



Pillars of Light



The Library of the
UGLNSW & ACT
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Eppur si Muove (and yet it does move...)

Galileo Galilei 1564-1642.

Our Grand Library is moving forward, despite numerous trials and tribulations. Before long, it will be what our members expect us to be : a Grand Library that is useful and usable .

The young generation of Masons, educated in the use of modern public Libraries, need computing facilities for research, for study, for access to material required for the preparation of a talk or a lecture.

A computerized lending system including an electronic version of the Library Catalogue with a comprehensive synopsis on all our books in both the Reference and the Lending Sections is planned for introduction shortly.

Considered the Hub of Knowledge of this Jurisdiction, the Grand Library has become the centre of attention for more and more members of the Craft. Manned by a group of imaginative volunteers that have put everything in motion, our Library is daily a beehive of activity and dedicated creativity.

A monthly Study Circle is attracting erudite Masons from

all corners of the State around a table in the Grand Library to debate on matters Masonic, so that the level of knowledge of the Craft will be increased.

I am starting now on a campaign to create new and numerous Study Circles in Districts and Masonic Centres around the State. Advice and encouragement are given from here to all those Brethren who want to share a constructive discussion and thus contribute to the successful future of Freemasonry in NSW.

The Study Circles are a tremendous success and we have reported monthly on the conclusions of our debates - a source of inspiration for our leaders and decision makers.

Monthly, the Grand Library is publishing a newsletter, the "Pillars of Light", containing interesting Masonic material, book reviews and reports of the Study Circle discussions. It is accessible through the Grand Lodge Internet Site, in the Library section.

Positive reactions from Brethren , pleased with its content (including many from other jurisdictions) who



eagerly await the next edition, provide encouragement to continue.

And, before I forget - a long list of new Books have just been ordered for your pleasure and enlightenment.

Your Grand Library is moving forward, to become a modern source of information, an open, accessible source of enlightenment that is participating actively in the common effort of demystification, development and creation of a larger appreciation of the Craft amongst our members and the Community in which we live.

For all that, my Brethren, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve.

Joe Haffner
Your Grand Librarian



This Month's Book Review

"*The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*" (HBHG) by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln caused a world wide sensation when first published in 1982, became a No.1 best seller, and spawned literally hundreds of what could be called "alternative religious history" books. Other descriptions for this new genre could be 'new age thinking', 'esoterica', 'Gnosticism' or even 'alternative Christianity'. The HBHG led directly to the publication in 2003 of Dan Brown's "*The Da Vinci Code*" which has become and still is an international publishing phenomenon. The 'Code' owes its entire existence to HBHG. Indeed one of the Code's main characters Sir Leigh Teabing is named after HBHG author Richard Leigh and 'Teabing' is an anagram of 'Baigent'.

At least one of the HBHG authors is an acknowledged Freemason. Michael Baigent is the Editor of "*Freemasonry Today*", an independent Masonic magazine published by David Wilkinson in the UK, and to which the UGLNSW Library subscribes to.

An extremely brief summary of the "plot" (there are many, many wrinkles and turns) of the HBHG picked up in the hundreds of subsequent 'alternative histories' is as follows:

"Mary Magdalene was the wife of Jesus, bore him children, and after the Crucifixion escaped to Gaul (southern France_Languedoc) possibly pregnant at the time, and possibly accompanied by Jesus' offspring, where she preached her Gnostic or dualist beliefs.

The "Black Madonnas" so prevalent in churches in Southern France are thought to be representative of Mary Magdalene – in fact they are referred to as 'Magdelas' in some parts. In France she married into or allied with the Frank nobility engen-

dering what became the 'Merovingian Dynasty'. At least one branch of this dynasty (surviving to this day) is the Stuart Dynasty which became the British Monarchy (1603-1714) including King Charles II - this has distinct Masonic implications.

spreading into Scotland and other European communities finding outlets in various knightly orders and eventually into Freemasonry."

The hypothesis is that the bloodline of Jesus extended into the European nobility via the children of the Magdalene and that Mary was the 'vessel' or 'chalice' for carrying that blood. This brings the Grail romances to the forefront and purportedly reveals one of the greatest secrets of all time.

