So, my brothers, here's to truth for you; and here's to truth for me. And, with the help of God, may we mostly agree.



December 2021 ~ TheResearchLodge.com ~ 9



Truth Comes First

By Rev. and Bro. Pierre Cushing

The original and eternal foundations of our moral and spiritual temple, those which uphold the completed structure, are no more than three, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. These three fundamental principles, these Three Principal Tenets, include the rest—everything which makes up the strength and beauty and majesty of our Temple and every degree of Ancient Craft Masonry through which we pass from Entered Apprentice to Royal Arch, is intended to impress them more deeply upon the mind and heart and conscience of the Craft. ...

They should never be omitted in the instructions of the First Degree, for they are the foundation of all the ethical and religious teaching of our order, the very bedrock on which it is built up, and they are the indispensable need of the world to-day, the foundation which must be laid anew in the hearts of men and of nations if civilization itself is to be saved from ultimate collapse and ruin. ...

They are stated in a certain order, but their true exposition requires us to reverse that order and think of them in the relation of cause and effect; that is, Truth, Brotherly Love and Relief. Truth comes then first of all. ... The truth of God's being and attributes and of the relation which He holds to us and we to Him becomes logically the first principal tenet of our Institution. And it is a twofold truth, for the Fatherhood involves the Brotherhood of man. ... From this great twofold truth proceeds the second tenet. Brotherly Love, by which we are taught to "regard the whole human race as one family, who as being created by one Almighty parent and inhabiting the same planet, ought to love, aid and support one another." ...

From sincere Brotherly Love, and as its very life and its express image, springs the last principal tenet: Relief. Under this head we are taught that to relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, especially on Masons, who are thus bound together by a chain of sincere affection. ... [But] does not this tenet broaden out into some thing larger than the relief of sickness and poverty? Does it not involve the great duty of Service, and the cordial support of every measure for the prevention of poverty and disease and for the right education of the youth of our land, and their uptraining into an intelligent, self-respecting, home-loving, flag-honoring and God-fearing citizenship? ...

It is only in the steadfast exemplification of these Three Principal Tenets that order, peace and happiness can be brought back to a darkened, distracted and troubled world, for every other virtue springs from them. They are not peculiar to Masonry and not Masonry's sole possession. But Masonry has adopted them from her Greatest Light, that sacred volume which she has chosen for the faith and practice of her members. Let us devote ourselves anew to their exemplification. Let us reconsecrate ourselves to the service of God. Let us uphold the institutions of religion and find therein the divine sanction of all law and the inspiration to every good work. Let Brotherly Love prevail and every moral and social virtue cement us. Let our feet be swift on errands of mercy wherever the opportunity presents itself, and let service be our watchword and inspiration.

[Excerpted from "The Three Principal Tenets," Rev. Pierre Cushing, Grand Chaplain, R.A.M., New York, in *Square and Compass*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, Denver, Colorado, May, 1923, 7-9

TRUTH

BY

**M.W.BRO. R. STEPHEN DOAN, PGM
[CALIFORNIA]**

Truth is the third of the Principal Tenets of Freemasonry. Masonic author, editor and lecturer William Preston explained:

Truth is a divine attribute, and the foundation of every virtue. To be good and true, is the first lesson we are taught in Masonry. On this theme we contemplate, and by its dictates endeavour to regulate our conduct: hence, influenced by this principle, hypocrisy and deceit are unknown, sincerity and plain-dealing distinguish us, and the heart and tongue join in promoting each other's welfare, and rejoicing in each other's prosperity.¹

This explanation and those preceding it for Brotherly Love and Relief were printed in Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry* as part of his first degree lecture. These explanations are among the earliest references to the Principal Tenets of Freemasonry in our work. They appear to have been an innovation (perhaps by Preston) since the publications of the ritual exposés, *Three Distinct Knocks* and *Jachin and Boaz*, in 1760 and 1762, respectively, which included no references to these tenets.

Without Truth, in the sense of trustworthiness and honesty, as used by Preston, Brotherly Love and Relief would likely decay and die from lack of mutuality. Brotherhood can be sustained only with all three. What makes me a Mason? My obligation, a mutual pledge of benefits and burdens; but there can be no mutuality, no real obligation among us, without Truth, without trust.

