

THE MASON IN BUSINESS

THE majority of those people who cavil at the existence of Masonry as a "secret society" (which strictly speaking it is not) in their midst are not in the least interested in its religious aspects at all. That was made clear in the correspondence columns of those newspapers which recently gave publicity to *Darkness Visible*. It is open to question whether Mr. Hannah is as interested in religion as he pretends to be, as he seems to have done very little in his life so far to promote it, but that is by the way.

There are certainly those who imagine that Masonry is "good for business" and also that in certain professions and occupations good standing in the Lodge is the key to promotion. There are unworthy suspicions that the Craft is behind the scenes exerting an undue influence in the affairs of the nation, despite its many and sincere protestations of being entirely non-political. Mr. Fred Longden, a Birmingham Member of Parliament, actually had the temerity to ask a question in the House of Commons in 1951 asking the then Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee) to set up an inquiry. The result was the same as that accorded to Dr. Box in Convocation, a dignified refusal to even appear to put an ancient and honourable institution in the dock. But Mr. Longden is reported to have said to the *Birmingham Gazette* (June 23, 1952) that although he was not considering raising the matter again in the near future,

"things should come to the boil before anything more is done."

As my intention in writing this book is to prevent anything so foolish or disastrous as an anti-Masonic agitation in Church or State "coming to the boil", Mr. Longden's secular misgivings must also be refuted and dismissed.

As regards Mr. Longden personally I have nothing to say, for I do not know him; he is obviously a successful and without doubt a thoroughly sincere and well-meaning man. Yet I am impressed by the fact that the majority of those who are suspicious of Freemasonry are small and unsuccessful men, burdened with a sense of inferiority, who in a spirit of resentful jealousy find in the Craft a scape-goat against which to harbour resentment and on which to cast the blame for failures. Anti-Masonry in this respect is akin to anti-Semitism, for the Jews, too, are often our superiors in the world of business and commerce.

Freemasonry represents an aristocracy and an élite, not of race, for Jew and Gentile are equals in the Lodge, not of birth, for here is the true democracy and brotherhood which ignores such accidents as rank, nor yet of money, for rich and poor are welcomed beneath our banners without distinction and without snobbery. We are, however, a picked aristocracy of honourable men, for no one known to be otherwise has the slightest chance of being admitted. One of the Solemn Obligations indeed pledges the newly-made Mason to particular caution in this respect should he have

occasion to recommend anyone for the high privilege of Initiation. Our formularies and ritual, too, conduce to the maintaining of the highest standards of personal integrity. Surely then it is not to be wondered at, but rather rejoiced in, that Freemasons are so often found filling positions of the very highest distinction in the land.

Is it then surprising, or in any way deleterious to the best interests of the country, if Masons tend to give a certain degree of preference in their dealings to their own Brothers in the Craft! Were I a potential employer with a vacancy to fill, if there were several applicants who appeared equally well qualified and one were a Mason, I should most certainly select him, for quite apart that I am under oath to do so in these circumstances, there is the perfectly reasonable consideration that I should have this added guarantee of thereby choosing an honourable man who would perform his duties faithfully and conscientiously, and who is also under oath to support me in all my laudable undertakings. Were I a business man, particularly in these days of lowered commercial morals, I should most certainly prefer to do business with one whom I could similarly trust to act with me on the square. Were I Prime Minister I should prefer my colleagues in the Cabinet to be also my brethren, were they equally experienced in their tasks, for this would give me added confidence in their reliability and sense of public responsibility. Were I a Bishop or a patron of livings, I should naturally seek out Masonic incumbents,

thereby ensuring that I would be preferring clergymen of tolerant and liberal views and wider spirituality. There is nothing sinister in this, for it is only sound common-sense. None but the petty-minded and the failures will object. One may feel sorry for them, but it is in the interests of no one, least of all of themselves, that their petty resentments should carry weight.

There is always a tendency for like to favour like, and Freemasons who deny, or even apologise for, the fact that this may frequently hold good in the Craft are being less than candid. Jews are known to be extremely clannish in doing business only with each other. The clergyman will of course tend to do his shopping with a regular member of his flock rather than with a known atheist. One does not often hear complaints of this. Yet Masonry, in so far as it expresses a preference for dealings among its own fraternity, should surely incur less reason for censure, for here is a brotherhood, not of creed, not of race, but a brotherhood of honour.

The accusation that men come into Masonry because it is good for business, however, is an aspersion that is both unworthy and untrue. Moreover, it is an accusation that is very easily refuted, for every Candidate must solemnly affirm that he offers himself "uninfluenced by mercenary or other unworthy motive" and from "a favourable opinion preconceived of the Institution, a general desire of knowledge, and a sincere wish to render himself more extensively serviceable to his fellow-creatures." If he is unable to make such an affirmation, he is not eligible for Initiation. Masons

enter the Craft to give, not to get, and if he finds afterwards that certain material benefits accrue as well as spiritual benefits, it is no more than his just deserts. It is but another case of "seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." The labourer is worthy of his hire.

THE MASON IN POLITICS

THE more lurid attacks on Freemasonry have often made much of Masonic influence in shaping the French Revolution to support the claim that Masonry is part of a world-wide revolutionary conspiracy. It is perhaps curious that none of the better-known historians of that great upheaval deign even to mention it as a contributory feature, yet it is undeniably true that French Masons to this day claim the credit for having inspired it. Certain Masonic emblems appeared on banners as emblems of the revolution, and the celebrated motto *liberté, égalité, fraternité* was a familiar one in the French Lodges.

