

# Rule and Guide

## Geoffrey M. Davies

*The memorial address given in honor of their deceased Brethren by Most Worshipful Brother Geoffrey M. Davies, PGM, at the 107th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba in 1982, was based upon "The Master's Blueprint," by the late Brother and Rabbi Sheldon Gordon of Ionic Lodge No. 186, Duluth, Minnesota. It is with pleasure we share it with you as a Short Talk Bulletin.*

In an ancient collection of Jewish literature appeared a statement by a teacher who lived some 2000 years ago, who was not very well known, and about whose real identity there appears to be some doubt. With reference to the parchment scrolls of the Holy Bible, he said: "Turn it and turn it again for everything is in it. And contemplate it and grow gray and old over it and stir not from it for you can have no better rule than it." What this almost anonymous teacher said some 2000 years ago is of deep meaning in Masonry, for he described one of the Great Lights of Freemasonry-the Holy Bible which is our rule and guide of faith.

Our ritual makes great use of Holy Scripture and, of course, the Bible itself plays a vital and dynamic role in the work and thought of Masonry. If we, as Masons follow the admonition and guidance of this teacher to turn to the Bible and turn to it again, we will find many concepts which give us a deeper insight into the great teachings of Masonry and correspondingly, we will find that the wisdom of Masonry adds another dimension of meaning to many passages of the Sacred Text. A great teacher of Judaism once described the Bible as being God's blueprint in the creation of the world. let us, then, as builders consult the Master's blueprint.

There is a very natural tendency for the individual Freemason, once he has achieved the sublime degree of a Master Mason, to pay little attention to the insights and teachings of the two initial degrees through which he reached at great height. As Shakespeare says in Julius Caesar, "But 'tis a common proof that lowliness is young ambition's ladder where to the climber upward turns his face. But when he once attains the upwards rounds, he then unto the ladder turns his back, looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees by which he did ascend." But our degrees are closely interconnected and mutually supporting one building on, and incomplete without the other.

Much is said in the Bible of the construction of Solomon's Temple, the magnificent edifice ... rivalling and perhaps surpassing the architectural wonders of all history. The Bible also records a humble construction which had, in the realm of the spirit, a significance at least as great as that of Solomon's Temple ... When Moses returns to the people, having stood at Sinai's heights, he is told by God to construct an altar for Him, of simple and pure unhewn stone. The foundations of that altar are to be made of rock upon which no iron has come. In the lodge, the E.A. is the unhewn stone, the rock upon whose surface no iron has yet come, and we would do well to remember the great meaning of this for Masonry and to impart to our Brothers of the First Degree the high and noble level which they have attained, and what it is we expect of them. It is the Bible which gives us this insight. The unhewn stone of the altar built by Moses represents the foundation of the lodge.

In the Entered Apprentice Degree, we are urged to the great task of moral improvement and betterment, to learn to subdue our passions that we may emerge the better man, indeed the better servant of God. David on his death bed, giving his son Solomon a father's final word of guidance, turned to the building of the great temple, the House of the Lord. It is written, "And David said to Solomon: My son, as for me, it was in my heart to build a house unto the name of the Lord My God, but the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Thou has shed blood abundantly and hast made great wars. Thou shalt not build a house unto my name because thou has shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.'" (I Chro. 22:7) Notwithstanding David's great attributes as a singer of psalms, the shepherd who could see so clearly the shepherding love of God for man, he was also a man of violence, of bloodshed, quick to indulge his appetites and his passions. Thus God forbid such a one who was unable to subdue and refine himself, to build His temple. In this great building work, this Temple of Solomon, at its very inception, we find further illumination of the great Masonic teaching which urges us to refine ourselves and to learn to subdue our passions- " ... that we may be enabled the better to show forth His glory and contribute to the happiness of mankind."

The Fellowcraft Degree is likewise heightened in significance and deepened in meaning by the Volume of the Sacred Law. The Operative Fellowcraft was instructed in the science of the builder and was entrusted with the working tools which required care and diligence, selectivity and refinement in their use. We, as Speculative Masons, expect of the Fellowcraft a degree of proficiency in the builder's art, whether that be the physical building of the operative mason or the spiritual and moral uplifting of the Speculative Mason. Again, turning to the V.S.L., the Book of Exodus tells us of the construction of a sanctuary in the wilderness during the period when the Children of Israel wandered about in the Sinai Peninsula preparing themselves for their ultimate entry into the Promised Land. And we read, "and the Lord spoke unto Moses saying, 'See I have called by name Bezaleel ... of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skillful works; to work in gold and in silver and in brass and in cutting

of stones for setting and in the carving of wood to work in all manner of workmanship. ' " (Ex. 31:1-6)