While trustworthiness and honesty are essential in our dealings with others, Truth is also something else and certainly more profound, if not more obscure in our understanding of it. Metaphysically, Truth is the ultimate reality of existence. In my view, the ultimate reality of existence is the harmony of the universe (or the Music of the Spheres, a concept attributed to Pythagoras), Hermetically represented in Freemasonry by the science of Geometry. Geometry measures and predicts how the Sun, Moon and other celestial bodies move in harmony and the sequence of seasons. It therefore becomes the symbol of not just that harmony but also its source, the Great Architect of the Universe, as Masons usually say, or the Great Geometrician, as I prefer. Geometry is therefore the basis of all Masonic symbolism. The Holy Bible is the rule and guide of our faith

and can lead us to Truth, and Geometry facilitates a unique and transcendent perspective to understand Truth and experience it at work in the World.

Understanding Truth, and a commitment to act in promotion of it, is Wisdom. We can access that Wisdom through observing harmony in nature and considering what those observations reveal about improving ourselves and our surroundings. The study of how Wisdom can be revealed through nature and reason is known as Hermeticism, after Hermes Trismegistus, the Greek name for Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom who was a patron of alchemy. Hermes was also the messenger of the gods, who made Wisdom available to humanity. Freemasonry is Hermetic.

A commitment to Truth in this metaphysical sense is among the requisites to become a Freemason. We confirm our readiness to be made a Mason by affirming in our application for the degrees a belief or trust in the existence of a Supreme Being and a belief or trust in a Future Existence. The essence of the Supreme Being is harmony, and it calls us to surrender part of our Free Will and choose to be part of that harmony, with a trust that our existence beyond the grave will return us to perfect and unending union with that harmony. Our understanding and commitment to metaphysical Truth deepens as we learn to subdue our passions and improve ourselves in Masonry, thereby bringing ourselves more closely into harmony with Truth.

This metaphysical view of the ultimate reality of existence is consistent with a simply stated aim of each of the three Religions of the Book:

Judaism: Follow the law. Christianity: Love one another. Islam: Submit to the Divine.

Although approached differently, each is founded on a commitment to live in harmony with a higher power. Humans experience this harmony as love: a well-being which passes all understanding.

Hellenistic Jews and early Christians used a non-Masonic metaphor for this ultimate reality: the *Logos*, a Greek word sometimes translated into English as "the Word," a force emitting from the Creator, drawing Creation back into harmony with the Creator, a perfect visual for *Musica Universalis*, the Music or Harmony of the Spheres.

¹ William Preston, *Illustrations of Masonry* (8th ed.). (London: G. and T. Wilkie, 1792), 54.

SYMBOLOLOGY

THE GODDESSES OF TRUTH

BY BRO. JAIME PAUL LAMB



Prudentia by Nicolaus Vanni
1762



Veritas, Goddess of Truth
Artist Unknown

Not only is truth one of the three grand principles of Freemasonry (along with brotherly love and relief), but it is also one of the three transcendentals, or properties of being, first addressed in classical philosophy: *truth*, *beauty* and *goodness*. The implication, from this perspective, is that truth is both beautiful and good; truth is *beautiful* in that it analogously conforms to some of the same criteria by which we appreciate the physical form (harmony, symmetry, balance, elegance, etc.); and it is *good* in that it is attractive, desirable and agreeable. Whereas, beauty and goodness correspond to aesthetics and ethics, respectively, truth is apprehended by the philosophical disciplines of logic and epistemology—yet it may be argued that each of the three transcendentals must also partake of the qualities of the other two. Bearing this in mind, and knowing the ancients' tendency to concretize otherwise abstract concepts, how might truth be represented?

Over the millennia, the concept of truth has been personified in the form of a goddess. From the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations to the Greek and Roman, truth has been consistently embodied by a woman. One of the reasons why truth has been represented by the female form may be due to its simultaneous exemplification of the beautiful and the good, as proposed above. It is the purpose of the present article to take a closer look at the myths and symbolism of these goddesses to see if they can enrich our understanding of the (increasingly) elusive concept of truth.

