



# Drake's Oration of 1726

WITH COMMENTARY AND NOTES  
BY SHAWN EYER, FPS

## COMMENTARY

Brother Francis Drake was a notable English surgeon and antiquary who was enthusiastically involved in Freemasonry both early in life and in his later years. This speech was delivered when he was just 30 years of age and serving in the York Grand Lodge as its Junior Grand Warden.

Lionel Vibert, FPS, noted that this 1726 oration “attracted much attention at the time,” and that it is “of considerable historical importance.” [*The Rare Books of Freemasonry* (1923), 27] That importance is grounded in the fact that Drake’s oration is “the earliest address by a prominent Mason, dealing with the subject of Masonry, which has survived . . .” [Knoop, Jones & Hamer, *Early Masonic Pamphlets* (1945), 196].

Underlining Vibert’s observation of the attention this speech attracted, we find that it was reprinted many times. Although the first print run—possibly intended for the York Masons alone—was short and copies became exceptionally rare, an expanded edition was published in London in 1729, adding an oration by Edward Oakley (a prominent figure in the London-based Grand Lodge of England), and an account of a Drury Lane performance of Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*, bespoke by the London Freemasons, and including a Masonic prologue and epilogue. This expanded version received a second edition in 1734, also at Lon-

## A SPEECH

Deliver’d to the Worshipful and Ancient Society of  
*Free and Accepted Masons.*

At a Grand Lodge, Held at *Merchant’s-Hall*, in the City of  
YORK,  
on *St. John’s Day*, December the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1726.

The Right Worshipful Charles Bathurst, *Esq; Grand-Master.*

By the Junior Grand-Warden.

*Olim meminisse juvabit.*<sup>1</sup>

YORK: Printed by *Thomas Gent*,  
for the Benefit of the LODGE.

[A1] To *Daniel Draper, Esq;*<sup>2</sup>

Dear Brother!

THAT this Discourse sees the Light, is chiefly owing to your Candid Reception of it at the Rehearsal. I can no where therefore pitch upon a Patron more interested (I may say) in its Protection. A superior Command has since wrung it from me; and, as I hope you will bear me Witness, with Reluctancy enough. I am sorry to say, that I am afraid the Lodge has trusted too much to your Judgemnt, tho’ that exceeds mine, as far as an *Extempore Harangue* can a studied Speech.

Since I mean it entirely for the Good of my Brethren, I am no ways in Pain what the rest of the World shall think of it: Because we all know none [A2] but a Mason can throughly [*sic*] understand it. It is hard, we have but a Negative to all the



don. Furthermore, Drake's oration also appeared in Cole's *Constitutions*, beginning in 1729. It was, then, a very popular text during crucial formative years of the Fraternity.

The transcription, orthography, and pagination given here are from the first edition of 1727. The pagination is faulty in the original, and that is reproduced in the bracketed folio numbers seen here. These notes are excerpted from a longer commentary to appear in *Ahiman: A Review of Masonic Culture and Tradition*.

1. Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.203: "One day, it will give pleasure to remember this."

2. Daniel Draper was a member of an unknown lodge, not a member of the York Grand Lodge. Neville Barker Cryer points out that this demonstrates that the York brethren were not isolated from the rest of the Craft [*York Mysteries Revealed* (2006), 243]

3. Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.604: "A conscience aware of its own rectitude."

4. The Masonic policy of refusing to argue with detractors is already in place in 1726. This is fascinating, because until the 1720s, there are only sporadic criticisms of Freemasonry. Both the York and the London Masons seem to have adopted a formal policy of answering critics only indirectly.

5. Drake compares the esoteric teachings of the lodge to its material riches, emphasizing that he has allowed neither the "Arcana" nor the revenues to fall into the possession of the profane. Although modern narratives often assert that such

Invectives daily bestowed upon us; and yet as *Mens sibi conscia recti*,<sup>3</sup> Silence is the best Way of answering those angry Sophisters, who because they cannot unloose the Knot, wou'd gladly cut it asunder.<sup>4</sup>

And now, I, as the Lodge's proper Officer, am order'd, in this Publick Manner, to return you their unfeigned Thanks for the great Honour you have twice done them. And I shou'd very much wrong their Trust to neglect it. I shou'd now, also, go on, according to the constant Practice of Epistles Dedicatory, to say some very fine Things without Sense or Meaning. But as Flattery is no ways inherent to *Masonry*, as a Brother pardon me, if I only say this: That we know a Genius, which, were it plac'd in a proper Station for its Exertion, deservedly its due, might not only be a Credit to the Fraternity in particular, but an Honour to our whole Country;

"And stand the Foremost in the Rank of Fame."

I am (S I R!) Ever Cordially Your's.