English Masons claim, and quite rightly, that the Continental Grand Orient has always been more politically minded than the Grand Lodges of English-speaking countries. That the Grand Orient has long been anti-clerical (and the French Revolution was as much anti-clerical as political) is entirely the fault of the insane blindness of the Popes, who, unwilling to tolerate any society which they could not completely dominate and control, outlawed a body which, rightly and respectfully treated, might have become their most powerful ally. To the extent that the Revolution in France was Mason-inspired, then, the responsibility can be laid fairly and squarely with the Vatican, and nowhere else. In England we may indeed be profoundly thankful that such a tragedy was averted, indeed never even contemplated.

This fact has had a profound effect on our destinies. The emergence of England from feudalism to democracy and freedom has been a gradual, not a revolutionary progress. The development of the monarchy from absolutism by divine right to constitutional rule was advanced in England a century ahead of any country in Europe. Freemasonry in this country, ever standing foursquare for democracy and liberty, working in closest harmony with Church and throne, has never been tempted to support any policy of revolution or violence, it has rather played its part behind the scenes in inspiring by its lofty ideals expressed through its individual members every movement that has stood for the common welfare of the people.

It is perfectly true that today the Grand Lodges will have nothing to do with the Grand Orient of France. The reason for this, however, has no connection with politics. The Grand Orient ceased to regard belief in the Great Architect as the first and indispensable landmark of the Order, hence relations were severed finally and completely. This, however, only came about in 1878, roughly a century after the French Revolution, when relations had been fraternal and amicable.

Were England ever to groan under a tyranny as oppressive and cruel as France suffered under the Bourbons, were the spirit of liberty, equality, and fraternity ever to become eclipsed in a dark night of cruelty and totalitarianism, Freemasonry would ever keep alight a beacon of hope, would animate and inspire through its brethren any movement that might

throw off such a yoke, and re-establish justice and freedom. Masonry in England is non-political, because thank God there is no need for us to be political, and when all the great parties of our parliamentary democracy are agreed on these fundamental principles, Masons may support which they choose, and the Craft plays no part. Elsewhere it may be a different story. In Ireland as long as there is a danger of a backward, illiberal, and Popish state perpetrating the injustice of absorbing free Protestant Britons who have no wish to be absorbed, there can be little doubt on which side the influence of Freemasons is to be felt.

It is, then, supremely ridiculous to talk of Freemasonry as in any sense revolutionary or political. The influence of Freemasons, wholly sane, liberal, free, and democratic, runs like a thread of gold through the life of our country, ever on the side of the angels, ever standing foursquare for justice, truth—and God.

THE MASON AND THE JEW

As it is my sincere hope and ambition that this book may contribute to the annihilation for all time of ignorant and carping criticisms, and may help to establish in the eyes of the outside Freemasonry as the moral and spiritual backbone of our nation, there is a line of attack from another angle which may well be considered before its contemptuous dismissal. Mr. Hannah does not specifically allude to it, but it would not surprise me in the least if it were not a strong contributory factor motivating his unworthy attack.

I refer (with distaste) to the obviously absurd yet far from insignificant school of thought which seeks to link Freemasonry with Jewish political Zionism, and the forces of world revolution, and which regards it as an organ of some secret *imperium in imperio*. Roman Catholics, particularly of the Irish variety, are among the worst offenders here, and the absurdity of the late Fr. Cahill's *Freemasonry and the Anti-Christian Movement* is only equalled by the writings of his successor Fr. Fahey. In England this school of thought is still kept alive by certain unsavoury remnants of pre-war anti-Semitic fascist groups.

Supporting this point of view is the fact that Freemasonry is several times mentioned as an instrument of policy in the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. For the benefit of those who have never heard of this strange document I might point out that it purports to

be the highly secret minutes of a Jewish conspiracy for world domination, economic and political, and for the enslavement of the Gentiles. The document first appeared in Russia, published by one Serge Nilus in 1905, who is alleged to have brought it from Switzerland. It attracted very little interest until translated into English by Victor Marsden in 1922, when it was the subject of a series of articles in the *Morning Post*. It was at first generally believed that Nilus himself had fabricated the Protocols as a piece of clumsy anti-semitic propaganda; later research, however, in a refutation which appeared in the *Times*, established beyond all doubt that they were copied from the book of Maurice Joly, *Dialogues aux Enfers entre Machiavel et Montesquieu* which had been published as early as 1864. No sensible person has taken the Protocols seriously since this overwhelming refutation.

Those whose prejudice blinds them into ignoring this refutation and who still regard them as authentic profess to see a certain degree of literal fulfilment of certain prophecies in the unhappy events that have befallen the world since their publication. Twisting facts to fit a pattern of vague apocalyptic prophecy is, however, the easiest of all human occupations. Pyramid-measurers and followers of Sunday Paper astrology are as adept at this pastime as are the Jew-baiters.

As historical documents, however, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* have been completely discredited in the eyes of all persons of normal intelligence. Any argument against Masonry, or against the Jews, which

is even remotely based on these impudent and mischievous forgeries is therefore utterly valueless.

The point is also made, and with slightly more truth, that the Masonic workings themselves are strongly Jewish both in form and symbolism. As there is no distinctively Christian content or symbolism in them whatsoever (until one reaches the higher degrees) it is argued that the Jew is more at home in the Lodge than the Christian.

Certainly our Ritual is based on the Old Testament, and it is undeniable that the Royal Arch in particular, with its banners representing the emblems of the Twelve Tribes and its jewel in the form of the Seal of Solomon has a strong Jewish flavour. On the other hand, there are other elements in this degree which Mr. Hannah points out spitefully and quite irrelevantly which would be less familiar to them. But Christianity, too, is based on Judaism; the New Testament is meaningless without the Old. Christ was a Jew, and his apostles were Jews. Masonry, then, has nothing to fear from any attack on these lines, which must be equally shared by all Christian people.