Among the earliest known goddesses of truth, we encounter the Sumerian Kittu, whose very name means “truth.”¹ She was said to be the daughter of the Sun god, Utu, predecessor of the Akkadian Shamash, and Sherida, goddess of beauty and sexual love. Interestingly, we see the *goodness* and light of the Sun, passed through the prism of *beauty*, producing *truth*. Taken together, Kittu and her brother Misharu, the Sumerian god of law, formed the concept of justice—which may be said to be the product of truth and law.²

Significantly, the goddess Ma'at, herself a personification of truth, was also the daughter of a Sun god, Re.³ Encountering this sequence in both the Mesopotamian and Egyptian panthea leads us to suspect the presence of an early symbolic commentary on the application of the (solar) light of reason producing truth—unfolding in a sort of conceptual heredity. Ma'at also represents balance, harmony and order—qualities integral to beauty—and was the wife of Thoth, god of wisdom; truth and wisdom being complimentary. Egyptian gods were typically contrasted by an opposing deity; Isfet, goddess of lies, chaos and violence, being the antithesis of Ma'at.⁴ The goddess' ever-present ostrich feather, known as the “Feather of Truth” in the Duat's Hall of Judgement, would become the hieroglyph denoting “truth.”

Aletheia, the ancient Greek goddess of truth, is often said to be the daughter of Zeus. However, there is a more interesting parentage found elsewhere. According to Aesop's *Fables*, Aletheia was crafted by the Titanic fire god Prometheus, known for stealing fire from the gods and bestowing it upon humanity.⁵ This is an interesting take on her origin, in that the Promethean "fire" may be seen as the allegorical light of consciousness and reason, the product of which is the ability to discern the truth. As an abstract concept, *aletheia*, meaning "truth" or "disclosure", was employed in ancient Greek philosophical discourse, a usage that was further developed in the 20th century in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. As in the case of the Egyptian Ma'at, Aletheia was contrasted with *lethe*, meaning "forgetfulness" or "oblivion."⁶

Veritas, whose name also means "truth" in Classical Latin, was the Roman goddess of truth. She was said to be either the daughter of Saturn or, in the manner of Aletheia, fashioned by Prometheus.⁷ Like many deities in the Roman pantheon, she shares much with her Greek predecessor. Veritas, who was often depicted holding a hand mirror, was said to have lived in a well.⁸ The hand mirror alludes to the clarity gained by self-reflection, while the depth and inaccessibility of the well symbolizes the elusive nature of truth. Under the epithet *Nuda Veritas*, she appeared as a naked virgin—thereby, like many of the goddesses of truth, representing a synthesis of the good and the beautiful.

Veritas was sometimes depicted holding a book, either in her lap or clutched to her breast; this, perhaps, being an allusion to the necessity of truth to the proper functionality of the law, as well as the adherence to it. In a similar, though slightly more esoteric context, the *Torah* (meaning "law" in Hebrew) is shown in the lap of the Tarot's High Priestess, just as the Volume of Sacred Law is to be regarded as the Great Light in the Masonic profession; and to be considered as "the unerring standard of truth and justice."⁹

As we have seen, truth is commonly personified as a woman in ancient and classical mythology; and these personifications also seem to partake of the two other properties of being: the good and the beautiful. Solar light and fire also figure prominently, as they pertain to symbolic Light, in the Masonic sense. It is also noteworthy that the idea of truth, as embodied in myth, is contrasted with antithetical concepts such as dishonesty, forgetfulness and chaos.

¹ Glenn S. Holland, *Gods in the Desert: Religions of the Ancient Near East*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 115.

² Joshua J. Mark, "The Mesopotamian Pantheon," *World History Encyclopedia*, 2/25/2011. Retrieved at: <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/221/the-mesopotamian-pantheon/> on 2/26/2021.

³ "Maat". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved at: www.britannica.com on 2/26/2021.

⁴ Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*. (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 34.

⁵ Aesop. *Fables*, 530. Phaedrus, Appendix 5.

⁶ Pindar. "First Olympian Ode" 11.6, 5th c. BCE.

⁷ Samuel L. Macey, *Patriarchs of Time: Dualism in Saturn-Cronus, Father Time, the Watchmaker God, and Father Christmas*. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 34–36.

⁸ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, IX. Perseus Project. (Medford, MA: Tufts University Press), 72.

⁹ *Monitor and Officers' Manual*. (San Francisco, CA: Grand Lodge of California F.& A.M.), 21.