[1] *Right Worshipful Grand-Master, and Brethren,*

YO U, Sir, and all of You know, that I have had the Honour to bear the Office of one of the Grand-Wardens to this Society for this last Year; and by that Office, I am not only particularly oblig'd to take Care, that, during my Administration, neither the Revenues, nor the *Arcana* of the Lodge, be either embezzl'd or expos'd to vulgar Eyes<sup>5</sup>; but I do think it also my Duty, before I resign my Place, at least, Sir, since I have your Commands for it, to remind you of some things, relating to Human Society in general, as well as to this our most antient LODGE in particular.

HO W unequal a Task I have taken upon my self, will, I am afraid, but too evidently appear by the Sequel. A young Brother pretending to dictate on Two such sublime Subjects to older and wiser Heads than his own, can admit of no Excuse, but that I have just now mention'd. I wou'd not in this be thought to derogate from the Dignity of my Office; which, as the Learned *Verstegan*<sup>6</sup> observes, is a Title of Trust and Power; *Warden* and *Guardian* being synonymous Terms; yet as You are no Strangers to Publick Assemblies, and cannot but observe the Awe they often strike on such as are oblig'd to exert any Talent before them, this *First*

*Essay*, howsoever wrote or deliver'd, I hope will neither discredit my Person, nor my Office. It has been said, by one that knew it well, That one wou'd think there was some Kind of Fascination in the Eyes of a large Circle of People, darting all together on one Person, which has made many a brave Fellow, [2] who has put his Enemy to Flight in the Field, tremble, in the delivering of a Speech before a Body of his Friends at Home. Whatever will be the Event of this, I hope the good Design I do it with, shall, by the Candour of my Brethren be admitted for an Excuse, and in some measure compensate for the Loss of Time, which I doubt not might be much better employ'd on this important Occasion.

HUMAN Society, Gentlemen, taken in general Terms, is one of the greatest Blessings of Life. For this End Speech and Language was given us; which does so sublimely distinguish us above the rest of the Works of the Creation. The different Empires, Kingdoms and Commonwealths in the Universe, are only so many Greater or Lesser Communities, or Societies of Mankind, collected together; and, for the most part, have invented the Laws and Language they now speak, and are govern'd by. *Society* has Harmony in the very Sound of the Word; but much more in the Application of it: For 'tis to it we owe all Arts and Sciences whatsoever. To this End, all Schools, Seminaries and Colleges were erected by our wise Progenitors; not to mention those numberless Noble Edifices set apart for Congregated Societies in Divine Worship. How useful this of our own has been in these Remarkable Particulars, I shall have sufficient Reason to speak of in the Sequel.

*Et adde tot Egregias Urbes operumque laborem,  
Tot conjesta manu Præruptis oppida Saxis.—Virg.<sup>7</sup>*

BUT when we come to view Society, and its Usefulness in a nearer Perspective, we shall find it magnify upon us prodigiously, and requires a Pencil more delicate than mine to draw it in Perfection; I shall confine my self therefore to a few slight Touches, which even from my Hand may perhaps give some Idea of the Beauty of the Whole.

'TIS a Maxim indisputably true, That we ought to read Men as well as Books. What an unsociable Animal is a Learned Ped-

esoteric elements consisted only of passwords and grips, there is evidence that some of Drake's contemporaries would have differed. Drake himself apologizes later in the oration for alluding to the "mysteries," even though only Freemasons were present. This strongly suggests that the brethren of the York Grand Lodge understood the secrets of Masonry to be more than grips and signs, as it is clear that it is not modes of recognition to which Drake is referring. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know precisely what Drake meant by "Arcana" in this statement.

6. Verstegan (circa 1550–1640) was a Dutch antiquary who used the name Richard Rowlands while in England. Politically and religiously controversial, he fled to Italy and lived out his remaining years in Belgium.

7. Virgil, *Georgics* 2.155–56: "Reckon also these many cities, testaments to labor, and every town built by hand where cliffs rise from the water."

8. According to Jacqueline Pearson, "The idea that the real man reads not books—or not only books—but the world, or men, became a cliché in seventeenth-century writing: the real man, man of sense, is constructed not by books but by knowledge of the world." ["Flinging the Book Away," in C. Gill (Ed.), *Theatre and Culture in Early Modern England, 1650–1737* (2010), 46] This development in the English ideal of masculine identity emphasized breadth as well as depth, and rejected pure scholasticism as too solitary. Masonic lodges valued both book-learning and social intercourse, and there-

fore provided an important nexus for this kind of personal enrichment, as Drake's rhetoric makes clear.

9. Much of the life of the early lodges was invested in the hours of dining and conversation which came after the formal labors were closed. Martin Clare, prominent in the Craft during the 1730s, gave an oration on the topic of the polite conversation that ought to prevail among Freemasons of "good breeding." He urged the brethren to avoid natural roughness, contempt, censoriousness, raillery, contradiction, interruption, and captiousness. Clare warned that "All sort of Opposition to what another Man says" could be harmful to good fellowship. As stipulated in Anderson's *Constitutions* in 1723, even after lodge was closed, Freemasons were proscribed from "doing or saying any thing offensive, or that may forbid an EASY and FREE Conversation." [54] Good manners were viewed as an essential part of the Craft.

