

GEMS OF PURPOSE

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BETHPAGE LODGE #521, F&AM OF TENNESSEE

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Exoteric & Esoteric

Dr. D. E. Stafford

As I have mentioned before in this publication, I am an E-bay junkie. I often have precious items with which I cannot live without shipped to my office. Why do I have them shipped to the office instead of to my home? Well the answer is simple, I don't want Mamie to know on what precious Masonic item I spent our grocery money. Last week, the two-volume edition of Blanchard's *Scotch Masonry* arrived at school. The office ladies are always excited about my boxes. They find it exciting to learn what unusual item Dr. Stafford has bought now. There is an element of excitement in the unknown contents of the boxes that arrive in the post. The ladies brought the box of books into my office, and stood in front of my desk waiting for me to open it . . . *Is it another pair of double-headed eagle candlestick holders, is it more books, is it another old robe?* I opened the box to reveal the books. Books are never as exciting to them as glass, knick-knacks, ties, tuxes, robes, lithographs, and the other countless items that arrive, but the excitement was still there.

As I set at my desk flipping through my new treasure, I began to reflect on the ladies repeated excitement about my mail. In my mind it began to take the form of a Masonic allegory. The packages are not unlike Freemasonry. They cannot see what is inside, but they have an insatiable curiosity. What it holds is a puzzle, and those who do not know its secrets have a desire to know for sure what Masonry hides. My packages always have an obvious exterior which clearly shows to whom it is to and from whom it was sent, but there is never an indication from its exterior as to what item is contained therein. Freemasonry does the same. We have an outward appearance, we are a charitable institution that seeks to take good men and make them better, but the spiritual and philosophical secrets we teach are never revealed to the outside world.

A long shot? Well, it may not make any sense to you, but it made me begin to think about Freemasonry's exoteric and esoteric teachings.

..... *Continued on Page 2*

Dates to Remember

- January 22—School of Instruction Eat 6pm Work 7pm
- Feb. 17—Stated Mtg
- March 19—Stated Mtg
- April 16 - Dr. Driber Lecture/Stated Mtg Eat 6pm, Open 7pm
- May 21—Stated Mtg
Come out to a stated meeting. There is always something to gain from fellowship with Brethren!

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Exoteric & Esoteric

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I suppose the best place to begin with this discussion is to look at the definitions of exoteric and esoteric. Webster's Dictionary gives three definitions for the word exoteric: 1.a. *suitable to be imparted to the public <the exoteric doctrine>* 1.b. *belonging to the outer or less initiate circle.* 2. *relating to the outside.* For esoteric, Webster's has the following: 1.a. *designed for or understood by the specially initiated alone.* 1.b. *requiring or exhibiting knowledge that is restricted to a small group, difficult to understand.* 2.a. *limited to a small circle.* 2.b. *private or confidential.* 3. *of special, rare, or unusual interest.* Now, how does these definitions apply to Masonry?

I propose that there are two basic applications of the terms, exoteric and esoteric, to Freemasonry. The first involves the ritual and the second involves those who practice those rituals. The rituals of Freemasonry generally have two interpretation: one that is obvious and superficial (exoteric) and another that is deeper and hidden within the text and symbols of the ritual (esoteric). In ancient times symbols were used to conceal teachings and knowledge; whereas, in today's society we are accustom to the use of symbols to proclaim the obvious. In previous times, symbols were used by groups, fraternities, and cults to disguise teachings. To the uninitiated a symbol would have superficial meaning, but to the initiated, the same symbol would remind them of mystic or esoteric teaching. The esoteric teachings of Freemasonry are personal and individual. It is up to each Mason to decipher the hidden meanings for themselves. The idea is to surround yourself with well-informed brethren to help guide you your path to realization within the Craft. The problem arises when you realize that there are few brethren who are interested in the more esoteric elements of Masonry. Which brings us to the next way in which esoteric and exoteric refers to Masonry.

