

A BODY WITHOUT A SOUL?

The Philosophical Outlook of British Freemasonry 1700-2000

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Introduction

Masonic ceremonies for the laying of the foundation stones of public buildings were commonplace in Britain up to the Second World War. These included not only churches, but also railway stations, bridges, docks, hospitals, schools and even a Turkish bath. However, these ceremonies were most frequently held for churches. The most celebrated masonic foundation stone ceremony took place in 1880 when Edward VII as Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone of Truro Cathedral, the first cathedral to be consecrated in Britain since the Reformation. Similar ceremonies were also held for building works at many other cathedrals in the nineteenth century, such as Rochester, Peterborough and Liverpool, and freemasons gave substantial financial assistance to these works. In 1882, the vicar designate of a new church in Dulwich to the south of London wrote to Grand Lodge requesting that the foundation stone of his church should be laid by freemasons. He explained that he was not a freemason himself, but he wished to 'enlist and attach for the work of the church a cause which I see binds men so wonderfully together'. Masonic processions were not held only in connection with foundation stone ceremonies. In 1931, the new Bishop of Hereford was enthroned, and the occasion was marked by four processions in the town. The first consisted of the parochial clergy of the diocese; the second of the mayor and corporation; and the third of the Queen's representative, the Lord Lieutenant, the Sheriffs, and other high dignitaries. The fourth procession comprised freemasons in regalia, in honour of the new Bishop's rank as Grand Chaplain.

Such events vividly encapsulate the ideological and philosophical character of British freemasonry. It is rooted in the local community, drawing its membership from the respectable middle classes. It is deeply engaged with the monarchy and aristocracy, and, above all, it has an intimate relationship with the churches, and in England particularly with the established Anglican church. For French freemasons arriving in Britain as refugees after Louis Napoleon's coup d'état in 1851, such scenes were astonishing, and in their opinion bore little relationship to freemasonry. Many were republicans and freethinkers, and they objected to the prominence of clergymen in English freemasonry and its support for the monarchy. They also found the cost of English freemasonry prohibitive. Rather than joining craft freemasonry, they continued their masonry by joining the Order of Memphis, which was not recognised by the English Grand Lodge. Keen to encourage English working men to become freemasons, they founded lodges under the Order of Memphis in London, Birmingham and elsewhere. The English Grand Lodge issued a circular barring English freemasons from having anything to do with these lodges or the French masons. Infuriated, the French masons appealed for support from their fellow countrymen, issuing circulars violently denouncing English freemasonry. They described how in England the functions performed by an orator in France were fulfilled by clergymen, and described English freemasonry as Jesuitical. Although English freemasonry had built great institutions for its children, the elderly and the infirm, these were closed to anyone who did not believe in God or was a republican. The masonic schools did not offer a purely secular education. English Freemasonry was, in the view of these French freemasons, a body without a soul:

'Ses travaux sont consacrés a quelques momeries, et surtout à la gourmandaise'.

These criticisms fuelled the growing tensions between the English Grand Lodge and the Grand Orient of France. English freemasonry clearly did have a soul, but it was bound up with the Bibles in its lodge rooms, as the increasingly bitter exchanges between the French and English masonic press indicated. The French journal *Le Monde Maçonique* criticised English freemasons for making presentations to cathedrals, and urged them to devote themselves to moral architecture. In reply, the English weekly *The Freemason* criticised continental freemasonry as excessively mystical and denounced its views of philosophy, fraternity and universality as chimerical. It declared that the English point of view was more sure. Grounded in recognition of the supreme being, it did not exclude anyone of any religion. It relied on the Bible as a standard. English freemasonry had no philosophical aspirations or mystical illuminations, but rather simple and touching ceremonies: 'Non-Christian we are not, as opposed to Christians, but universal we are, in our scope and constitution.'

