

Preface to Volume III

In "The Meaning of Masonry", W.L. Wilmshurst notes:

"It is well to emphasize then, at the outset, that Masonry is a sacramental system, possessing, like all sacraments, an outward and visible side consisting of its ceremonial, its doctrine and its symbols which we can see and hear, and an inward, intellectual and spiritual side, which is concealed behind the ceremonial, the doctrine and the symbols, and which is available only to the Mason who has learned to use his spiritual imagination and who can appreciate the reality that lies behind the veil of outward symbol. Anyone, of course, can understand the simpler meaning of our symbols, especially with the help of the explanatory lectures; but he may still miss the meaning of the scheme as a vital whole. It is absurd to think that a vast organization like Masonry was ordained merely to teach to grown-up men of the world the symbolical meaning of a few simple builders' tools, or to impress upon us such elementary virtues as temperance and justice:-the children in every village school are taught such things; or to enforce such simple principles of morals as brotherly love, which every church and every religion teaches; or as relief, which is practised quite as much by non-Masons as by us; or of truth, which every infant learns upon its mother's knee. There is surely, too, no need for us to join a secret society to be taught that the volume of Sacred Law is a fountain of truth and instruction; or to go through the great and elaborate ceremony of the third degree merely to

learn that we have each to die. The Craft whose work we are taught honour with the name of a "science," a "royal art," has surely some larger end in view than merely inculcating the practice of social virtues common to all the world and by no means the monopoly of Freemasons. Surely, then, it behoves us to acquaint ourselves with what that larger end consists, to enquire why the fulfilment of that purpose is worthy to be called a science, and to ascertain what are those "mysteries" to which our doctrine promises we may ultimately attain if we apply ourselves assiduously enough to understanding what Masonry is capable of teaching us."

One does not have to agree with all the views contained in "The Meaning of Masonry" to embrace this poignant analysis for its cogency, accuracy and veracity.

I am, therefore, delighted to report that the brethren of A. Douglas Smith Jr. Lodge of Research No 1949, A.F.& A.M., continue the quest to understand these mysteries and to share the acquired Masonic knowledge and information among themselves and with the general Masonic community. The sharing takes the form of papers presented at our meetings, and the subsequent dissemination of these materials in our Transactions, the latest of which you now possess.

I salute the brethren who, over the years, have been fully engaged in the honorable and beneficial practice of researching and sharing Masonic information and knowledge with us for our mutual edification. Their industry has paid dividends in the form of our intellectual and spiritual growth and development.

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Preface To Volume 3, by Kwame Acquaaah, PM, Prepared December 20, 2003

It is my hope that many more of us will seek employment in digging deeper into the mysteries of the Craft and sharing the findings. Of course, reading, researching, reflecting, and writing are not easy. However, as I write, I am reminded of President John Kennedy who said of the 'Race to the Moon'. "We choose to go to the Moon. We choose to go to the Moon in this decade, and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win....." So it is that Masonic research is hard, but we do it as a labor of love, and it is the reason for our membership in a Masonic Research Lodge.

It has been 10 years since our last volume of the Transactions, Volume 2, covering 1988-1992 materials, was published. Accordingly, for the present Volume, the Editor, Wor. G. William Miller had to excavate documents from the 1993-1997 periods. It was not easy. Wor. Miller deserves our highest commendation for his yeoman's service. He has faithfully and competently guided and superintended the Transactions from its inception, Volume 1 having been published in 1988, to the current issue. He has earned the sincere appreciation and abiding gratitude of the Lodge.

Our Lodge has "come of age." It was 21 years old this year, having been founded in 1982. It continues to prosper and flourish as an umbrella under which all God's Children, all over the world, are fit to gather if they are good and worthy men, sound in mind and under the tongue of good report. The brethren of our Lodge can take great satisfaction from the knowledge that they are true exemplifiers and espousers of the precept that we must all learn to live and celebrate life with men of different religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, color, and national origin. I am truly proud of the Lodge.

May A. Douglas Smith, Jr. Lodge of Research No. 1949 forever be the Lighthouse for Masonic Enlightenment for Northern Virginia and beyond.

Kwame Acquaaah
Master

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