10. Drake refers to God as "the Divine Architect," a common epithet for the Supreme Being in Freemasonry. Drake's God is not deistic, as most clearly evinced by his powerful statement later in the same oration that "God himself was the Architect" of Solomon's Temple—a traditional viewpoint shared not only among Freemasons, but by the notable natural philosopher Isaac Newton.

11. Hyperbolically characterized by Drake as "the most ingenious Author that ever liv'd," Joseph Addison (1672–1719) was a popular English essayist and prominent Whig politician. This excerpt is from an essay

ant, who has shut himself up all his Life with *Plato* and *Aristotle*? For 'till the Dust and Cobwebs of his Study are brush'd off on him by Conversation, he is utterly unfit for Human Society.<sup>8</sup>

[3] A GOOD Genius can only be cultivated this Way, but lies like a Rich Diamond, whose Beauty is indiscernible 'till polished.

GOOD Manners, the chief Characteristick of a fine Gentleman, is only attainable this Way.<sup>9</sup> For we learn by seeing how odious a Brute is, to shun Brutality.

GOOD Sense, which indeed is a Genius, yet can no way be so readily improv'd, as by frequent observing in good Company Nonsense and Ribaldry exploded.

IN fine, neither our Health nor Wealth would suffer by it, but be both of them increas'd and amended, did not the pernicious Custom of drinking too deep, which we of our Nation too much indulge, invert the Order and Economy of all Society. There is no Conversation to be kept up in the World, without good Nature, or something which must bear its Appearance, and supply its Place. For this Reason, Mankind have been forc'd to invent an Artificial Kind of Humanity, which, as a great Author has defin'd, is call'd *Good Breeding*. But when both these have their Foundations sapp'd by an Inundation of Liquor, Ruin and Desolation will undermine and lay waste that Glorious Seat of *Reason*, which the Divine Architect<sup>10</sup> has, above all others, honour'd the Human Constitution with.

THE most ingenious Author, that ever liv'd, has made a pretty Observation on the different Humours that Drink produces in an *English Society*. He says, they proceed from the different Mixtures of Foreign Blood that circulates in us. *We sit down, Indeed, says he, all Friends, Acquaintance and Neighbours; but after two Bottles, you see a Dane start up, and swear the Kingdom is his own: A Saxon drinks up the whole Quart, and swears he will dispute that with him: A Norman tells them both, He will assert his Liberty; and a Welshman cries, They are all Foreigners and Intruders of Yesterday; and beats them all out of the Room. Such Accidents, adds our Author, frequently happen amongst Neighbours, Children and Cozen Germans.*<sup>11</sup> I wish I cou'd not say, That I have frequently observ'd it in our own Most Amicable Brotherhood of *Free-Masons*.

[4] BUT so many better Heads and Pens have been em-

ploy'd on this Subject, that it wou'd be too presuming in me to take up more of your Time about it. I shall proceed therefore, as I propos'd, to speak of this **Our Most Antient and Most Honourable Society** in particular.

AND here, my Brethren, so vast and spacious a Foundation is mark'd out for one of the Noblest Superstructures that Wit can invent, and Rhetorick adorn; that, were the Design drawn and executed by a masterly Genius, with all the necessary Oratorical Decorations proper for so sublime a Subject, we might safely say with the POET,

—*Quod nec Iovis Ira, nec Ignis,  
Hec Poterit Ferrum, nec Edax Abolere Vetustas.*<sup>12</sup>

But as I am verily persuaded, that you neither expect to hear a *Cicero*, a *Demosthenes*, or even — a *Henly*<sup>13</sup> in me; so I may hope, your Candour and Humanity will pardon my Temerity, where the Loftiness of the Text must inevitably shew the Insufficiency of the Preacher.

THE Learned Author of the *Antiquity of Masonry*,<sup>14</sup> annex'd to which are our Constitutions, has taken so much true Pains to draw it out from the Rubbish, which the barbarous and ignorant Ages of the World had buried it in, as justly merits the highest Gratitude from his Brethren.

THAT diligent Antiquary has trac'd out to us those many stupendous Works of the Antients, which were certainly and without Doubt infinitely superiour to the Moderns.<sup>15</sup> I shall not therefore follow his Steps; but since there ought to be something said of Antient Architecture, to illustrate the real Antiquity of Masonry in general, I shall beg Leave to subjoin what an Elegant Modern Author, the Ever-Celebrated Mr. *Addison*, has wrote on this Subject.

“WE find, *says he*, in Architecture, the Antients much superiour to the Moderns. For, not to mention the Tower of [9] *Babel*, which, an old Author says, there were the Foundations to be seen in his Time, which look'd like a spacious Mountain; what cou'd be more Noble than the Walls of *Babylon*, its Hanging Gardens, and its Temple to *Jupiter Belus*, that rose a Mile high by 8 several Stories, each Story a Furlong in Heighth, and on the Top of which

he published in *The Tatler*, N<sup>o</sup> 75, Saturday, October 1, 1709.