The Sangraal or Sangréal or 'the Holy Grail' of Arthurian legend is postulated to be the Sang Raal or Sang Réal (two words) translating from the French into "Royal Blood", i.e. the blood of Jesus.

The next piece of the puzzle is the myth and legend of the Knights Templar who, following the capture of Jerusalem by Godfroi de Bouillon (of the Merovingian bloodline) and the 1st Crusade, were invited to Jerusalem where they were invited to excavate under Herod's Temple (Zerubbabel's/Solomon's Temple) to seek out early Christian memorabilia (perhaps even the Ark of the Covenant or the Holy Grail). Not only did they find memorabilia/relics but they also came into contact with Gnosticism and they started to diverge from the teachings of the traditional Church leading to their eventual downfall.

The Gnostic/dualist "heresies" discovered by the Knights Templar were returned to France and blossomed into a number of heretic religions such as Catharism that were brutally put down during the

Inquisition and forced underground. The heresies continued to flourish secretly, spreading into Scotland and other European communities finding outlets in various knightly orders and eventually into Freemasonry."

Of course the above "plot", in addition to having been worked over by hundreds of researchers and authors over the past 25 years, is EXACTLY the "plot" of "*The Da Vinci Code*".

It is easy to write off HBHG as a complete fantasy without any scholarly or factual merit but this would be doing it a disservice. The "facts" presented are fully referenced and over the past 25 years literally thousands of scholars, academicians and researchers have argued in print over its relative merits or demerits. A veritable industry in "alternative religious history" has grown up and the world wide interest in topics raised by the HBHG has been quite astonishing. The Da Vinci Code phenomenon is proof of this incredible interest.

It is not the reviewer's role to express personal opinions on the validity or otherwise of the book being reviewed but the HBHG is an important book because of what followed in terms of world wide interest and controversy. It is also extremely 'readable' as either a serious research source or as a "novel" of considerable interest and an enjoyable read. The Masonic content of the book is also hotly debatable and, indeed, many Masonic researchers have argued about the connections between the Knights templar and modern day Freemasonry.

Reviewed by:

Bro Michael Noakes





Study Circle No. 5

Freemasonry and the Deity

facilitated by

Wor Bro John Carroll

Lodge Fire Brigade & Lodge Kelleman

A small group including Rt Wor Bro Rabbi Raymond Apple, Rt Wor Bro Greg Levenston, WBro P G Nayar, WBro John Loveday and Bro Manfred von Risch was welcomed by Grand Librarian, VW Bro Joseph Haffner before handing over to WBro John Carroll who introduced the subject with the following:

"For reasons which I will quickly explain, I believe that today's topic is the brother of the one we discussed in January. It is in our pursuit of Charity, our interpretation of that word, and our relationship to the Almighty that we must make Freemasonry stand out amongst the few surviving groups which seek to attract people--- and especially men of good will--- to the pursuit of a better, and kindlier society. Moreover, our unique relationship to the Deity is something that we, as Masons, should be prepared to explain--- candidly and cogently--- in public, so as to re-gain ground lost to our detractors among "the un-instructed who are not Masons".

It is a Landmark of our Order that a candidate for its Mysteries must believe in a Supreme Being---- because the quest on which he embarks calls on him to discover within himself those latent qualities which distinguish him from the rest of a mortal and perishable creation: those parts of his Higher Nature which demonstrate that he is an "emanation" of One who is Greater.

As is said in the Ancient Charges, "...if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist, nor an irreligious libertine. ...Let a man's religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the Order, provided he believes in the glorious Architect of heaven and earth,

and practises the sacred duties of morality. Masons unite with the virtuous of every persuasion in the firm and pleasing bond of fraternal love: they are taught to view the errors of mankind with compassion and to strive by the purity of their own conduct to demonstrate the superior excellence of the faith they may profess. ...Masonry is the centre of union between good men and true, and the happy means of conciliating friendship amongst those who must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance." These are truly noble words. They are the foundation of our publicly stated aims "to make good men better" and to promote "the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God".

Therefore, their importance must never be lost under the dust of familiarity or the tarnish of lip-service. Nor will they be, if we constantly remember that "wherever we are, and whatever we do, His All-Seeing Eye observes us"...