Members of all faiths meet together on equal terms in our Lodges, and they meet in perfect harmony. Freemasonry indeed is a strong unifying influence where sectarianism may not be even discussed, and all secondary beliefs are submerged and forgotten in a common devotion to the Great Architect and to the good of all mankind. In predominantly Christian England, it is true, this aspect of Masonry is less notice-

able than, say, in India, but even in England this broad tolerance is extended to our brethren of the Jewish faith with whom we share a common heritage, and who are fraternally welcome in the Lodge. Freemasonry is indeed a bulwark against anti-Semitism, and as such deserves well of all right-thinking people who deplore the senseless persecution to which this ancient race has been subjected elsewhere.

A MASON LOOKS AT SECURITY

It is obviously impossible for me to comment, one way or the other, on the accuracy or inaccuracy of the ritual disclosures of *Darkness Visible*. I, for one, in common with the vast majority of my brothers, took my solemn obligation very seriously indeed, and not for one moment will I betray a secret trust by even hinting that an alleged disclosure might here and there reveal the true secrets. I neither confirm nor deny *Darkness Visible*. I merely despise it and hold it in utter and withering contempt as an outpouring of a diseased mind, deserving of no notice whatsoever.

There is a boring monotony in these alleged disclosures which from time to time spawn forth from an unsavoury underworld. *Darkness Visible* contains nothing whatever that is new. I have no desire to call attention to or advertise such works in the past by enumerating them; suffice it to say that they exist.

Yet it would be both idle and dishonest to deny that the existence of such publications, and the smattering of imperfect knowledge which the outsider might gain of the mysteries, is partially due, not only to the very rare and utterly despicable traitor who plays the rôle of Judas Iscariot, but also, so to speak, to the Peter, James, and John who slept. There has been, and still is, a certain lack of vigilance, an element of carelessness.

Our printed rituals are certainly coded and give very little away. Mr. Hannah exaggerates grossly—exag-

gerates both the facts and his own intelligence—when he compares them with a *Times* cross-word puzzle, for every Mason will know what I am talking about when I say that there are certain blanks to which there are no clues whatsoever. At the same time, it seems an obvious scandal that authentic rituals should ever be supplied openly to the trade.

I do not know where Mr. Hannah picked up his rituals, but there are certain bookstores in London which have a Masonic department that is not even in charge of a Freemason, where no questions are asked or tests made as to the right of purchasers to possess them. Every Freemason who discovers such a state of affairs in any bookshop should protest, not only to the bookseller who may or may not be a Mason, but also to the publisher who allowed, or at least who failed to take precautions against, this supply. He should let it be understood that he prefers to buy even non-Masonic books elsewhere, in exactly the same way that he should protest to such shops as stock *Darkness Visible*. When such protests exceed the likely amount of ritual sales, this unfortunate anomaly will cease. Nobody wishes to victimize innocent booksellers, or to stifle freedom of expression, but there are Masonic deficiencies and privacies which must be preserved.

And to prevent any unhappy disposal of a deceased Brother's Masonic effects, would it not be better to arrange some system by which all rituals, like Officers' jewels, remain the property of the Lodge rather than of the individual, to be surrendered on resigning?

This need not become an added financial liability to the Lodge, as a non-recoverable or only partially recoverable deposit could be levied on their issue. If the Lodge's name and ownership were clearly printed on them, it would be difficult for a widow or executor through malice or ignorance to dispose of them improperly or carelessly after a Mason's decease, for the Lodge on production of a receipt would have a legal right to their recovery.

Certainly the Higher Degrees manage their affairs in this respect better than the Craft, and it is rare indeed to find their rituals on sale, new or secondhand. And those Lodges which follow their own peculiar Provincial workings which have never been printed at all seem to be completely successful in maintaining ownership of manuscript rituals, with little inconvenience to the Brethren. I do most earnestly appeal for fresh thinking on these lines, in the light of the Solemn Obligations, and of the damage already done.

The Board of General Purposes affirmed in 1926, and re-affirmed in 1938, that "In view of the increasing number of publications purporting or affecting to give particulars of the secrets and inner proceedings of the Craft, the Board desires to notify that the preparation, publication, sale, or circulation of such works is a Masonic offence, and that when reported and proved, the offending Brother will be dealt with by disciplinary methods. The Board would add a strong warning to Brethren generally to be extremely cautious in any allusions, whether spoken, written, or printed, to Masonic

matters which may thus come into the possession of unqualified persons." This is binding, and needs special stressing today. Surely the same principle, however, should apply to illicit and public sale also of authentic coded rituals.

Then there are those who, though doubtless faithful and loyal Masons at heart, are sometimes inclined to treat the mystical aspects of it with a certain levity. I was present once at a public dinner of a corporation where some nine-tenths of those present were Masons, the majority from the same local Lodge. Yet a few were not, and these were sometimes forgotten. In the convivial and boisterous atmosphere many intimate Masonic jokes were cracked, many facetious references were made to certain ceremonies, and there was even an approximation by some to certain usages in toasting and drinking peculiar to the Masonic after-proceedings when no non-Masons should be present. And again I have heard in public places Brethren discussing the proceedings of their Lodges within the earshot of strangers, and I am sure these experiences may be familiar to my Masonic readers. I am convinced that there is no deliberate disloyalty, and probably the carelessness is not fully realised. It is doubtless assumed in all these cases that the conversations, the allusions, the witticisms are couched in a jargon that is completely incomprehensible to the non-Mason and goes straight over his head. They may even assume, and in most cases rightly, that the outsider will not even realise that Masonry is the subject at all. But it is

careless. It is contrary to the spirit of the Obligations, and to the letter of the Affirmation of the Board of General Purposes. And it is far too common.