12. Ovid, *Metamorphosis* 15.871–72. “Neither will the wrath of Jove, nor fire / nor the sword have power over it, and nor shall it even be extinguished by the ravages of Time.”

13. Drake has gone for a laugh by mentioning Bro.: John Henley (1692–1756), the first Chaplain of the London Grand Lodge. He was widely known as “Orator Henley” for his gifted rhetoric and ability to draw an audience. It is known that he gave a number of Masonic orations, a fact apparently already known to Drake.

14. Drake is expressing “the highest Gratitude” to Bro.: James Anderson for his 1723 book of *Constitutions*. Although one might expect the York Masons to resent Anderson's work, which edited the Old Charges into a more modern format, it seems the book was both well known and warmly regarded within the York Grand Lodge.

15. It is fascinating to observe that even in 1726, there is a counterpoint being struck in Masonic rhetoric between Antients vs. Moderns, with the Antients seen as the grander and more worthy of emulation. Drake may be very subtly implying the greater antiquity and legitimacy of the York Grand Lodge versus the London Grand Lodge. If so, then this section foreshadows the later and more overt characterization of the London Grand Lodge as “the Moderns” by the lodges that united in the 1750s to form a Grand Lodge of Antients in England.



16. The word *fabulous* is used in the archaic sense of fanciful or absurd.

17. Genesis 11:3.

18. The Egyptian labyrinth no longer exists, but was described in the first century by Strabo (*Geographica* 17.37). Herodotus, writing in the fifth century, said that “[t]hough the pyramids beggar description and each one of them is a match for many great monuments built by Greeks, this maze surpasses even the pyramids. It has twelve roofed courts with doors facing each other: six face north and six south, in two continuous lines, all within one outer wall. There are also double sets of chambers, three thousand altogether, fifteen hundred above and the same number under ground. [5] We ourselves viewed those that are above ground, and speak of what we have seen, but we learned through conversation about the underground chambers. . . . Thus we can only speak from hearsay of the lower chambers; the upper we saw for ourselves, and they are creations greater than human.” (*Histories* 2.148)

19. The foregoing extensive quotation on architecture is from Joseph Addison’s essay in *The Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 415, June 26, 1712.

20. Seth’s Pillars were a common Masonic theme in the Old Charges, and the fascination with them continued in Anderson’s Constitutions. One made of brick and the other of stone, according to tradition they were inscribed with the wisdom of Adam and the knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences. Although

was the *Babylonian* Observatory? I might here likewise take Notice of the huge Rock that was cut into the Figure of *Semiramis*, with the smaller Rocks that lay by it, in the Shape of Tributary Kings; the prodigious Bason, which took in the whole *Euphrates*, until such a Time as a New Canal was form’d for its Reception, with the several Trenches thro’ which that River was convey’d. I know, *adds our Author*, there are Persons, who look upon some of these Wonders of Art to be fabulous<sup>16</sup>; but I cannot find any Grounds for such a Suspicion, unless it be that we have no such Works amongst us at present. There were indeed many greater Advantages for Building in those Times, and in that Part of the World, than have been met with ever since. The Earth was extremely fruitful, Men liv’d generally on Pasturage, which requires a much smaller Number of Hands than Agriculture. There were few Trades to employ the busy Part of Mankind, and fewer Arts and Sciences to give Work to Men of Speculative Tempers, and what is more than all the rest, the Prince was absolute; so that when he went to War, he put himself at the Head of a whole People: As we find *Semiramis* leading her three Millions to the Field, and yet over-power’d by the Number of her Enemies. It is no Wonder then, when she was at Peace, and turn’d her Thoughts on Building, that she cou’d accomplish so great Works with such a prodigious Multitude of Labourers: Besides that, in her Climate there was small Interruption of Frost and Winters, which make the Northern Workmen lie half the Year idle. I might mention, amongst the Benefits of the Climate, what Historians say of the Earth, That it Sweated out a Bitumen or Natural Kind of Mortar, which is doubtless the same with that mention’d in Holy Writ, as contributing to the Structure of *Babel*. *Slime they us’d instead of Mortar*.<sup>17</sup>

“IN Ægypt we still see their Pyramids, which answer to the Description that have been made of them; and I question not [10] but a Stranger might find out some Remains of the Labyrinth that cover’d a whole Province, and had an hundred Temples dispos’d among its several Quarters and Divisions.<sup>18</sup>

“THE Wall of China is one of these Eastern Pieces of Magnificence, which makes a Figure even in the Map of the World. Although an Account of it would have been thought fabulous were not the Wall itself extant.