The United Grand Lodge of England produces an official statement on freemasonry and religion which is available on its web site and elsewhere. This stresses that freemasonry is not a religion, but that freemasonry supports religion. The Bible is open at all lodge meetings, and every freemason is instructed to place above all other duties his duty to God, by whatever name he is known. This carefully balanced statement reflects a tension as to the exact relationship of freemasonry to the Christian religion which goes back as far as the establishment of English Grand Lodge in 1717 and which is at the heart of the philosophical nature of English freemasonry. I would like to explore this theme further by looking briefly at six British masons who were particularly engaged with this issue. Some, such as William Stukeley, William Preston and George Oliver, are well-known in British masonic history. The other three, Godfrey Higgins, John Baxter Langley and Sir Herbert Dunnico, are more obscure, but in many ways even more interesting.

William Stukeley

In 1726, Sir Isaac Newton received a visitor at his London residence. They looked at the proofs of the new edition of Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, and discussed Solomon's Temple, which Newton considered to be the prototype of the great temples in Egypt and Greece. Newton's guest was the young physician and clergyman William Stukeley. Stukeley epitomised the wide-ranging intellectual interests of the period. He was a senior official of the College of Physicians, discussed astronomy with Newton and Halley, and helped establish the Society of Antiquaries. He is today best known for his work in documenting prehistoric monuments such as Stonehenge and Avebury. He had been fascinated by old buildings since childhood, learning how to measure height and making model buildings with miniature bricks he had moulded himself. On going to London, he became friendly with the builders working on St. Pauls and attended the topping-out ceremony for the cathedral. But Stukeley was not simply interested in old buildings for their own sake. Like Newton, he felt they held a key to understanding the biblical origin of all religion. He was seeking the Newtonian laws of religion.

Stukeley's insatiable curiosity led him in 1721 to become a freemason. He suspected masonry 'to be the remains of the mystery of the ancients'. Although the London Grand Lodge had been founded four years previously, Stukeley claimed that it was difficult to find sufficient freemasons to initiate him. He regretted the subsequent changes in freemasonry, writing that shortly after he was initiated 'it took a run, and ran itself out of breath through the folly of its members'. Nevertheless, Stukeley remained committed to freemasonry, and one of his first actions after moving to Grantham in Lincolnshire in 1726 was to establish a freemasons' lodge there.

Recent scholarship has emphasised the fundamental contribution of the Huguenot clergyman and scientist Jean Theophilus Desaguliers to the early development of English freemasonry, but we have little direct evidence of the nature of his contribution. It has been assumed that James Anderson in compiling the *Book of Constitutions* for Grand Lodge was guided by Desaguliers, but Anderson's criticism of those who saw God as simply a clockmaker or architect was apparently directed at Newtonians like Desaguliers, and suggests that Anderson has his own strong views on the relationship between freemasonry and religion. Stukeley's writings provide a further reminder that the early development of English freemasonry was the work of a group of men who had divergent religious views. Stukeley knew Desaguliers, but for him the more significant figures were the Duke of Montagu, the Duke of Richmond and Martin Folkes, all of whom served as Grand Master. Stukeley lamented that all these men were irreligious, singling out the influence of Martin Folkes as particularly malign. He complained that Folkes 'professes himself a godfather to all monkeys, believes nothing of a future state, of the Scriptures, of revelation'. He accused Folkes of perverting the Duke of Montagu, the Duke of Richmond and many other noblemen. In Stukeley's view, half the philosophers in London were infidels and the other half fanatics. This he declared made it impossible 'to keep a golden medium, or to see the great beauty of the Church of England in particular, of religion in general'.

The early development of Grand Lodge reflected a variety of reactions to the challenge posed by Newton to conventional religion. For Whig noblemen such as Montagu or Folkes, it provided a means of pursuing essentially Deist ideas. It seems from Desaguliers' poem on 'The Newtonian System of the World' as a model of government that for Desaguliers it provided a means of keeping these different philosophical and religious views in harmony. But perhaps the most original view was that of Stukeley, for whom freemasonry seems to have provided a key to understanding how earlier religions prefigured the modern religious settlement of the Church of England. For Stukeley, freemasonry provided a link back to the Druids, those Ancient British priests who were to haunt English freemasonry.