Ma'at the Egyptian goddess of truth, Wall Painting Inside the tomb of Nefertari



Time Saving Truth From Falsehood and Envy by Francois Lemoyne (1737)



Time Unveiling Truth, by Jean Francois de Troy (1733)

Short Talk Bulletin: TRUTH

By Bro. Carl H. Claudy

It is an odd fact that Freemasonry's direct teaching in regard to truth is less important than her indirect teaching. In the Entered Apprentice's lecture, we learn of truth as "the foundation of every virtue. To be good and true is the first lesson," etc. But these teachings regarding the third principal tenet are of truth in its narrower and more restricted sense—the use of the word as a synonym for sincerity, right dealing, absence of deceit, straightforwardness.

Philosophers distinguish several varieties of truth—logical truth, the conformity of reasoning to premises; ontological, metaphysical or transcendental truth—the doctrine that the existence of Deity is proved by the very idea of His existence; absolute truth—the reality behind the appearance or idea.

These conceptions of truth have led to the more common use of the word, as that which is believed to be so, as distinct from that which is known to be opposite of the fact. The witness who swears to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, indicates no more than his intention to state that which is known to him, believed by him; that he will not intentionally deceive. A witness may testify to something which is not a fact and yet be un-perjured, provided it is a fact to *him*. A man ignorant of astronomy may truthfully testify that the sun moves from east to west between morning and night. His testimony is the truth as he knows it. That actually the earth moves beneath the sun, while the sun stands still, does not make him untruthful. ...

The Entered Apprentice lecture teaches of truth as opposed to deceit, truth as a foundation of character, truth in the moral sense. In this sense truth really is the foundation of every virtue. There is no justice without truth; there is no philanthropy without truth; there can be no self-sacrifice, no bravery, no rectitude—no virtue of any kind—without a foundation in that which is sincere and honest, as opposed to that which is lying and deceitful. This aspect of truth is only a part of the third principal tenet. It is vitally important, it must be learned, pondered and observed, but it compares with the absolute Masonic truth as compares the moon to the sun.

To grasp the idea of absolute truth is not given to many. All abstract ideas require real mental labor to formulate. The thought of fundamental, unchangeable, inescapable verities behind the form, substance and phenomena of life, is not easy. Yet difficulty but makes the idea the more precious when it does become a part of a Freemason's mental concepts.

A manufacturer is to make a table. Before he puts

pencil to paper, he forms an idea of what a table looks like. He reduces this idea to a drawing and specifications; it then becomes an idea made manifest, so that others can understand it. But it is not yet a table. When the woodworker constructs the table from materials, cutting and fitting them from the plans, the idea becomes embodied. The table is now all three—idea, idea manifest, and idea embodied. To the observer it is possessed of form and substance, is hard, varnished, throws a shadow and can support other objects—it is, in fact, a table.

The absolute truth of the table is probably quite different. For all its seeming solidity and weight, we know that it is far more space than matter. We know that its atoms are composed of electrons, whirling at inconceivable speeds about a central proton, and that if we could see it as it *really* is, not as it appears to human senses, it would be a collection of bounding, moving, swinging, revolving particles of electricity, the force of which, if all were suddenly let loose, would be sufficient to wreck a city.

But not a single scientist can yet even imagine what an electron *really* is—the absolute truth of it escapes the laboratory.

Freemasonry is not at all concerned with proving the verity of Deity. She accepts a Great Architect as truth. But as we have seen, truth has more than one Classification. The absolute truth of Deity can no more be known to man on earth than the absolute reality of the table can be realized by those who use it. Our perception of the world and life is sense bound. From seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling, we reason, think and believe. Many aspects of physical things do not touch our five senses—for instance, the speed of the electron, the size of the atom. And unimaginable aspects of Deity cannot enter our minds, because finite mind can never comprehend that which is infinite.

Freemasonry teaches that the True Word was lost. She offers a substitute. To search for That Which Was Lost is the reason for Masonic life. While we know that the search must be as fruitless as it must be endless, we find joy and usefulness in the effort, not in the results. Important to the Freemason is not the comprehension of the idea of the absolute, but that he seeks it in his conception of the Most High.

The great Freemason, Lessing, said "Pure truth is for God alone"—phrasing in six words both the impossibility of mortals ever finding it, and the reason we should seek it! Cicero, too, knew why we must seek. When he said: "Our minds possess, by nature, an

insatiable desire to know the truth” he uttered a truism, no matter what aspect of truth is considered. Chesterfield capped them both with his famous “Every man seeks for truth—God, only, knows who finds it.”