“WE are oblig'd to Devotion for the noblest Building that have adorn'd the several Countries of the World. It is this which has set Men at Work on Temples and publick Places of Worship, not only that they might by the Magnificence of the Building invite the Deity to reside there; but that such Stupendous Works might at the same Time open the Mind to vast Conceptions, and fit it to converse with the Divinity of the Place.”<sup>19</sup>

THUS far our Author; and I am perswaded you have not thought me tedious in giving you so much of the Works of that Great Man instead of my own. From what he has said, the great Antiquity of the Art of Building or Masonry may be easily deduc'd. For without running up to *Seth's Pillars*<sup>20</sup> or the Tower of *Babel* for Proofs, the Temple of *Belus* alone, or the Walls of *Babylon*, of both which the learned Dr. *Predeaux*<sup>21</sup> has given ample Accounts, which were built 4000 Years ago, and above 1000 before the Building of Solomon's Temple, are sufficient Testimonies, or at least give great Reason to conjecture, that three Parts in four of the whole Earth might then be divided into *E-P-F-C* & *M-M*.<sup>22</sup>

Now, it is morally impossible but Geometry, that noble and useful Science, must have begun and gone Hand in Hand with Masonry; for without it, those Stupendous and Enormous Structures could never have been erected. And tho' we have not the Names of any great Proficients so early as *Babylon*, yet we have a *Pythagoras*, an *Euclid*, an *Archimedes*, flourishing in very remote Ages, whose Works have ever since been, and are at present, [10] the Basis, on which the Learned have built, at different Times, so many noble Superstructures.<sup>23</sup>

BUT I must not trespass too much on your Patience, and shall therefore, tho' unwillingly, pass over the Building of *Solomon's Temple*, a Building where God himself was the Architect, and which to all Masons is so very Particular, that 'tis almost unpardonable to neglect it.<sup>24</sup>

BUT that with the Repairs of it by *Josiah*, rebuilding by *Zerubbabel* and *Herod*, to the final Destruction by *Titus Vespasian*; together with the History of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Orders and Architects, the *Gothick* Intrusion over all, and its late Resurrection and present growing Greatness, may be Subjects sufficient for several Discourses; which, since I have ventur'd to break the Ice,

not as frequently discussed today, their Masonic presence is preserved thematically in the teaching that the pillars of Solomon's Temple contained the archives of the Craft.

21. Humphrey Prideaux (1648–1724) was a prominent English cleric and historian, politically aligned with the Whigs. He vigorously opposed deism. Among his major works is that referenced here, *The Old and New Testament connected in the History of the Jews and Neighbouring Nations* (volumes issued from 1715 to 1717).

22. The reference here to the divisions of E[nter] P[rentice], F[ellow] C[raft], and M[aster] M[ason] is remarkable in that it is frequently overlooked. Although it is generally understood by Masonic historians that, somewhat earlier than this, the terms of Fellow Craft and Master Mason were synonymous, this does not seem to be the implication in Drake's construction. The viewpoint that originates the tri-gradal system in the London Grand Lodge after 1723 is complicated by the York Grand Lodge's apparently matter-of-fact reference to the three degrees or divisions of Masons existing in 1726. The earliest records of the conferral of a third degree are in London in 1725, and in Dumbarton, Scotland in 1726. [See Harry Carr, *The Freemason at Work* (Hersham, U.K.: Lewis Masonic, 1992), 358]

23. The great arc of Masonic history is expressed in architectural terms with mythical overtones. Neville Barker Cryer points out that this was “already deeply embedded legend in Masonic working,” and that





this may account for any apparent “temporary suspension of critical appraisal.” He concludes that “This was not so much history as essential tradition.” [*York Mysteries Revealed* (2006), 245]

24. Solomon’s Temple emerged as a central concern in speculative Masonry in the 1600s. By the 1720s, the Temple’s architecture and mythic traditions—including legends unique to the Masonic Order—were a major preoccupation.

25. Note that Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth are already established as the “three Grand Principles.” See *The Grand Mystery of Freemasons Discover’d* (1724) for another example.

26. More of Drake’s wit is on display here, as he shares an inside joke with his brethren by cleverly referring to the geometrical concepts of the point, line, superficies and solid. This demonstrates that even in 1726, Freemasons included those ideas in their teachings.

27. The word “pencil” probably refers here (as elsewhere in Masonic literature) to the archaic definition of pencil as “an artist’s paint-brush of camel’s hair, fitch, sable, or other fine hair, gathered into a quill; esp. one of small and fine make, suitable for delicate work.” (*Oxford English Dictionary*) Graphite pencils did exist in 1726, often called “dry” or “wooden” pencils.

28. Note that even in 1726, it is not merely that one “joins” a lodge, but that one would be “initiated into the Mysterious Part” of Masonry.

I hope some abler Hand will carry on.

I shall now by way of Conclusion beg Leave to subjoyn some Observations, and apply them more particularly to our ancient Lodge, and to our present Meeting at this Solemnity. And here I know you’ll excuse me from unveiling our Mysteries tho’ I am speaking to my Brethren, when you see the Reason I dare not plain in my Hand.