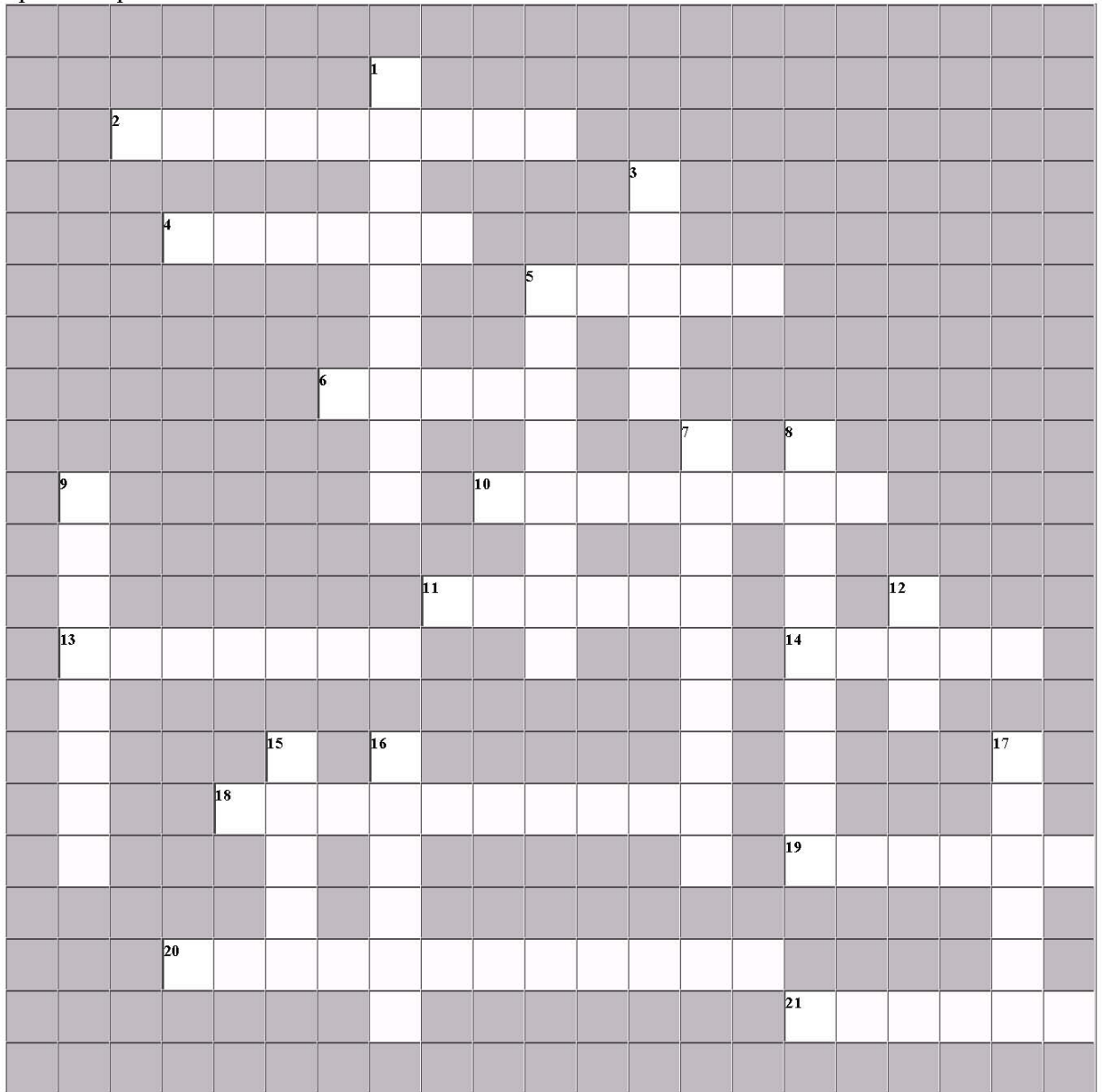
It has been stated that there are two types of Masons, non-reading Masons (exoteric) and reading Masons (esoteric). In the May 1885 edition of *The International Standard* appears a review of a book entitled *Freemasonry from the Great Pyramid of Ancient Times* by Tho. Holland. In this review the following may be found, "An exoteric Mason is one of whom the apostle says, 'They are not all Israel that are of Israel,' but occupy the outer courts, and probably many will never enter the holy of holies" (p. 169). In contrast the same article describes an esoteric Masons as "a deep student of all the (Masonic) mysteries, and especially of those that are divine." An exoteric Mason is a man who is satisfied with the superficial, basic understanding of the meanings within the lessons of the Craft. They are the Masons who have no greater ambition than flipping pancakes and supporting high school scholarships (all well in good in their place). MacKey in his article "Reading Masons and Masons who do not Read" states, "there are more Masons who are ignorant of all the principles of freemasonry than there are men of any other class who are chargeable with the like ignorance of their own profession." Many of these brethren petitioned the lodge looking for the economic, political, and professional advancement. Many of them found it; however, that is far from a noble reason to unite with the Royal Order. I do not say this to offend any of my brethren. Those of you reading this newsletter are most likely reading Masons.