“Our ancient friend and brother, the great Pythagoras” was poet, philosopher and scientist when he stated, “Truth is so great a perfection that if God would render himself visible to man, he would choose light for his body and truth for his soul.”

Few men are able to tell others of the eternal verities, even if, at long last, they win them. To “tell the truth,” meaning to state the fact or belief as known, is easy. But to tell the truth unto men is like singing music to the tone deaf, teaching differential calculus to a six year old child, or speaking in a language the hearer does not understand. He who even thinks he knows the Lost Word may never tell it—no syllables formed by mortal tongue may speak it. Listen to John Ruskin, sage of sages: “Childhood often holds a truth with its feeble fingers which the grasp of manhood cannot retain—which it is the pride of utmost age to recover.” The very young and the very old know that which they cannot tell to us of the middle years. As Freemasons, we know a truth we cannot tell even to the initiate, who must find it for himself in the midst of our symbols and our teachings.

The Great Light holds a thousand truths—and one great truth. Alas, that some are so blinded to the latter that, finding an apparent failure of conformity between page and page, they see not the truth behind. ... *Of course* in this mighty literature are self-contradictions; *of course* different prophets, historians, singers and inspired leaders saw different aspects of the truths they taught, and so taught differently. ... The *real* truth, the *whole* truth—the *absolute truth*, is to be found in no verse, chapter or book, but in the book of books as a whole.

From the beginning of time man has attempted to visualize that which he cannot imagine! He would put in words, write upon paper, limn on canvass, shout to the housetops, that which he cannot conceive. What is the conventional idea of heaven? Place of golden streets, flowing with milk and honey! Why? Because gold is precious and beautiful, and milk and honey good, and hard for the lowly and the poor to get. Injustice oppressed man for centuries; justice became a hope. A just judge, no matter how severe, was far better than an unjust judge. Hence, we have an early conception of God as a strict, stern, implacable judge. Later on—much later—came the idea of a merciful judge, a loving, kindly, compassionate father.

As man has grown and learned, so has his conception of the truth of the Great Architect grown more beautiful. Will any contend that man is perfect? Nay, man humble or exalted, man learned or ignorant, man wise or foolish, cannot conceive the unthinkable majesty and beauty, the stupendous power and glory, the unphraseable marvel, which must be the absolute truth of the Great Architect.

The dearest hope of all mankind, since the first man cried the birth cry, was agonized down the centuries by Job: “If a man die, Shall he live again?” And the centuries have given a hundred answers. Immortality in men’s minds is as different as the men! To some it is rest; to others opportunity to do all that

“The great
Freemason,
Lessing,
said ‘Pure
truth is for
God
alone’...”

life denied them; to some it is pleasure; to others it is knowledge; to yet others it is formless, ageless, boundless contemplation, the Nirvana of the Buddhist. But no thinking man believes that his most glorious conception of immortality can compare to whatever may be the absolute truth of that magnificent belief.

Concrete truths are all relative; absolute truth is unchanging. We think of men as good or bad, moral or unethical, wise or ignorant, only as compared to others. Absolute goodness, morality, wisdom, we cannot know here, since here we cannot know the absolute truth of anything.

But we may search for it! We may so order our lives, so read the Great Light, so follow the teachings of the ancient Craft, that our quest of That Which Was Lost brings us one step nearer to the barrier which forever separates mortal eyes from immortal truth.

That he who quests earnestly and seeks sincerely will, at long last, pass that barrier and with his own eyes see the absolute, is the magnificent truth of Freemasonry.

So mote it be!

[Carl H. Claudy, “Truth,” *The Short Talk Bulletins I*, Vol. 10, No. 9, August, 1932. (Burtonsville, MD: The Masonic Service Association of North America, 2013), S. Brent Morris, Ed., 428-30.]

The Masonic Quest for Truth

By C. Douglas Russell

In last year's *Fraternal Review* series on the Four Cardinal Virtues—in which it was noted that Truth is the foundation of all the Masonic Virtues—I quoted Bro. George Steinmetz: "... all the truths of Freemasonry are not elucidated in exact chronological order, but are found scattered and hidden throughout the ritual and actual workings of the Lodge."¹ Lessons about the Virtues, and about Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, are learned through participation in the ceremonies and other activities of the lodge, as well as by individual study and contemplation. Because Masonic teachings are "scattered and hidden," and "veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols," initiation into our Craft marks the beginning of a journey of discovery for each individual Freemason—a personal and spiritual quest for ever-deepening knowledge and understanding of truths about himself, nature and the universe, and about the Supreme Being who created us and our world.