Security secrets were kept, even by the civilians, particularly of dockyard and garrison towns, with an amazing fidelity when it was realized that the nation's very existence was in jeopardy. Surely the Freemason can maintain a similar reticence to preserve inviolate the equally important integrity of his mysteries. The Catholic priest, to do him justice, does not chatter about what he hears in the confessional. If such silence can be upheld in the interests of debased superstition, surely an equal silence can be kept to protect the truer mysteries. If Cabinet secrets remain inviolate, so should ours if we are ever vigilant, and call on help from Him who "hath made us priests and kings before God."

Vide, Audi, Tace (See, Hear, and be Silent) is the motto of Grand Lodge of England, and should be engraved on the heart of every loyal and watchful Brother. We have, and have always had, our enemies, and renewed watchfulness is called for. "Brethren, be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may destroy; whom resist, steadfast in the faith."

FREEMASONRY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

THROUGHOUT our age-old and incomparable Masonic ritual it is constantly stressed that Freemasonry is not only as ancient as antiquity itself, stretching back through the innumerable vistas of the years to the very beginning of time and civilization; almost equally, however, is emphasized its universality in space.

In the language of mystery and symbolism the Candidate learns that he has become a living part of something greater—ininitely greater—than a mere body of a few score of honest men and true who meet from time to time within the four walls, perhaps of a small lodge-room in a humble provincial Temple, though he will always love and revere this local unit and refer to it as, in the most beautiful word in the English language, his Mother. He will love and revere that room, for here he first saw the light of moral truth and virtue, here his wandering footsteps were guided into the paths of the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science, here he was solemnly prepared for his passing through the intricate windings of this mortal life even to the closing hour of existence, to the very throne of the Great Architect Himself. Here in this very room he is treading on holy ground.

And it is constantly brought to his attention that these four walls are only a fragment of a greater whole, which yet mystically comprehend the infinity of the whole. They stretch "in length from East to West, in

breadth between North and South, in depth from the surface of the earth to the centre, even as high as the Heavens. The reason a Freemason's Lodge is described of this vast extent is to show the universality of the science; likewise a Mason's charity should know no bounds save those of prudence. . . . The covering of a Freemason's Lodge is a celestial canopy of divers colours, even the Heavens." And again, "The Earth constantly revolving on its axis on its orbit round the Sun, and Freemasonry being universally spread over its surface, it necessarily follows that the Sun must always be at its meridian with respect to Freemasonry."

And indeed these inspiring sentiments are more than words of mere rhetoric, allegory, and symbolism, for Freemasonry has spread to every quarter of the globe, and has a universality even greater than that of the Church itself, being both more ancient and more comprehensive of all that is good and true in the spiritual experience of mankind. From the cold northern remoteness of Iceland to the teeming tropics of India and Borneo, from the plains of Australia and New Zealand to the thriving cities and prairies of the United States, from the inscrutable orient of China and Japan to the colourful races of South America, in Europe, in Africa, the mystic Masonic Fraternity is to be found, silently and secretly working for brotherhood and righteousness among men of good will. Its world-wide influence is incalculable and indeed does not ask to be calculated or boasted of, for in true Christ-like humility it prefers to do good by stealth, not letting the

right hand know what the left is doing.

Thus the traveller who is also a Brother will always find himself at home, however distantly he wanders, in whatever direction. It opens the doors to the privilege of being with real men who do things. Sometimes in beautiful and costly Lodge rooms, sometimes in but bare walls or in a small well-guarded valley under a canopy of glittering stars, wherever a safe and secure sanctuary is to be found, the Brother, irrespective of his country, race, colour, or religion, is made welcome. When adversity or difficulty strikes him on a strange and foreign shore, the fraternal helping hand is out stretched in sympathy and relief, for a Freemason's charity knows no bounds save those of prudence.

There are indeed Grand Lodges and Grand Orients which we do not recognise, and of whose activities we do not altogether approve. They have departed from certain unalterable landmarks, chief among them being belief in the Great Architect, and the non-political nature of the Craft. A great deal is heard about these Grand Orients and their influence in Europe today, but the fact remains that, although they may have an influence out of all proportion to the size of their memberships, numerically they are very small indeed compared with the truly vast body of Regular Grand Lodge Masons. And the situation is never without hope that they may see the error of their ways and return to the true fold, thereby yet further increasing our strength. But do not let us lose our sense of proportion over these irregular bodies, for the true

Brotherhood is already world-wide, rapidly growing and capable of almost infinite development overseas (except at present, perhaps, beyond the Iron Curtain) and there are Regular Lodges in most, if not all of the countries where the irregular Grand Orientals hold sway. The future is obviously with us, and not with them.

And what a glorious future it may well be, and what incomparable benefits to all mankind may result! For Masonry can play an important, pacific, and wholly beneficial part in bringing the nations of the world into closer understanding with each other, and we can play that part without in any way sacrificing our non-political principles, as an international force standing for brotherhood and peace.

At one time it seemed as if the undivided Catholic Church was destined by God to fulfil this rôle. She had a unity, and a visible centre of that unity to which Christian civilization paid homage. She represented to the world the spirit of Christ, to the nations a supra-national spiritual and unifying influence. But the Catholic Church not only lapsed into the grossest of errors and pagan superstitions and forfeited the respect and adherence of enlightened men, but the visible head of that Church, the Pope, inflated with pride and arrogance as his proposterous claims to civil as well as spiritual authority increased, completely neglected that principle which to Freemasonry is a foremost landmark of non-interference in politics. And the results of this policy have more than justified Masonic wisdom in remaining true to its non-political principles.