..... Continued on Page 5



January Crossword

Complete the puzzle.



Down

1. Some lodges here work Scottish Rite Craft Ritual
3. JR Warden Station is in the
5. should be duly and truly
7. This GL was organized by GL of North Carolina
8. A new EA is placed in this corner
9. Goose and Ale-House
12. The attentive
15. Masons meet on the
16. Spread the cement of brotherly love
17. Masons part on the

Across

2. Three officers are this
4. A symbol of immortality and resurrection
5. Masons walk by the
6. teaches us to divide our time
10. Could be removed by this
11. 100% Christian Grand Lodge
13. Ceremonies designed to teach morals lessons of Masonry
14. a man is first prepared in his
18. First Grand Master in America (2 words)
19. An instructive tongue
20. A symbol of Deity (3 words)
21. The sun, moon, and WM are lghts

Scriptures for a Studying Mason

Amo 7:7 Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall *made* by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

Amo 7:8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

Amo 7:9 And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

Amo 7:10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

Amo 7:11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

ESOTERIC AND EXOTERIC MASONRY

I frequently hear of Esoteric and Exoteric Masons. What is the difference between them, and which am I who am a Master Mason, and a Commander of the Royal Arch. The ancient philosophers divided their followers into two schools, termed *exōterikos*, exoteric or exterior, and *esōterikos*, esoteric or interior. The exoteric school was held in public places, and its disciples or pupils were taught the elements of physical and moral science, whilst the esoteric disciples were assembled in the master's dwelling, and there received the benefit of a philosophical training, in which the allegorical meaning was defined, such being supposed to be too abstruse for dissemination *ad populum*. An exoteric Mason is one who is content with such knowledge as he can acquire in his Lodge, or at a Lodge of instruction. When he is initiated he becomes an exterior Mason, because he is a recipient of that which is common to all Masons. After going through his degrees, rising to the highest honors of the Lodge or Chapter, and being an expert Brother, mastering every ceremony, and having every portion of the ritual by heart, he may, and very frequently does, descend to his last resting place an exoteric Mason. But where a Brother has the attainments to unravel the philosophy of Masonry, to grapple with the hidden mysteries, and elucidate the more subtle reasonings that the rituals present, as well as to seek higher light than he can attain in Lodge or Chapter, then he becomes an esoteric or interior Mason. From our querist's description of himself, we have no hesitation in classing him with the former, who, however lip perfect, are content to remain within the entrance of the Temple, forgetting that in every such place there is an arcane whose mysteries are only open to the diligent student, content to labor in pursuit of Truth, and find that Masonry has two entire and distinct aspects — one *ad populum* and the other *ad clerum*, or in other words, one common to all Masons, and Exoteric, and one confined but to the few and select, or Esoteric. — London F. M. Mag. ∞

Taken from *The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, October 1, 1862, 11(12).

Exoteric and Esoteric

..... Continued from page 3

In opposition to an exoteric Mason is an esoteric Mason. An esoteric Mason is a brother who has a zeal for knowledge and higher thought. These are those men who petition the Craft in search of greater knowledge and understanding of the world about them. They surround themselves with well informed brethren and engage in edification through reading, debate, and in-depth study of the Order's rituals. They seek out the rituals of other Masonic systems and compare them to gain more light. They study the rituals of Freemasonry in the contexts of time, religions, politics, philosophy, sociology, and human progress. They apply their spirituality and question their own basic beliefs in the journey for a greater understanding of themselves and the mystic bond. An esoteric Mason is a man of the enlightenment in modern times.