William Preston

It is impossible here to give a full account of the important contribution of Scottish freemasonry to masonic ideology in Britain. Modern freemasonry first developed in Scotland, and Scots continued to exert a major influence on English freemasonry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The importance of the Scottish contribution is illustrated by this man, William Preston, the foremost masonic teacher in England at the turn of the nineteenth century. Preston was a Scottish printer who, on moving to London, became manager of Strahans, the largest publishers in London. He supervised the publication of some of the most famous books of the time, such as Johnson's *Dictionary* and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and was considered one of London's finest judges of literary style. Preston was initiated as a mason in London in a lodge of Scotsmen operating under the Antients Grand Lodge, but soon switched his allegiance to the Premier Grand Lodge. He became Master of the Lodge of Antiquity, one of the four lodges which had formed the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717. Preston had an elevated view of the rights of his lodge, which eventually led to a titanic dispute with Grand Lodge.

On becoming Master, Preston wanted to find out more about the precepts of freemasonry, but could not find a satisfactory guide. He formed a reading group with a few masonic friends to discuss the ritual and its lessons. They felt that there was a need for a 'general reformation' of freemasonry which would encourage a more elevated view of its doctrines. In their opinion, unsuitable people became freemasons and rushed through the various degrees without understanding the lessons that they taught. Preston and his friends organised a gala under the auspices of Grand Lodge at which they spoke on the moral significance of each degree. Preston

published the lectures under the title *Illustrations of Masonry*. As the book was reprinted, he gradually developed it into a manual of masonic philosophy which was profoundly influential in both Britain and the United States.

Preston's book opened with a 'Vindication of Masonry' which encapsulates the philosophy of late-eighteenth-century English freemasonry. According to Preston, the roots of freemasonry lay in the contemplation of the symmetrical beauties of nature which revealed the hand of a divine creator: 'Whoever attentively observes the objects which surround him will find abundant reason to admire the works of nature and to adore the being who directs such astonishing operations'. For Preston freemasonry gave an opportunity to learn virtue by paying 'rational homage' to this deity. His efforts towards more dignified and solemn masonic practice were designed to enhance this message. As such, Preston's work can be seen as part of the 'reformation of manners' in Britain at this time, but Preston also stressed the universal message of freemasonry: 'the distant Chinese, the wild Arab, and the American savage will embrace a brother Briton and know that besides the common ties of humanity there is a still stronger obligation to induce him to kind and friendly offices'.

Despite this internationalist message, Preston's work reflects increasing tensions caused by the growth of the British Empire. In 1776, Lord Moira initiated the Persian ambassador Mirza Abul, and a few years later a Muslim son of the Nawab of the Carnatic was initiated at Madras. References to, for example, the use of the Bible in the earlier editions of Preston's work became increasingly inappropriate, and Preston in later editions stated that the volume of the sacred law should be whatever is understood to contain the word of God. Preston left no doubt however that he regarded christianity as the higher faith. In ushering through the Union between the two English Grand Lodges in 1813, the Duke of Sussex, who had been present at Mirza Abul's initiation, was anxious that the new Grand Lodge should help bind together the British Empire. Specifically christian references in the Book of Constitutions were dropped, but the Duke's ruling in 1840 that Muslims and Hindus could become freemasons caused consternation in India, and it was many years before District Grand Lodges in India were willing to admit Hindus. Even then influential freemasons in India continued to protest that only christians could truly understand masonry.