SINCE, as has been said, Human Society has always been so useful, it cannot be wondered at that this of ours should have so very ancient an Original. I have already shewn you that Masonry is the oldest Science the World has produced; the first, the earliest Ages employ’d their whole Study and Industry upon; and for this Reason the fundamental Rules of this Art have been handed down from Age to Age, and very justly thought fit to be made a Mystery on. A Mystery however that has something in it apparent to the whole World, and which alone is sufficient to answer all the Objections that Malice or Ignorance can throw, or has urged against us; of which, to mention no more, our three Grand Principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth<sup>25</sup> to one another, are very shining Instances. A Foundation laid in Virtue by the strictest Geometrical Rules, is a Point of such Moment, that each Line describes its Strength and Stability, [12] and a Mason must have a very superficial, and far from a solid Judgment, that can doubt of its Duration to the End of all Things.<sup>26</sup>

THE Pen, the Pencil,<sup>27</sup> and the Trowel, have always been thought by the greatest Monarchs the World has produc’d, the properest Instruments to convey their Names and Actions to the latest Posterity. The two former are certainly capable of flattering either their Vices or their Persons; but the honest *Trowel*, as the best and most durable Register, must be allowed to bid the fairest for eternizing of them, and has in their erecting Cities, Castles, Palaces, Amphitheatres, &c. brought down for many many Ages, and does not only convince us at present of their distinct Genius, Riches, Religion, Politicks and Power, but their very Names have been stamp’d and are still current among us: For Instance, *Constantinople*, *Cesarea*, and *Alexandria*.

WHAT Wonder after this, that so many Kings, Princes, and Noblemen, have at all Times honoured this Society with their

peculiar Patronage and Protection, have taken it as an Honour to have been initiated into the Mysterious Part of it,<sup>28</sup> and thought it no Degradation for a Mason to say he was Brother and Fellow to a King?

EUROPE came much later to the Knowledge of this Art than the Eastern Parts of the World; and this Island, as far as I can find, the latest of all. For tho' by our records we learn it was brought into *France* and *Germany* by one<sup>29</sup> who was actually at the Building of *Solomon's Temple*, yet it was long after that, when *St. Alban*,<sup>30</sup> the Proto-Martyr of *England*, along with Christianity, introduc'd Masonry. To the Romans indeed, our Ancestors owe the Origin of useful Learning amongst them, which made a very good Exchange for the Loss of their Freedom; for Cæsar in his Commentary tells us, that the *Britains* had no walled Towns nor Houses, but only fortified their Dwellings with Woods and Marshes. But when after that, our first *Saxon Kings*, having thrown off the barbarous Ignorance of *Paganism*, were by the [13] Light of the Gospel more civiliz'd, and shewn the usefulness of Arts and Sciences, This of ours answering the necessary End of self Preservation as well as Grandeur and Devotion, must be allowed to be first sought after. And tho' Old *Verulam*, since<sup>31</sup> call'd *St. Albans*, may justly claim Precedency as the first built Town in Britain; yet you know, we can boast that the first Grand Lodge, ever held in England, was held in this City; where *Edwin*,<sup>32</sup> the first Christian King of the *Northumbers*, about the Six Hundredth Year after *Christ*, and who laid the Foundation of our Cathedral,<sup>33</sup> sat as Grand-Master. This is sufficient to make us dispute the Superiority with the Lodges at *London*: But as nought of that Kind ought to be amongst so amicable a Fraternity, we are content they enjoy the Title of Grand-Master of *England*, but the *Totius Angliæ* we claim as our undoubted Right.<sup>34</sup>

AND here I have a fair Opportunity to enlarge upon those Encomiums due to Our present GRAND-MASTER; Whose Regard for His Office, Proficiency in the Science, and His Great Munificence shewn to the Society, can never be forgotten. *Manat altâ Mente Repostum*.<sup>35</sup> We must all acknowledge Him to be the Foundation-Stone of its Present and Growing Grandure.

BUT His Command prevents me from proceeding in this. MR. Deputy MASTER has likewise Executed his Office

29. As noted in the original: "*Ninus*." *Ninus* is a rare alternate name for *Naymus Græcus*, a legendary stonemason of Solomonic times.

30. Noted in the original: "*This from an old Record preserv'd in our Lodge*."

31. Noted in the original: "*Camden*."

32. As noted in the original: "*Edwin's Chief Seat of Residence was at Derventio, now call'd Auldby, six miles from YORK. Rapin P. 162.*" Drake refers to Paul de Rapin's *Histoire d'Angleterre* of 1724, page 162.