The unity of Christendom was shattered at the Reformation, nor was the Protestantism which ensued necessarily much more enlightened or less bigoted, nor yet less political, though it usually substituted nationalism for international meddling. In the nineteenth century Protestantism, thanks to higher criticism and increased religious knowledge, tended to become more liberal and to shed its bigotries and exclusiveness. The twentieth century has hastened this process, and has also, in the teeth of much obscurantism and obstruction, seen the growth of a desire for Christian unity, and here and there concrete results. But the goal of a united and reformed Christendom is still, humanly speaking, at least a century ahead, if not many more. And the international benefits of such a unity would still be vitiated by the fact that many men and indeed whole nations whose religion is not specifically Christian would still be outside. There must be a great deal more enlightenment, an enormous broadening of horizons on the part of all religious men before the World Council of Faiths could ever become the World Council of Faith. That consummation, indeed, is not even in the foreseeable future.

But Freemasonry is already united and already international. It transcends the bounds of Christian and Western civilization; it includes the Moslem, the Hindoo, the Buddhist, and the Jew. Without waiting for their respective faiths to come together in a visible federation or unity, they can all meet together in their own and in each other's Lodges throughout the world

and pray and worship together to the same one-and-only indivisible God whom all religions acknowledge and venerate.

Here, then, is hope for the warmongering and mistrustful world. Here is a great ideal capable of almost infinite development. An ideal, not for the far-distant future, but within our grasp. An ideal that need not, and indeed cannot, upset anyone's cherished convictions or national loyalties.

There is much talk of a united Christendom. There is much talk of the United Nations Organization. Neither have as yet achieved world peace or brotherhood. But in Freemasonry we have already a true league of nations, a spiritual union stronger than religious or national prejudice. Close and fraternal links already exist between the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the United States, also with many Grand Lodges of the Dominions, many countries of Europe and South America. In countries where there are no independent Grand Lodges, there are usually Lodges under the jurisdiction of one of these, started perhaps for the benefit of English-speaking people resident in these lands, and expanding to include their own citizens. Here is a nucleus capable of growth.

The common bond of Freemasonry has again and again exerted a profound influence on Anglo-American relations, and always for good. It has similarly had a wholly beneficial effect towards unifying and pacifying the discordant races and religions of India, and was

perhaps the greatest blessing brought to that mighty country under the auspices of the British flag.

By strengthening these ties and alliances between the Grand Lodges the day is surely not far off when a Supreme Grand Lodge of the World might be established. This need not in any way encroach on the complete freedom and independence of its constituent members, any more than Her Majesty the Queen encroaches on the complete independence of her far-flung dominions. The Supreme Grand Master could be elected for a short term of years only, and could be chosen in strict rotation from the member bodies. Supreme Grand Lodge could meet annually, in rotation at the member Grand Lodges.

Such a body would exercise an influence on the world compared with which the fading influence of the Vatican would sink into insignificance. By its influence rather than by mixing in politics, it should be able entirely to prevent the folly of another world war. Gradually, step by step, a Masonic Temple can be built up to the glory of God and the brotherhood of man the like of which the world has never known before. A temple, not of stone, not of bricks and mortar and precious metals, but a temple of living men, whose united influence no chauvinistic government would dare defy. A temple of righteousness, an earthly reflection of that Grand Lodge above, where the World's Great Architect lives and reigns forever.

This is an ideal within our grasp, if we have the vision to grasp it step by step. It will require increased

enthusiasm and missionary zeal from the Brethren, particularly those whose avocations lead them into extensive travels. It is an ideal worth striving for, if under the Masonic banner all religions and races meet on the level, and guided by the united wisdom of the best that is in Freemasonry and inspired by our age-old and unshakable principles, we shall indeed be a fit vehicle for the work of the Most High.

Bro. J. S. M. Ward has in his day come in for a good deal of criticism for his exaggerated and sometimes fantastic interpretation of Masonic symbolism. There is, however, complete freedom of interpretation within the Brotherhood, and he is as entitled to his views as any other Freemason of whatever rank or position in the Craft. With this I am not concerned. But he has written some magnificent lines on the rôle of Freemasonry in the world which cannot but strike an echo in every loyal heart, and I cannot do better than quote them, from *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*:—

“Freemasonry is the mightiest force in the world. All that is best in religion and nationality is united with all that is best in internationalism. Far removed from the petty struggles of the politician, with its history stretching back into the dim dawn of man, it stands calm and serene. To it the passions of a day and the jealousies of nations are but as the quarrels of naughty children, to be smiled at with the pitying smile with which the angels regard our faults. Let us set our ideals high, but strive to attain them by practical methods. That should be our aim.

“Masonry has not survived the fall of mighty empires and the corroding hand of time to remain, in the midst of this world agony, merely a pleasant social club and a place where men may congregate to eat good dinners. The signs of the times point to the coming of great changes, and from little things great ones grow . . . from these seeds will grow that insight into the administration of world affairs which will enable the rulers of Freemasonry to use their influence with foresight and intelligence.

“Every one of us can play a humble part, and we must lay the foundations truly and well; we must spread the grand ideal throughout the Lodges of the land, and cement together the fabric of our Order by bringing together the various degrees. Above all, we must keep burning the lamp of spiritual truth, which has ever burnt within our Lodges throughout the long-drawn ages . . .