Godfrey Higgins

Preston's urbane depiction of freemasonry as a natural religion seems far removed from Stukeley's speculations about the druids, but the druids had not been forgotten. Preston himself gives a romanticised account of the druids, suggesting that they preserved secrets discovered by Pythagoras and that there were affinities between freemasonry and the druidic philosophy. The suggestion of a link between druids and freemasonry became the foundation of even more exotic speculations by one of the most remarkable British freemasons, Godfrey Higgins. Higgins inherited a large estate near Doncaster in Yorkshire. When Napoleon threatened invasion, Higgins became a major in the local militia but fell ill and resigned his commission. Becoming a local justice, he interested himself in social issues. He campaigned for better treatment of the insane and built a model asylum at Wakefield. He was invited to become a radical MP, but declined.

He was reluctant to pursue a political career because he had become deeply interested in the history of religion. His illness had prompted him to devote himself to the study of philosophy, and he decided to investigate the evidence for christianity. This developed into a study of the nature of all religions, and eventually became an investigation of the origins of language and nations. Higgins ruefully recollected that 'Ultimately I came to a resolution to devote six hours a day to this pursuit for ten years. Instead of six hours daily for ten years, I believe I have, upon the average, applied myself to it for nearly ten hours daily for almost twenty years. In the first ten years of my search I may fairly say, I found nothing which I sought for; in the latter part of the twenty, the quantity of matter has so crowded upon me, that I scarcely know how to dispose of it'.

The idea that freemasonry preserved the ancient learning of the Druids had been popularised in the eighteenth century by John Cleland, the author of the pornographic novel, *Fanny Hill*. The radical writer and deist Thomas Paine wrote an essay arguing that freemasonry preserved the ancient sun religion which was the root of all religions and of which christianity was a blasphemous perversion. Higgins took this idea further. In 1826, Higgins published a pioneering study of *The Celtic Druids* in which he argued that the Druids, in his view a priestly caste from India, worshipped the cross and anticipated many other elements of christianity, illustrating how christianity was a deliberate distortion of the true religion. Higgins was the one of the first scholars to point out the importance of phallus worship in ancient religions. The Celtic Druids was condemned as blasphemous by christians and excessively religious by deists. Like Stukeley, Higgins became a freemason to further his researches, although he refused to join the Royal Arch or the masonic Knights Templar for fear of being unable to reveal his discoveries in full.

Higgins's magnum opus was *Anacalypsis, An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or, an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions*. It was not published until after Higgins's death and only the first volume was completed. *Anacalypsis* sought to prove that all religions were descended from an ancient elite order of monks. Higgins proposed that stonemasons were 'the first priests, or a branch from them, and as they were the people employed to provide everything requisite for honouring the Gods, the building of the Temples naturally fell into their hands, and thus priests and masons were identified'. This ancient religion was called *Creestianity* (sic.) and embraced Jews, Buddhists, Brahmins and Muslims. This universal religion was 'a sublime

and beautiful system – the secret system of religion often alluded to by the christian fathers'. Freemasonry was a vestige of the ancient universal religion. Higgins added that 'I have stated enough to raise or justify what the Jesuits would call a probable opinion that the masonic ceremonies or secrets are descendants of the Eleusinian mysteries.' This for Higgins was the true secret of freemasonry, and in conversation with the radical Richard Carlile, Higgins claimed on this basis that he and the Duke of Sussex were the only two freemasons in England. Carlile was afterwards to popularise Higgins's view of freemasonry in his own Manual of Freemasonry.

Rev. George Oliver

The influence of Godfrey Higgins is evident in many esoteric and New Age movements in Britain, but the most surprising effect of Higgins's work was to give a renewed impetus to Christian apologists within English freemasonry, and particularly this man, the most celebrated English nineteenth-century writer on freemasonry, Rev. George Oliver. A Lincolnshire clergyman, Oliver was an energetic writer on freemasonry, religion and history, whose collected works fill 38 volumes. Oliver was excessively credulous, and was discredited as a historian of freemasonry by Robert Freke Gould, but his works are essential to understanding English freemasonry in the reign of Queen Victoria, as the recent biography of Oliver by Richard Sandbach has shown.