It is not to be assumed that one Mason is better than the other. In order for the fraternity to be all that it can be, it is essential for lodges to have a balance between exoteric and esoteric Masons. A lodge made up completely of exoteric Masons quickly loses its status as a secret society and holder of great secrets and becomes little more than a Rotary, Lions, or Kiwanis Club. A lodge made up entirely of sole minded esoteric Masons could rapidly become uncharitable, indulgent, and elitist. If there is one thing that I have learned is taught over and over within both the lodge and church it is moderation or balance. In order for the lodge or any organization to have success there must be a balance. Freemasonry is no different.∞

The Evolution of the Tennessee Craftsman



On January 15, 2009, Bethpage Lodge had the privilege to host M.W. Bro. John L. Palmer, PGM as the first lecturer of the *Anniversary Masonic Lecture Series*. Although the temperature outside was well in the single digits, the atmosphere of brotherhood and Masonic camaraderie inside the hall was warm and inviting. The lodge was blessed with a hardy number of visitors, and the lodge served a delicious meal. At seven o'clock, the members of the lodge retired to the lodge hall to conduct some unfinished business; after which, the lodge received visitor and announced and introduced M.W. Bro. Palmer and Right Worshipful Brother Dickie Johnson, Deputy Grand Master. Brother Palmer presented his lecture with ease, and the members and visitors of the lodge were all extremely impressed with the outstanding presentation. Following the presentation, Brother Palmer was presented with a certificate notifying him that he had been elected an Honorary Member and Scholar of Bethpage Lodge No. 521. The lodge was later closed in Due and Ancient Form. All present lingered following the meeting discussing the presentation and enjoying the warmth of brotherhood. We encourage you all to make plans to attend the future lecturer's presentations.

Thank you Most Worshipful Palmer!



Where are They?

By: W.J.C.

Oh where are they whom once we loved?
Who walked in beauty by our side,
In youth's glad circle, when we moved,
By friendship bound, in fashion's pride?

They've gone to other worlds afar
Removed from these low grounds of sorrow,
Where tears of anguish never mar.
The happy day which knows no morrow.

There disappointments never blight,
Farewells there are never broken;
Morning never ends in night,
Loving hearts are never broken.

Then, dearest friends, farewell awhile,
Till we meet you, ne'er to sever,
Where immortal youth shall smile,
And our joys abide forever.

The Michigan Freemason, Volume VIII, 1877

DIXIE

By Albert Pike

Southerners, hear your country call you!
Up, lest worse than death befall you!

To arms! To arms! To arms, in Dixie!
Lo ! all the beacon-fires are lighted,—
Let all hearts be now united!

To arms! To arms ! To arms, in Dixie!
Advance the flag of Dixie!

Hurrah! hurrah!

For Dixie's land we take our stand,
And live and die for Dixie!

To arms! To arms!
And conquer peace for Dixie!

To arms ! To arms!
And conquer peace for Dixie!

Hear the Northern thunders mutter!
Northern flags in South winds flutter!
Send them back your fierce defiance!
Stamp upon the accursed alliance!

Fear no danger ! Shun no labor!
Lift up rifle, pike, and sabre!
Shoulder pressing close to shoulder,
Let the odds make each heart bolder!

How the South's great heart rejoices
At your cannon's ringing voices !
For faith betrayed, and pledges broken,
Wrongs inflicted, insults spoken.

Strong as lions, swift as eagles,
Back to their kennels hunt these beagles !

Cut the unequal bonds asunder!

Let them hence each other plunder !

Swear upon your country's altar
Never to submit or falter,
Till the spoilers are defeated,
Till the Lord's work is completed

Halt not till our Federation
Secures among earth's powers its station !
Then at peace, and crowned with glory,
Hear your children tell the story!

If the loved ones weep in sadness,
Victory soon shall bring them gladness,

To arms!

Exultant pride soon vanish sorrow;
Smiles chase tears away to-morrow.

To arms! To arms ! To arms, in Dixie !
Advance the flag of Dixie !

Hurrah ! Hurrah !

For Dixie's land we take our stand,

And live or die for Dixie!

To arms! To arms !
And conquer peace for Dixie !