“Freemasonry, to me, is the most wonderful thing in the world. In it there is a spiritual vitality which has enabled it to survive its worst enemies . . . Despite ignorance, despite deliberate attempts to destroy some of her most glorious treasures, she yet survives, and, waxing in strength and beauty, spreads her branches over the whole earth. North, east, south, and west, we find the Lodges, and, where they are, there men gather to seek that which was lost. Within her portals anger and discord cease, and peace and harmony reign.

“And every day there stand at her gates crowds who clamour to be admitted into her mysteries till men grow

weary at the work.

"But, as she grows in strength and beauty, it needs must be that she must recognise greater responsibilities and readjust her organisation to meet them . . . tomorrow the Brethren throughout the world will respond to the influence of this central body.

"We are moving towards a better, a more spiritual world, but before us lie darkness, difficulties, and danger, it may even be the Valley of the Shadow of Death . . . One thing I know will survive—Freemasonry. As individuals we shall not all live to see that day, but some will, and meanwhile to work lest the night come upon us when no man can work.

"In the new age which is passing through the long-drawn travail of its birth, Freemasonry will be there, as of old, to lay the broad foundations on which the new religion will be built. Errors and false dogmas will pass away, and among them perhaps some which appear to our poor blinded eyes the most essential, but the Real Truth will always remain—for truth is eternal—and the bases of truth are within our Order. Out of them shall rise a new and better covenant once more, and still will Freemasonry remain to be as the Ark of Refuge when once more the waters of destruction threaten the earth long ages hence.

"But ever the path is upward, after every change, and He who is changeless watches over us and knows.

"Thus, looking forward, we stand on the threshold of strange times, and belike the hearts of some may fail when they look into the blackness of the night, and

strive to pierce its gloom. But, as once in their Masonic career, they saw a faint light in the east, though it but served to illumine an open grave, so now they will also see *that* light, and remember that it changed into that bright Morning Star whose light brings salvation to the earth . . .

"This then was, is, and shall be the task of Freemasonry, to keep alive the hidden wisdom, the hoarded wealth from of old, and to bind together with bands of fraternal love all humanity, to serve as an Ark of Refuge, and also as an Ark of the Covenant, within which is hidden the mystic stone on which is inscribed the lost word.

"The waters of ignorance have swept over the Ark many times, and the turgid waves of materialism have torn away the carven woodwork which one time adorned it, but the Ark is built as an equilateral triangle, and neither the tyranny of the waves nor the soft persuasive patter of the rain can make the stout planks open. She has ridden through many storms, for the form in which she is built is invulnerable, and though fresh storms threaten her, yet those within remember that presently the rainbow will appear in the sky, and the sun of peace will shine forth in renewed splendour."

Loes not this ideal, this magnificent achievement, make the petty attack of *Darkness Visible*, with its "soft persuasive patter", appear not only pathetic in its futility, but indeed beneath all contempt?

CONCLUSION

FREEMASONRY, the wisdom of the ancients, the light that has illumined moral and spiritual seekers through the archway of the years from the primeval dawning of civilization and yet burns as a guiding beacon of light and hope in the world today has the immortality of truth itself. Never was such age so young and so vigorous, never was youth so old.

Doubtless we have much yet to learn as we progress majestically down the pathway of the centuries. At present we enjoy the benefit of the mystic light that has been vouchsafed to us, but we remember with humility that it does not spring from ourselves, but from an external source; truth does not come as an instantaneous flash but by degrees. It does not break out as a sudden inspiration in any age, but has been built up by an assiduous study of the things symbolized in nature and our personal experience, and mirrored in the countenance of the Most High. Our personal illumination as Freemasons does not come by direct intuition, but as the result of much patient observation, prolonged research, and laborious analysis of the wisdom of the Ancients.

Realising this, then, it behoves us to be cautious in estimating our achievements. We must never exaggerate or boast of our merits. We must not indulge in false and senseless self-satisfaction or conceit. We should not be carried off our feet by presumption, rash

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dogmatism, or foolish assertion. A sense of proportion, totally lacking in our blind adversaries, is needed at every stage.

It should be a warning to our own hearts, therefore, that while we claim to be heirs of all that is best in the world, while we appropriate all the accumulated learning of the ages, while we give ourselves without stint to the sacred cause of charity in the relief of sickness and distress, we should not stultify ourselves with inordinate pride or pose as super-men before the world.

The poet Tupper has with singular beauty expressed the inner meaning and teaching of our Masonic Art in these words:

All things being are in mystery, we expound
mysteries by mysteries

And yet the secret of them all is one
simple grandeur.

O Mysteries, ye are all one; the mind of an
inexplicable Architect,

Dwelleth alike in each, quickening and moving
in them all.

Masonry stands impregnable, the secrets of her strength and wisdom sure and inviolable. The angry surf may beat its envenomed spray noisily against her

bulwarks, but they cannot be undermined nor fall. For our beloved Mother Grand Lodge of England, and all that she stands for in this distracted world, stands firm, with one foot planted squarely on the Rock of Ages, the Rock of immortal truth, and the other pointing to the Bright Morning Star, whose rising brings peace and salvation to the faithful and obedient of the human race.

The Nature of Freemasonry (Dr. H. S. Box)

As these pages were about to go to press in the middle of September, 1952, the Augustine Press issued a second publication, *The Nature of Freemasonry*, by Dr. H. S. Box, of whose activities I have already written in an earlier chapter.

Evidently written in collaboration with Mr. Hannah from the similarity of material from which he draws, this book, although somewhat less offensive and objectionable than *Darkness Visible*, is obviously another co-ordinated move in the conspiracy to align the Church of England with the forces of spiritual reaction. In style and scholarship Dr. Box is infinitely Mr. Hannah's superior; his book is evidently intended to appeal to the theologian on his own ground, letting his subordinate conspirator, not unversed in the technique of gutter-press journalism, to make the mob appeal.