33. As noted in the original: "*A Church of Wood was hastily run up at York, for the new Converts, which were very numerous. Shortly after Edwin laid the Foundation of a Church of Free-Stone. But finished by Oswald, his Successor. Rapin p. 246. Bede L.2. C.13.*"

34. Drake eloquently asserts the primacy of the York Lodge/Grand Lodge according to its legendary antiquity, while casting no aspersions upon the London Grand Lodge.

35. Virgil, *Æneid* 1.26: "registered deep in her (Juno's) mind." A common aphorism among educated Englishmen of the time when referring to any deeply felt memory.

36. While on its own, this might be understood most naturally as a manuscript constitution of the York Lodge, Drake has already used the phrase "our Constitutions" in reference to Anderson's *Constitutions*. See note 13. Numerous regulations for Masonic conduct are found in Anderson's work.

37. Participation in the Craft required a significant financial investment in those days, as evidenced by this admonition.

38. Drake's wording that "as long as our Feet shall stand upon this Earthly Foundation, we may join Heart and Hand, and as it were with one Voice" possibly indicates the practice of singing. Andrew Pink points out that three exposures claim Masons would sing songs after the initiation and passing ceremonies with their hands clasped in a chain, stomping their feet to punctuate certain parts of the songs. See *The Canonbury Papers 2* (2003). 4–5.

39. Early Masonic writings sometimes refer to false brethren within the bounds of the lodge, a theme which was important enough to become ensconced in the drama of the third degree. Descriptions of false brethren from the 1720s and 1730s emphasized their disinterest in the traditions of the Craft, their unwillingness to abide by Masonic standards of conduct, and their overinterest in food and their intemperance. As one of Drake's contemporaries caustically put it, "They make their belly their God."

40. Ovid, *Epistolæ Ex Ponto* 2.9.47: "A faithful study of the liberal arts, softens the manners and does not permit cruelty." Drake has stressed *sinit*, permit. As noted earlier, English Freemasonry—both in London and York—emphasized how polite conversation on meaningful subjects contributed to individual development.

throughout the whole Year with great Pains and Industry; and every Particular Member of the Lodge owes Him all imaginable Gratitude for it.

[ 1 4 ] F O R my *Brother-Warden* and my self, I leave our Conduct to Your own Judgment. Our Accounts have been examin'd, and we hope we have not any Ways wrong'd the Great Trust You repos'd in us.

A W O R D of Advice, or two, and I have done. To You, my Brethren, the Working-Masons, I recommend carefully to peruse our Constitutions.<sup>36</sup> There are in them Excellent Rules laid down for your Conduct, and I need not insist upon them here.

To You that are of other Trades and Occupations, and have the Honour to be admitted into this Society, I speak thus. First, Mind the Business of your Calling. Let not *Masonry* so far get the Ascendant, as to make you neglect the Support of your selves and Family.<sup>37</sup> You cannot be so absurd as to think that a Taylor when admitted a Free-Mason is able to build a Church, and for that Reason your own Vocation ought to be your most important Study. False Brethren, 'tis true, may build Castles in the Air; but a Good Mason works upon no such fickle Foundation. So square your Actions as to live within Compass. Be obedient to the Officers chosen to govern the Lodge: Consider they are of your own appointing, and are trusted with an unlimited Power by you. As well henceforwards, as this Solemn Day, let each salute his Brother with a chearful Countenance: That as long as our Feet shall stand upon this Earthly Foundation, we may join Heart and Hand, and as it were with one Voice<sup>38</sup> issuing from the same Throat, declare our Principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth to one another. After which, and a strict Observance of our Obligations, we can be in no Danger from the Malice of our Enemies without the Lodge, nor in *Perils amongst False Brethren* within.<sup>39</sup>

A N D now, Gentlemen, I have reserv'd my last Admonitions for You. My Office, as I said before, must excuse my Boldness, and your Candour forgive my Impertinence: But I cannot help telling you, That a Gentleman without some Knowledge of Arts and Sciences, is like a fine Shell of House, without suitable Finishing or Furniture. The Education of most of you has [15] been Noble, if an Academical One may be call'd so; and I doubt not

but your Improvements in Litterature are equal to it: But if the Study of Geometry and Architecture might likewise be admitted, how pleasant and beneficial they wou'd be, I do not presume to inform you.

—*Ingenuas Didicisse Fideliter Artes,  
Emollit Mores, nec sinit esse Feros.*

Says *Ovid*.<sup>40</sup> And it is likewise said, That a Man who has a Taste for Musick, Painting, or Architecture, is like one that has another Sense, when compar'd with such as have no Relish for those Arts.<sup>41</sup> 'Tis true, by Signs, Words, and Tokens, you are put upon a Level with the meanest Brother; but then you are at Liberty to exceed them, as far as a superiour Genius and Education will conduct you. I am credibly inform'd, that in most Lodges in *London*, and several other Parts of this Kingdom, a Lecture on some Point of Geometry or Architecture is given at every Meeting: And why the *Mother Lodge* of them all shou'd so far forget her own Institutions, cannot be accounted for, but from her extream old Age.<sup>42</sup> However, being now sufficiently awaken'd and reviv'd by the comfortable Appearance of so many worthy Sons, I must tell you, that she expects that every Gentleman, who is called a Free-Mason, shou'd not be startled at a Problem in Geometry, a Proposition in *Euclid*, or at least be wanting in the History and just Distinctions of the five Orders of Architecture.