...But whose Eye are we talking about? Who is the Father of this Brotherhood of Man? The Tree of Knowledge has many roots, many branches, and yet it has a single trunk. The religions of ancient civilisations recognised many gods, but acknowledged a Primary God above them."

The remainder of Wor Bro Carroll's remarks may be found in the minutes of the Study Circle in the Grand Library.

Meet our Volunteers



Rt Wor Bro Lloyd Coles

It is Lloyd Coles' 65th year in Freemasonry and what active, enjoyable and rewarding period it was!

Lloyd taught in Country Schools before joining the RAAF, then studied for his Arts Degree at Sydney University. His experience ranged from one-teacher Schools to Principal of large Primary Schools and involvement in School Music, combined Public School Concerts held in the Town Hall and Sydney Opera House. Lloyd feels it was a very fulfilling, worthwhile career.

Over the years his interests have been quite varied and purposeful and included local Orchestras, tennis, management of Junior Rugby teams, extensive Travel and of course the Grand Lodge Library. Here he discovered what a wonderful place it is for a Mason in search of continually extending one's horizon as well as serving in the same time our Masonic community.

The debate which followed the opening remarks was spirited and led to the following conclusions:

- Freemasonry is not a religion, but follows a religious ethic which is valid across all faiths;
- Freemasonry is unique in requiring belief in a Supreme Being and this places it in a position where it can claim brotherhood across faiths that acknowledge a Supreme Being;
- Freemasonry is taking too much for granted when it asks its members about their belief in a Supreme Being when their understanding is still developing;
- The Craft needs to spend more time in helping its members understand how belief in a Supreme Being can be an important element in their lives.

Enlightened Pillars of the Grand Librarian

From where derives the word "Lodge"

Looking up in dictionaries, we find that the word originates on the construction sites where Masons were living, working and creating in huts or in "lodges". Interesting to know that the root of the word is the Latin "logium" for *home, abode, dwelling*. Lodges are mentioned in 1352 at York Minster and on every important site, since. There is an interpretation which has gained a certain number of scholars, pretending that the etymology of the word is derived from the "logia" – a place of meeting where people were gathering for the purpose of pleasant exchange of ideas. In this sense, it seems that "logos" (a discourse) would be an acceptable root for Lodge. But I believe that the first explanation is more appropriate.

"Quatuor Coronati" – (The Four Crowned) what is behind the name of the famous Lodge of Research?

Shortly before the end of the 3rd Century, in AD 298, during the reign of Emperor Diocletian, five Christian Stone Masons refused to carve a statue of a pagan god. They were condemned to death and cast into the River Tiber. It is said that 5 Crowns appeared on the water above where the bodies had sunk. A couple of years later Diocletian ordered all soldiers to march past and throw incense on the altar of

Aesculapius. This time FOUR Christian officers refused to obey the order. They were put to death and later became the 4 martyrs. Later, all nine martyrs were honoured. According to German interpretation, the five Stone Masons were accounted as being only four. What is definitely known is that in all of the known Gothic Constitutions, the above Legend is mentioned only in the Halliwell MS. or as some know it the Regius Poem.

Kabbala

The mystical philosophy or theosophy of the Jewish faith is the Kabbala. The word derives from the Hebrew "Kabal", signifying to receive, because it is the doctrine received, according to belief from above, adopted by the Jewish nation and discussed and interpreted by the *Sanhedrin*, the congregation of the Elders for centuries. It has sometimes been used only in a restricted sense, like the acceptance in which it is intimately connected with the symbolism of Freemasonry and as such, it is a system of philosophy which embraces certain mystical interpretations of Scripture and metaphysical speculations concerning the Deity, man and spiritual beings. According to Jewish sages, in these interpretations and speculations were enveloped the most profound truths of religion which have to be revealed only through symbols and allegories in order to be understood.

Would you have a question to ask? Please do not hesitate and forward your question to library@uglnsw.freemasonry.org.au. It will be answered shortly in this column.

THE GRAND LODGE LIBRARY NEEDS YOU

We would be especially pleased to hear from any Brother who may be interested in attending the Grand Lodge Library from time to time and to join the Grand Librarian's team. No special skills are required—only a true love for Masonry and its Literature.

Contact the Grand Lodge Library

Ph: 02 9284 2825

From 10 am to 3pm weekdays