The Nature of Freemasonry is not unlike Penney Hunt's *The Menace of Freemasonry to the Christian Faith* in that it bases its arguments almost entirely on quotations from Masonic authorities wrested from their context and given a twisted meaning far from that which the authors originally intended. Of these authorities some undoubtedly rank high in Masonic scholarship and knowledge; Mackey, Pike, and McClenachan in America, Castells, and Sir John Cockburn, and Covey-Crump in England certainly

enjoy a deserved prestige in the Craft. Wilmshurst, whose interpretations of Masonic symbolism at times verged on the far-fetched and fantastic, is generally regarded as a less sound authority, though Dr. Box nowhere hints at this.

This type of reasoning, however, is based on a false analogy which the theologian in dealing with Freemasonry is peculiarly liable to draw. The theologian in establishing or defending some point, say, of Christian doctrine will naturally quote texts and passages, not only from the Bible, but from the Fathers, the Schoolmen, or the great Reformers to justify his contention and to give it the weight of authority and antiquity. For these great figures in the past have in greater or less degree received the official or near-official stamp of orthodoxy from the Churches. The various Churches, Catholic and Protestant, have their own fixed systems of dogma by which such writings may be judged and tested.

Freemasonry has no such system, no dogma, no orthodoxy or heterodoxy in interpreting its formulae, ritual, and symbolism. Masonic thinkers and mystics have, therefore, complete liberty of thought, but each writes only for himself and no others. Certain Brethren may find the writings of one spiritually helpful in understanding more deeply his Masonry, others are equally at liberty to reject or choose another. Official statements emanating from the Board of General Purposes of Grand Lodge on the nature and aims of Freemasonry are the only statements to which

the Craft are in any way bound, and it may be mentioned in passing that Dr. Box refrains from quoting any such statement in his book. This is only to be expected, for these statements nowhere support his strange thesis at any point.

Before dealing with the main theme of this book, there are a few patent absurdities to be dismissed.

The appendices, for instance, quote certain lectures and catechisms from early eighteenth-century exposés compiled by predecessors of Mr. Hannah and Dr. Box, probably with equally faulty and perjured information to draw on. It is difficult to see why they were included; they may be of some historical interest to the Masonic scholar, and of considerable amusement to the entire Craft, but does Dr. Box really imagine that the Masonic scholar will read a book by a non-Mason with anything but scorn?

Then again, a considerable part of *The Nature of Freemasonry* is entirely irrelevant because it deals with certain higher degrees that the author must know perfectly well are extinct, and have not been worked in this country for many years, if at all. They contain certain archaic crudities and do, perhaps, breathe a spirit of vengeance and retribution which are totally alien to the spirit of Masonry as practised today. A description of these degrees (which I believe are still worked by the Grand Orient of France) can only be interpreted as an unworthy attempt, a smear campaign, to discredit Regular Masonry, of which at no time did these degrees form a part.

What exactly, however, is the purport of this fresh insult to the Craft?

Dr. Box says or quotes some extremely complimentary (and in the main, true) things about the spiritual value of Freemasonry. For instance, he quotes Bro. J. S. M. Ward's statement (p. 15) that Freemasonry is "a great adventure, a search after that which was lost; in other words, the Mystic Quest, the craving of the soul to comprehend the nature of God and to achieve union with Him." Is not this in every way commendable, especially to an author in Holy Orders whose life should be dedicated to that very quest? But no. Dr. Box adds a little footnote (with which the book is very lavishly adorned) denying the legitimacy of such a search for God to the Freemason. "Needless to say," it runs, "Christianity maintains that it is only through Christ that union with God can be achieved."

And again (p. 43) he quotes from Sir John Cockburn the profound truth that "Among the manifold blessings that Freemasonry has conferred on mankind none is greater than that of taking the sting from death and robbing the grave of victory." Dr. Box as a clergyman, one would think, would welcome any light that could be shed on the dread and inescapable fact of death, any hope that could be given for a sure and certain hereafter, to alleviate and assuage the well-nigh universal fear and trepidation that accompany our final parting from this world and give us courage to face manfully our latter end. But no. Another dis-

approving little footnote is appended to these words. "It is hardly necessary to point out that Christianity is accustomed to attribute this blessing to quite another source." This is worse than the blind leading the blind. It is the blind denying the existence of a light which he himself cannot see. Certainly as a minister of the Christian gospel I believe most firmly that the spirit of Christ proved stronger than death, and thereby deprived the grave of its victory. The footnote is technically correct. To me, as a Christian, the Universal Symbol that is Hiram is Christ, but as a Freemason I cannot deny, even if I wished it, that to those who have not accepted Christ as their guide Masonry has illuminated the final and terrifying mystery of death with comfort and a hope of immortality that is fully consonant with Christian doctrine even though the name of Christ (or indeed the name of any religious leader or saviour) is not and cannot be specifically mentioned as the mainspring of that hope.

And that is the main theme of *The Nature of Freemasonry*. It is not an attempt to discredit the Craft by crude abuse or wild allegations of sinister happenings within the Lodges (though there is a rather unpleasant and utterly nonsensical passage about phallic symbolism in Masonry which would have been better omitted). The book pays tribute to the spiritual teachings of Freemasonry, but it does so in an attitude of carping sectarian jealousy. Dr. Box bitterly resents the fact that essentially Christian standards and teachings are to be found independently

of orthodox Christianity, the Church of England in particular. The nearer Freemasonry approaches the religion of Jesus of Nazareth in its fundamental lessons of the spiritual progress and immortality of the soul, the more he dislikes it.