The spiritual qualities in man are reflections of the attributes of our Divine Creator. They are the highest human values that motivate our best behavior, presented in Masonic teachings as virtues,

Spectrum of Consciousness	Human Nature	Features
<i>transpersonal</i> Higher Self	spirit	<i>virtue</i> spirituality intuition
<i>existential</i> personal self	mind	intentionality imagination abstract thinking
<i>ego</i> self-image		beliefs & attitudes concrete thinking
	feelings	feelings, desires
	body	instincts, appetites, the five senses

tenets, landmarks, and fundamental principles. The diagram above illustrates a framework for thinking about these values based on integral psychology, introduced in our 2020 series on the Four Cardinal Virtues. Integral psychology posits a spectrum of identity and awareness, from the most restricted, the ego level, through the existential level of the personal self, into the most expanded sense of identity, the Higher Self or Soul. Truth is experienced differently at each of these levels.

An integral approach acknowledges both subjective

immortality. Such a man has sensed that there is a divine spark within him. It may take the form of a healthy conscience, an urge to become a better man, or belief in a connection to a higher power beyond ego and personal truth. Integral psychology acknowledges this divine spark, or spiritual level, of identity as the Higher Self or Soul. It is up to each brother to find his own path toward self-improvement, to explore and interpret Masonic teachings, and find truth in his own way. Let us then approach Truth in Masonry by raising questions, by finding suggestions in ritual for seeking Truth, and by using the mysterious symbols shown here and on the facing page to shed light on the Masonic quest for Spiritual and Absolute Truth.



The image above is described by Bro. Manly P. Hall as "... the double, or interlaced, triangle of Solomon, represented by the two Ancients of the Qabbalah ... the God of Light and the God of Reflections. Out of the great Sea of Eternity rise the

head and shoulders of the Ancient and Holy One, whose inverted image is mirrored in the Deep. Thus, the reflection of Deity is ever visible in Nature, but man mistakes the shadow for the substance. As the universe is the reflection of the Ancient One, so the human body is the reflection, or inverted image, of man's spirit, and the interlaced triangles fittingly portray the combination of spiritual and material elements entering into the Constitution of humanity." If what we see in Nature is but a reflection or a shadow of our Creator, then how will we come to know the Divine as it truly is? The language of our ritual suggests that the physical world is symbolic of that sacred reality, and that we can learn about it by studying sacred texts and the sciences, and through contemplation.

Ritual language seems to invite us to seek the light of Truth about the Masonic Tenets by studying and interpreting Masonic symbolism. ("Tools and implements of architecture most expressive are selected by the Fraternity to imprint upon the memory wise and serious truths; and thus, through the succession of ages, are transmitted unimpaired the most excellent tenets of our Institution.") And as we experience the degrees being performed repeatedly, we internalize the truths they are meant to convey. ("As [Masonry's] principles and mystic ceremonies are regularly developed and illustrated, it is intended and hoped that they will make a deep and lasting impression upon your mind.")

Each Mason is also urged to seek truth in spiritual teachings of his choice. ("As a Mason, you are to regard the Volume of the Sacred Law as the great Light in your profession; to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice; and to regulate your actions by the divine precepts it contains.") At the close of every lodge meeting, we Masons pray that the Supreme Being "influence our hearts and minds" that "we may each one of us ... with reverence study and obey the laws which Thou hast given us in Thy Holy Word."

Masons are to seek further truth through "study of the liberal arts and sciences, especially the noble science of Geometry, which forms the basis of Freemasonry, and which, being of a divine and moral nature, is enriched with the most useful knowledge." Through scientific study—the systematic study of

nature—"we discover the power, wisdom and goodness of the Great Artificer of the Universe, and view with delight the proportions which connect this vast machine."

"Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. To be good and true is the first lesson we are taught in Masonry. On this theme we contemplate, and by its dictates endeavor to regulate our conduct." Yes, Masons are instructed to contemplate, which is to focus the mind and to think deeply: about the divine and fundamental nature of truth; and about *being* true: that is, honorable, virtuous, trustworthy and honest. Contemplation can take us beyond focusing on symbols and ideas *about* Truth into a *direct experience* of Truth. By identifying as the Higher Self we can become momentarily blended into Absolute Truth itself. Wor. Brother W.L. Wilmshurst describes this experience in the following words. "True self-knowledge is unobstructed conscious union of the human spirit with God and the realization of their identity. In that identic union, the unreal, superficial selves have become obliterated. The sense of personality is lost, merged in the impersonal and universal. The little ego is assumed into the great All, and knows as It knows. Man realizes his own inherent ultimate divinity, and thenceforth lives and acts no longer as a separate individual, with an independent will, but in integration with the Divine Life and Will, whose instrument he becomes, whose purposes he thenceforth serves."

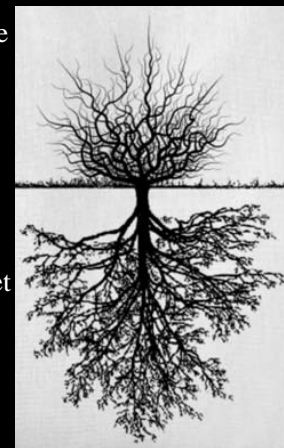
This exalted state of awareness might be perceived as a lofty sense of spiritual identity; but on a personal or ego level, it might seem like the opposite: a complete loss of personal identity. This is reminiscent of the image on the facing page, where the spiritual world is the mirror image of our everyday world. In daily life on earth, we see but shadows, or reflections, of the world inhabited by the God of Light who created us. In the sacred space of Absolute Truth, our sense of truth and reality is reversed.

This contemplative encounter with the mysteries of Absolute Truth is portrayed symbolically in an ancient Sanskrit text as an upside down tree—at right. "There is an eternal tree called the Ashvattha, which has its roots above and its branches below. Its luminous root is called Brahman, the Supreme Reality, and it alone is beyond death. Everything that exists is rooted in that point. There is nothing else beyond it. The Upanishad [a Hindu Volume of Sacred Law] encourages us to find the still point—the luminous root of the Ashvattha tree—in ourselves."

This image echoes other ideas about the great

difference in the truths (or realities) of the world of appearances and those of the world of the spirit. For example, we tend to see ourselves as physical beings, or personalities, who sometimes have spiritual experiences as a Soul or Higher Self; but theosophists see the reverse. "It is customary to speak of man as having a soul. Theosophy, as the result of direct investigation, reverses that dictum, and states that man is a soul, and has a body—in fact several bodies, which are his vehicles and instruments in various worlds." Such a viewpoint suggests that growth in self-awareness isn't only about personal growth or moral development. It can also involve recognition of a Spiritual Truth, a deeper sense of identity within, as a Higher Self—a spark of the Divine that partakes of Absolute Truth. This is reminiscent of a maxim found in Masonic writings, and seen in various forms in ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, and early Christian and Islamic texts. "Know thyself, and thou shalt know the universe and God."

Let's close with this allegory, illustrating such views of Spiritual and Absolute Truth: "A legend from the Ancient East ... told of a council of the gods, which was called to discuss where they should hide Man's Divinity. One suggested that it should be carried to the other side of the Earth and buried; but it was pointed out that Man is a great explorer and that he might find the lost treasure on the other side of the Earth. Another proposed that it be dropped into the depths of the deepest ocean; but the same fear was expressed, that Man in his insatiable curiosity, might dive deep enough to find it even there. Finally, after a long silence, the oldest and wisest of the gods said: 'Let us hide it deep within Man himself, he will never even think to look for it there!' And it was so agreed, all seeing at once the wise and subtle strategy."



¹ Space is lacking for this essay's 19 footnotes, available from dougrussell416@gmail.com by request.