Bezaleel was appointed as Moses' deputy in the construction of the sanctuary. The skills which were his indicate that he may serve us as a model and a prototype of the F.C. degree. He is not to make the sanctuary on his own, he has yet to achieve the Master's status, for he works under Moses, but he has reached a significant level of his development as a human being and as a skilled artisan and is therefore prepared to build a sanctuary, a place, a dwelling for God and for man. Now it is important for us to pay careful attention to the words of scripture which describe Bezaleel, for the key notion here is not merely that he has achieved wisdom and knowledge, but the manner in which he has achieved this understanding. "And I have filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge." We must never forget that our skills and our knowledge, our understanding and our insight, while refined by dedicated teachers within the great fraternity of life – and for us within the sacred halls of the Blue Lodge – stem ultimately from the gracious endowment of God. Knowledge is itself a sacred trust and responsibility. The wisdom, the skill to build, challenges us to build something worthy of the divine imprint, that we may earn wages celestial as well as earthly.

And so we come to the sublime degree of Master Mason. In the Book of Genesis, we are afforded an interesting insight into the theme found in the climax of our Hiram drama when one is raised to that sublime degree and when we concern ourselves with the great Lost Word. Much as has been written on this subject within and beyond the confines of our Fraternity. Its symbolism is a deep and meaningful one. Many have been the scholars who have attempted to determine its origin. In the Book of Genesis, we are told that Jacob spent a lone night by the Ford of the River Jabbok. Jacob wrestled with an angel and said, "Let me go for the day breaketh." And he said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And he said unto him, "What is thy name?" And he said, "Jacob." And he said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel, for thou has striven with God and with men and hast prevailed." And Jacob asked him and said, "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name." And he said, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. " (Gen. 32:26-30) The name, two names, play a great role in this drama. The name which Jacob can never learn, the name of the Angel, the name of God; and the name which is conferred on him as he is reborn.

The Hebrew word for Israel is made up of two parts, the first coming from a verb which means to wrestle, to struggle; and the second, coming from one of the names of God; as it is explained that Jacob has striven with God and with man and has prevailed. Now there is a concept here which is of great meaning to us as Master Masons. The word which we seek and its great secret will never come to us through idle speculation. We must confront life, strive with it, and force it to yield us its blessing even as did the great Patriarch Jacob. Our strength will lie in deeds of morality and righteousness, our tools, the skills of our Craft. Thus, the means of achieving and

recovering the Lost Word – the meaning of the Lost Word – is to strive with life with vigor, with firmness, and with purity of intent.

We speak, in Masonry, of the quest for light, by which we mean understanding. We know that the creation of light was the first great act of God as recorded in the Bible. And the continuing source of light is God. As the Psalmist reminds us: "Thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment, who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain." (Psalm 104) It is the light from that celestial source which gives significance to our work as Masons. It guides and directs us in our labors as builders and designers of a better world. But as we strive for this better world, let us remember what was taught in the lovely Song of Solomon, preserved in the Book of Psalms, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Psalm 127)

Building with God, the true Master of our Craft, building under His guidance and with His light, is the purpose of Masonry. And if we so build, if we rear up and erect such as sanctuary for His spirit and for our brothers as was said of the great work of Moses, "For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle." (Ex. 40:38)

The spirit of God inhabited that abode. If our Masonic work is truly dedicated, that spirit will inhabit the structure which we erect. This is our goal – that we may build a sanctuary by our deeds in which God may dwell. Then we may be sure that in the end of our days, we shall find our abode in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

MASONRY IN THE HOLY BIBLE where to Find it

### **Entered Apprentice**

Psalm 133

Psalm 16- 1

Ist Kings 7 – 21

Ist Kings 6 – 7

Ist Chron. 22

2nd Chron. 3

Isaiah 9 – 2

Ruth 4 - 7 – 8

Ruth 2 – I

Ruth 4 - 18 – 22

### **Fellow Craft**

Exodus 17 - 9 – 11

Ruth4-7-21 -22

Ist Kings 7 – 21

2nd Kings 23 – 17  
Judges 12- 17  
Samuel 12- 17  
2nd Chron. 2 – 15  
Amos 7 – 7  
Exodus 17 – 11  
I st Kings 6 – 8  
Ezek. 40 – 22  
Ezek. 44 – 5

**Master Mason**

Ecclesiastes 12:1-7  
Gen. 4 – 22  
I st Kings 6 – 8  
Ist Kings 7 - 13 – 14  
I st Kings 3 – 30  
Psalm 10 ~ 12  
Job 14- 1-2-5-7  
Ezek. 8- 16  
Ezek. 11 – I  
Ezek. 40 – 20  
Ezek.44- 1 -5

*STB - August 1982*