This attitude is a familiar and dangerous one in this century. It is the attitude of the Inquisition, which persecuted the most insignificant Christian heresy with a ferocity which far exceeded its persecution of the Jew or the Moor. It is the attitude of Muscovite Communism, which treats its "deviationists" from political orthodoxy with more savage hatred than the non-Communist. It is utterly alien to the spirit of Christ, who saw good in all that was good, and claimed many sheep "not of this fold."

The Nature of Freemasonry, then, along with *Darkness Visible*, must not be misunderstood for a Christian condemnation or criticism of Freemasonry. It is part of a conspiracy to align the Church of England with dogmatic reaction, it is an indirect weapon in the hands of those sinister forces who are seeking to thwart Christian re-union with the Free Churches, and ultimately a greater measure of understanding with all believers in the One God and Father of all. Freemasonry, though entirely non-political and non-sectarian, stands for such tolerance, understanding, and charity. Therefore Freemasonry is attacked by the enemies of these Christian virtues. Once this is understood, we should be proud to be attacked by such enemies.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Boston Speech on Re-Union

ON September 10 the Archbishop of Canterbury delivered an address to the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America in Boston, Massachusetts, which has notably clarified and advanced the cause of Christian re-union, and further corroborates what has already been said on this matter in Chapter VI. As the attack on Masonry is in reality an underground attack on Christian unity, and personally on Dr. Fisher who so ably labours for it, there are portions of the Archbishop's speech which have a clear relevance in this Masonic content, and which seem a direct or indirect rebuke to the calumniators of Freemasonry. His Grace said in the course of this speech:—

"The question which governs everything else is—does the Church Catholic include all baptized persons or groups of baptized persons, or does it include only members of an episcopal Church? If the latter, then no relation of intercommunion with non-episcopal bodies is tolerable; and all talk of re-union or intercommunion must be abandoned forthwith. *There are a few Anglicans who do consciously or unconsciously take this position, and would forbid even what I have called inter-praying. But the tradition, the practice and the thought of most parts of the Anglican Communion accept all baptized persons as within the Catholic Church, and all divisions between them as divisions within that Church. On that basis there is*

already and inevitably a relationship between all—a relationship between all who thus by water and the Holy Ghost call Christ Lord. And it is the bounden duty of all, as within one family, to seek to overcome family divisions and achieve family unity.

"Some degrees of intercommunion become possible without any compromise of principle; and every degree of intercommunion possible without compromise, itself declares the principle of our family kinship. So there can be, and is, among us official approval of inter-praying; and on suitable occasions of inter-preaching; and under certain conditions, of reception by us of communicants of other Churches; and thereby no Anglican principle is compromised.

"If that is where we are, our endeavour must be to seek a way by which we can advance to closer degrees of intercommunion, remembering that . . . intercommunion does not require approval by the one Church of everything in the doctrine, discipline or ritual of the other.

"Theologians have an essential part to play, but *they are not the final arbiters. In playing their part, they must always be careful not to exaggerate the letter of scholarship as against the spirit of the liberty of Christ.*

"At this time, when truth is so threatened by propaganda, morality so betrayed, and beauty so rarely to be found, I am moved no less to earnest, passionate prayer that, at all costs, we may be true to our heritage and our task."

What Critics have said

It was only to be expected that the "reactionary" Church press, both Catholic and Protestant, hailed *Darkness Visible* with an enthusiasm out of all proportion to the book's importance. The Romanist papers brought out the usual stale and fallacious arguments against Masonry, and even certain Anglican papers gave it favourable prominence. The secular press, very wisely, have for the most part ignored it.

The most sane and balanced review which has yet appeared, all the more convincing for having been written by a non-Mason, appeared in the *Church of England Newspaper* (July 18, 1952) which effectively exposed Mr. Hannah's motives. In this review Canon Marcus Knight made the following points:—

"In view of the fact that the Worshipful Master warns an initiate before administering the oath that in the vows there is "nothing incompatible with your civil, moral, or religious duties" it looks as if Mr. Hannah's long diatribe against the oath is a little hysterical."

"Mr. Hannah's object seems to be to persuade the Anglican Church to follow the Roman Church and the Salvation Army and keep out of Freemasonry. He does not really convince one."

"Do we want the Anglican Church to become a totalitarian autocracy modelled on Rome, or a sect based on the narrow denominational system? . . .

"The Reviewer is not a Mason. He did not find this

exposure of Masonic inner affairs very exciting; it is perhaps that one dislikes prying into affairs which others regard as private. In any case it all seems harmless. Do we want this theological sniping in days when so many graver affairs burden our hearts? All that Mr. Hannah can hope to do, if he succeeds, is to make Masonry a non-religious and anti-clerical society instead of what it is in Britain today. Would that be a good result? I doubt it."

Even the *Church Times*, never outstanding for liberal views, said of Mr. Hannah:—

"He has overloaded his case, and introduced a great number of repetitions. His writing is often marred by cumulatively offensive adjectives. He might have been better advised to let the facts speak for themselves."

Most Freemasons—indeed most sensible persons whether Freemasons or not — showed a natural and commendable reluctance to call attention to such a worthless book, however sensational, by reviewing it at all. Bro. Colin Brooks, however, adequately summarised the book's true worth in a review in *Truth*, headed "Disappointing Revelation":—

"He reproduces pictures of candidates prepared for certain ceremonies, looking slightly less ridiculous than High Church parsons with collars on back to front, and no more bizarre than High Church parsons in their multicoloured robes. Beyond these revelations, there seems nothing that would move anybody to any other emotion than that trite query—"What's all the fuss about?"