Oliver's initial researches into freemasonry were a reaction to Godfrey Higgins. Indeed, he was urged to tone down his discussion of phallic worship in his first book, *The Antiquities of Freemasonry*. Oliver accepted Higgins's assumptions about the antiquity of religion, but sought to show that early religions were part of God's purpose and paved the way for christianity, the highest expression of religious belief. He agreed with Higgins that freemasonry had existed from the earliest history of mankind, but saw it not as a remnant of an old religion but as the indispensable handmaid to the christian religion. In the words of Richard Sandbach, with the coming of Christ, 'a new system of morality and conduct sprang from the old, and again embraces everything necessary for carrying out God's will for mankind: this system does not provide or purport to provide the rules for religious celebration, or to dictate dogma, but concentrates on what man must do in his daily life on earth, how he must behave – a handmaid in fact to religion. Freemasonry is exactly that, and is the embodiment of that system'.

Thus, for Oliver freemasonry was a complement to christianity, and could only be fully appreciated by christians. In his own words, 'The entire system of masonry is contained in the Holy Scriptures. The Old Testament presents us with its history and legend, its types and symbols; and the New Testament with its morality, and the explanation of these allegorical references which were a sealed book until the appearance of the Messiah upon earth, and the revelation of its gospel'. In Oliver's view, while freemasonry did not exclude non-christians, they could never fully appreciate it. 'I presume not to say that masonry is exclusively christian... I only contend... that being a system of ethics and inculcating the morality of every christian religion under the sun, it is more particularly adapted to the Christian religion, because Christian ethics approach nearest to the standard of absolute perfection; and because the genius of masonry can assimilate with no other religion as completely as christianity'.

Oliver's teachings, constantly reiterated by masonic chaplains and popularised by masonic periodicals such as *The Freemason*, had an enormous impact on Victorian freemasonry. Oliver observed that there were two factions in English freemasonry, one more conservative and wishing to keep freemasonry more closed, and the other explicitly christian, outward-looking and keen to evangelise for freemasonry. Oliver became the sage of the christian party, which was led by the radical doctor Robert Crucefix. Crucefix urged Grand Lodge to be more active on social issues, proposing resolutions against slavery and campaigning for a home for elderly impoverished freemasons. He started the first major English masonic periodical, *The Freemason's Quarterly Review*. Crucefix was involved in a running battle with the conservative English masonic hierarchy, and Oliver was caught up in this, being dismissed from his Provincial office in Lincolnshire. Crucefix and Oliver actively promoted the christian higher degrees in England. The policy of using the masonic press and the higher degrees to christianise the craft in England continued to be pursued in England after the death of Crucefix and Oliver by other figures such as Rev. Robert Wentworth Little, the first editor of *The Freemason*.

John Baxter Langley

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution was founded in 1824 to provide lifesaving services on the British coast, and remains one of the most popular British charities, taking pride in providing this essential service without any state aid. Lifeboats were one of the most popular objects of nineteenth-century charity, with towns and social organisations competing to fund new boats. Although friendly societies such as the Oddfellows and the Foresters paid for new boats, freemasons were slow in rallying to the cause. *The Freemason's Magazine* began a campaign for a masonic lifeboat in 1868, but money was slow in coming in. Although two lifeboats were purchased with money collected from freemasons in 1871, the major impetus for masonic involvement with the lifeboat movement came in 1878, when two lifeboats were presented by United Grand Lodge itself. Since that time, English freemasonry has been staunch in its support of the lifeboats, a fact of which English freemasons are very proud. However, most freemasons are unaware that the origins of the masonic lifeboats lay in a further dispute about freemasonry and christianity, in which one of the most exotic figures of Victorian freemasonry, John Baxter Langley, played a central part.