To arms ! To arms !
And conquer peace for Dixie !

V/qhwhu#Dehgg1#Qhz#hduv#yh#

The Freemason, more than any other man, ought to feel what an important division of time this evening is, and ought to celebrate it by holding a lodge and a fraternal festival. At this festival he ought earnestly to ask himself, if during the past year he has always been faithful to the rules of the Order, and active in promoting its principles; he ought solemnly to pledge himself to continue his exertions; to pray fervently for a blessing upon the government of the country in which he resides; and heart to heart the brethren ought to wish each other a happy new year, and solemnly pledge themselves to maintain the great principles of brotherly love and truth.

The Freemasons' Quarterly Review, and General Assurance Advocate, September 30, 1848

Masonic Lecture Series Schedule

Bro. Thomas Driber, Ph.D.—April 16, 2009

Bro. Joe Kindoll—July 16, 2009

Bro. George Ladd—October 15, 2009

Each evenings event will begin with a meal at 6:00 PM. The lodge will open at 7:00 PM, and the lectures will begin. Halt not till our Federation Secures among earth's powers its station !
Then at peace, and crowned with glory,
Hear your children tell the story I

About Us

Bethpage Lodge No. 521, Free and Accepted Masons was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Free and



Accepted Masons of Tennessee on January 27, 1885. It is named for the small community in which the lodge hall sits. Bethpage, Tennessee is an unincorporated town in northern Sumner County, just north of Nashville. In its 124 years, the lodge has flourished and been the Masonic home to many traveling brethren. It is a country lodge with many traditions. It currently has an active membership of around 90 members. Bethpage Lodge meets on the Third Thursday of each month at 7 pm, and its meetings are open to all Master Masons from Masonic Jurisdictions recognized by the Grand Lodge of Tennessee.∞

Gems of Purpose is the electronic trestleboard or newsletter of Bethpage Lodge. Its primary mission is to assist in the spreading of Masonic light to not only the members of Bethpage Lodge but to Masonic brothers wherever this publication might land. It is edited and compiled by Brother David E. Stafford, Past Master and current Secretary of the lodge. Brother Stafford began publishing *Gems of Purpose* in 2006 as a service to the Lodge and has continued to do so. Although it is an official media of Bethpage Lodge, the views and opinions contained in *Gems of Purpose* do not necessarily reflect those of the lodge, the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, or Freemasonry. If you have questions or comments, please direct those to Brother Stafford via e-mail at bethpagelodge521@bellsouth.net. ∞



Submission - Although *Gems of Purpose* is the official educational voice of Bethpage Lodge, the lodge encourages anyone who has an interest in Masonic Education to submit possible material for inclusion in the newsletter. Items on Masonic history, philosophy, ideology, figures, and symbolism will be considered. Of course due credit will be given to the writer and if the writer is not a member of Bethpage Lodge, his lodge will be identified. *Gems of Purpose* reserves the right to edit all submissions. ∞

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125 Years of Masonry

Bethpage Lodge, #521

ANNIVERSARY MASONIC LECTURE SERIES

BETHPAGE LODGE NO. 521



Bethpage Lodge is pleased to announce that it will host an *Anniversary Masonic Lecture Series* in celebration of 125 years of Masonry in Bethpage, Tennessee. Lectures will be held quarterly throughout 2009 at our Stated Communications. The lodge invites all regular Master Masons to attend the lectures. A meal will be served at 6:00 pm, and the lodge will open at 7:00 pm each night. The floor will be turned over to each night's lecturer at the Worshipful Master's pleasure. Please find below a schedule of lecturers. For more information, contact David Stafford, the lodge secretary, by the means provided below. If you plan to attend a lecture with a group please let Bro. Stafford know, in order to prepare the numbers for dinner.

SCHEDULE

Bro. Thomas Driber, Ph.D. - April 16, 2009

Bro. Joe Kindoll - July 16, 2009

Bro. George Ladd - October 15, 2009

Where: Bethpage Masonic Lodge,
602 Old Highway 31E
Bethpage, TN

Time: Meal at 6:00 PM
Lodge Opens at 7:00 PM

All Master Masons Welcome!

If you plan to come with several brothers,
please let the secretary know a number.



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