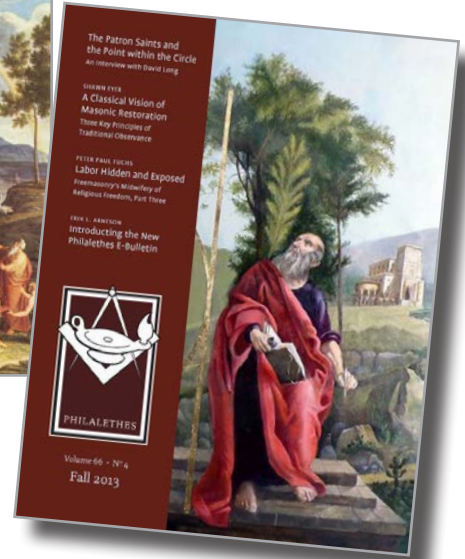
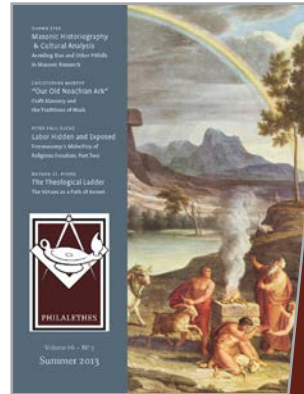
To sum all: Since we are so happily met to celebrate this Annual Solemnity: let neither *Dane* nor *Norman*, *Goth* nor *Vandal*, start up, to disturb the Harmony of it: That the World may hear and admire, that even at this critical Time all Parties are buried in Masonry. But let us so behave our selves here and elsewhere, that the distinguishing Characteristicks of the whole Brotherhood may be to be called Good Christians, Loyal Subjects, True Brittons, as well as Free-Masons.

FINIS.

41. Joseph Addison, in *The Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 93, June 16, 1711. Drake's approbation of Addison's perspective on aesthetics as a kind of "sixth sense" highlights the importance placed by the early speculative lodges on cultural refinement.

42. A 1725 copy of the "Old Rules" of the York Masons includes a stipulation for monthly meetings that "An Hour shall be set apart to talk Masonry." [W.J. Hughan, "The York Grand Lodge: A Brief Sketch," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 13 (1900):16-17] Drake indicates that such lectures ought to be revived. "If there is any rule that reveals how much Freemasonry has changed," writes Neville Barker Cryer, "this is probably it. Clearly the performance of ceremonies was not considered enough. This may well have been the root of having catechisms and lectures in which the tenets and principles of the Craft could be explained and discussed. The present steady return to this aspect of Masonry is therefore not a stop-gap but a recovery of at least an old York, if not a more general, tradition." [*York Mysteries Revealed* (2006), 238-39]

# Discover the New Philaethes!



The Philaethes Society is the oldest independent Masonic research society in North America, serving thousands of members worldwide. The recently redesigned *Philaethes* journal features thought-provoking, substantial articles on Masonic symbolism, philosophy, ritual, artwork, literature and history. Today, we are more curious than ever about the meaning of the Craft. Featuring today's leading scholars and researchers, as well as articles by emerging Masonic writers, *Philaethes* is ready to be a trusted ally on that quest.

Whether one is a new Mason, a seasoned Past Master, or somewhere in between, all will find much to enjoy in every issue of *Philaethes*! Sign up today, or consider a gift subscription for your Lodge or a friend.

## BONUS OFFER:

*Philaethes: The First Fifty Years* is a CD-ROM containing the text of our journal from 1947 to 1997. An indispensable resource, it is normally \$50. But with your new membership, you can receive it for only \$25 extra. Check the appropriate box below.

## THE PHILAETHES SOCIETY • Membership & Subscription Form

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip or Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

FULL MEMBERSHIP (includes journal subscription)

Year Made a Master Mason \_\_\_\_\_

Lodge \_\_\_\_\_

Grand Lodge \_\_\_\_\_

\$50 US/Canada     \$75 with CD, US/Can

\$60 Intl.     \$85 with CD, Intl.

Life Member, \$800

SUBSCRIPTION ONLY

Annual, \$50 US/Canada

Annual, \$60 Intl.

And please specify:

Individual (non-Mason, etc.)

Group (lodge, library, study group, etc.)

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with appropriate payment (in US funds only) to:

The Philaethes Society  
P.O. Box 379  
Penryn, CA 95663-0379  
USA

To enroll online, visit  
<http://freemasonry.org>.

All memberships are subject to approval.

### PAYMENT

Check    International Money Order    Credit Card (Visa or Mastercard)

Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_