Langley was a radical journalist in Manchester and Newcastle in the 1840s. He is best known for his support of the chartist revolutionary Ernest Jones in producing the radical publication *The People's Paper*. Langley was one of the prime movers of the Reform League, which campaigned for an extension of the right to vote. Langley was deeply interested in social questions, supporting Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant when they were prosecuted for advocating birth control and assisting Josephine Butler's unpopular campaign to reform the laws governing prostitution. Langley was chairman of a company to build better homes for the working classes, and the great catastrophe of his life was a conviction for fraud as a result of his lax management of the company. Langley's father had wanted him to be an Anglican clergyman, but Langley rebelled against the established church, and became a unitarian. He campaigned against the restrictive character of the Victorian Sunday, believing that workers should be able to attend educational events. He established a series of Sunday lectures, which allowed working people a chance to hear speakers on such controversial subjects as the theory of evolution. Langley was also an enthusiastic freemason. He proposed that a masonic hall should be erected at the heart of the working class estate his company was building in south London. In 1876, United Grand Lodge proposed that a charitable donation should be made from its funds as a thank-offering for the safe return of the Prince of Wales from a visit to India. It was suggested that the money should be used to repair the fabric of the cathedrals of St Paul's and St Albans. This sparked off a heated debate as to the propriety of using Grand Lodge funds for the maintenance of christian churches. Langley took a leading part in this. At one point, he caused uproar by claiming in a letter to The Freemason that the carvings on medieval cathedrals were remnants of phallus worship. In the subsequent correspondence, the name of Godfrey Higgins inevitably appeared. Following a debate in Grand Lodge, the matter was referred to a committee, of which Langley was a member. The committee decided that a donation to a secular charity was more appropriate, and recommended the purchase of lifeboats.

This debate illustrates the extent to which English freemasonry in the nineteenth century was split between a christianising party and a more conservative wing, composed of very disparate elements. The matter of the use of masonic funds to support the maintenance of cathedrals was to emerge again in 1895, when it was proposed that freemasons should give up one dinner a year to help pay for the completion of the decoration of St Paul's Cathedral. While Grand lodge funds were not used to provide assistance for church buildings, at a local level many Provincial Grand Lodges made donations to assist cathedrals and churches, and most English cathedrals contain testimony to financial assistance provided by local freemasons.

Rev. Sir Herbert Dunnico

In 1933, the East Anglian Daily carried a report of a masonic service held by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Essex at Chelmsford Cathedral. The report devotes considerable space to the sermon delivered at the service. Taking his text from St Paul, the preacher declared that 'The first great Masonic certainty was belief in God, the architect and ruler of the universe, and the father of all mankind.' The second great certainty, in the preacher's view, was that all things worked together for good. He went on to discuss immortality, and suggested that the most enduring lesson of human history was that the grave was not the end. 'Immortality cannot be proved on scientific lines. Our certainty of immortality is based upon the moral certainty of God. We believe in God, a moral God, and immortality is the outcome of that great certainty. If the grave is the end of all things, life is a grim satire, a grim joke, and the author of that grim joke is God. Never think God has abdicated his throne. The grave is not the last word; there are other spheres of service.'