FINAL WORD

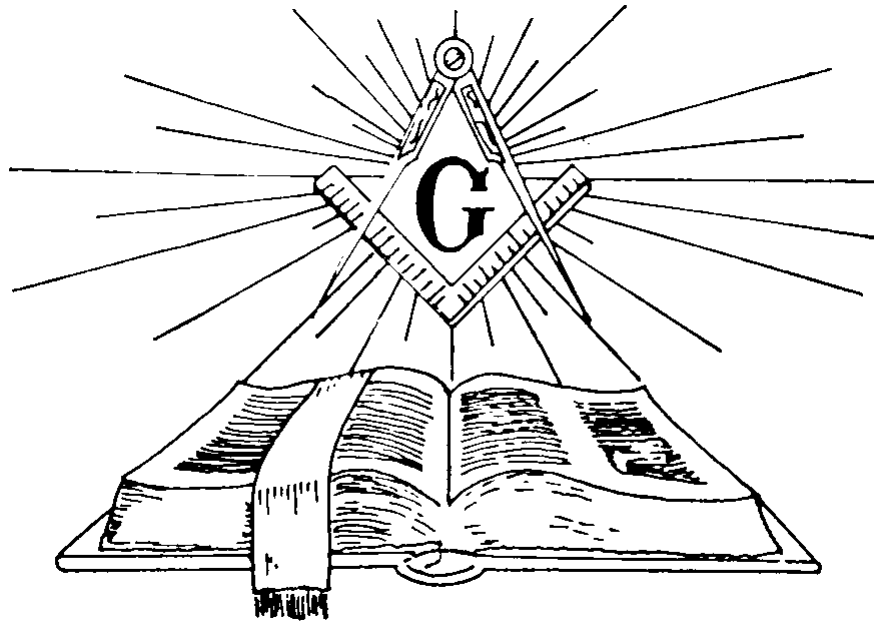


Bro. Manly P. Hall

Southern California Research Lodge, P.O. Box 3487, South Pasadena, California 91031

Freemasonry is a philosophy which is essentially creedless. It is the truer for it. Its brothers bow to truth regardless of the bearer; they serve light, instead of wrangling over the one who brings it. In this way they prove that they are seeking to know better the will and dictates of the Invincible One. No truer religion exists than that of world comradeship and brotherhood, for the purpose of glorifying one God and building for Him a temple of constructive attitude and noble character.

[Manly P. Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*. (New York: Tarcher/Penguin, 2006, first published 1923), 18.]





Montezuma Lodge #1 AF&AM
431 Paseo de Peralta
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-1958
Just west of the Scottish Rite Temple

Secretary
Don Helberg, PM
Lodge Office: 505-982-0971
Home: 505-471-0168
email: hiram@montezumalodge.org

Editor
Robert H. Sherman, PM
email: rhsjjs@comcast.net

April Dinner Menu



Join us on April 4th for dinner at 5:30 PM before the stated meeting. The entire family is invited. Our chefs have planned an excellent menu. If you have any dietary restrictions please contact the secretary so that we may arrange suitable alternatives.

Chicken Cacciatore
Vegetables
Tossed Salad
Garlic Bread
Desserts
Coffee, tea, and sodas



Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Santa Fe, N.M.
Permit No. 62

Return Service Requested

2022 Officers

Worshipful Master: - Charles A. Hannaford
(H): (505) 466-2732

Senior Warden - Christopher J. Williams
(C) (208) 995-6922

Junior Warden - Jose M. Montano
(C) (505) 692-9183

Treasurer - Patrick J. Varela
(H): (505) 471-2555

Secretary - Don L. Helberg, PDDGM
(H): (505) 471-0168

Lodge Office: (505) 982-0971
Email: hiram@montezumalodge.org

Chaplain - Robert H. Sherman, PDDGM
(H): (505) 983-9508

Senior Deacon - Jee W. Whang
(C) (704) 654-1270

Junior Deacon - Timothy R. Gilmore
(H) (505) 466-2230

Senior Steward - Gregory O Pringle

Junior Steward -

Marshal: - Alfonso J. Rodriguez
(C) 505-501-0078

Tyler: - Jerry Noedel, PM

What is the purpose of Freemasonry?

“To admit, make and pass Freemasons according to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Grand Lodge. To advance the moral and social interests of its membership; to foster good citizenship, honest industry and upright living; to cultivate the exercise of charity in its best and broadest sense; to assist the widows and orphans of its deceased members; to stimulate friendship, harmony and Brotherly love and generally to promote, in its own way, the happiness of mankind — it is a fraternity of good men, linked together by honorable and indissoluble bonds, to accomplish these noble purposes, eschewing all interests in factional politics and sectarian religion and free from the dictation of both.”

For more information about Masonry:

- ☐ Call the Lodge at 982-0971
- ☐ Stop by the Lodge
- ☐ Visit our website @
www.montezumalodge.org
- ☐ Ask any Mason