The preacher was another remarkable but now forgotten figure of English freemasonry, the Rev. Sir Herbert Dunnico. Born in Wales, Dunnico started work in a factory at the age of ten but, studying in his spare time, eventually managed to win a scholarship to University College Nottingham and was ordained as a baptist minister in Warrington and Liverpool, becoming president of the Liverpool Free Church Council. He was a committed socialist and in 1922 he was elected as Labour M.P. for Consett. From 1929 to 1931 he was Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Commons, and he served as Deputy Speaker. As a freemason, Dunnico was instrumental in the formation of one of the most unusual lodges in the history of English freemasonry, the New Welcome Lodge No. 5139. This was consecrated in 1929, shortly before the formation of the first majority Labour government, at the suggestion of the then Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VIII. The Prince was concerned that socialists were being blackballed by masonic lodges in London and alarmed by the antagonism of the British left towards freemasonry. The New Welcome Lodge was intended specifically for Labour M.P.s and for employees of trade unions and the Labour party. It was intended to form a link between freemasonry and the new ruling party. Among the many Labour M.P.s which the lodge recruited were the Party's Deputy Leader Arthur Greenwood and its Secretary Scott Lindsay, but the formation of the National Government made it difficult to sustain the lodge from the rump of the Parliamentary Labour Party. From 1934, New Welcome became a lodge for all men working in the Palace of Westminster. Dunnico was Master of the New Welcome Lodge in 1931, when he helped avert a crisis in English freemasonry caused by a proposed rise in subscriptions to finance the building of a new Freemasons' Hall in London as a masonic peace memorial. This was the time when the depression had badly affected northern England, and the increase in suscription caused outrage among northern Freemasons. Dunnico rescued the situation with a masterly speech at a special meeting of Grand Lodge at the Royal Albert Hall.

Dunnico's career illustrates how, even for socialist freemasons in England, the religious aspects of freemasonry have been of paramount importance. The relationship between the non-conformist churches and freemasonry has generally been a suspicious one. When in 1895 a masonic service was organised at a non-conformist chapel in London, it was said to have been the first such service held on non-conformist premises and the thought that such a service could be held created astonishment. Non-conformists seem only to have become involved in freemasonry in any significant numbers after this date. Dunnico seems to have played a part in allaying non-conformist suspicions of freemasonry. Following his speech at the Royal Albert Hall, Dunnico became a popular speaker among English freemasons. While his talks show greater consciousness of social issues and the changing world situation than the writings of George Oliver, they are still very much in his tradition and in the tradition established by the battalions of Victorian masonic preachers.

A characteristic address by Dunnico was 'Masonry, A Sacred Heritage', delivered at the consecration of the John Evelyn Lodge No. 5518 in 1935. Dunnico described how fifty years previously countries could live independently but, in the world of the 1930s, which was shrinking to the size of a village, it was necessary to live in friendly brotherly cooperation, or life would become a perpetual hell. The masonic witness he declared was of greater importance than ever. It affirms that life is not meaningless and haphazard, but behind it is the guiding purpose of a Great Architect whose name is God, the father of all men. 'We affirm that because of our belief in the Fatherhood of God, the logical outcome is Brotherhood.'

'Brotherhood to us is no mere sentiment, no mere fond hope or pious aspiration, but an eternal law embedded in the very fabric of the Universe, which the world must obey or perish. Until men are willing to obey this law, economists may devise new systems, one set of politicians may replace another, and the Churches may utter their varying shibboleths, but the New Heaven and the New Earth, the New Jerusalem, will tarry. Our task is not to make Masonry fit in with the world, but to make the world fit in with Masonry by enthroning the spirit of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth in all the relations of life. The world cannot be held together by any outward pressure, but only by the growth of that inner spirit enshrined in the very soul of Masonry.

Standing here today we plight our faith in God, in the divinity of man, in the belief that love is the only cement that can hold the world together. We renew our allegiance to our home, our country, our King and our God. We pledge ourselves to the defence of Liberty, the practice of Justice, and the spread of brotherly love, that goodness may increase and pity walk the common way of life. Standing here we prophesy that the day will come when there shall be one language, and that language Truth, one law, and that law love, one task, that task service to God and man'.

Did Dunnico here locate the soul of British freemasonry? I believe so – the essence of British freemasonry lies in a brotherhood, but one which stems from a consciousness of God and which is rooted in a loyalty to the country and its monarchy. And of course in a nation whose views of God, the monarchy and the nature of patriotism have shifted fundamentally in the past fifty years, it is hardly surprising that the soul of British freemasonry is one which has of late been troubled, but that is another lecture.