



The Traveler

WILKERSON
COLLEGE
LODGE NO.
760



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Spring 2010

Purgatory

By: Bro. Ben Wallace

On October 31st, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of Wittenberg Castle Church. Little did anyone know that the nail he used would be the first nail in the coffin of yet another empire that was never supposed to collapse. The protestant reformation that followed tore a rent in Christendom, and began the slow death of the Holy Roman Empire. Several of the 95 theses revolved around the idea of "Treasury of Merit". In 1343 Pope Clement VI endorsed the idea that one could pay their way out of sin. More specifically, by paying indulgences, someone who was in a state of temporal sin could go to a place called Purgatory in lieu of going to hell. Purgatory is neither heaven, nor hell. It's akin to the waiting room. If you thought that upon death, you were destined for Hell, you could pay an indulgence to the Catholic Church, and go to the waiting room instead. It was a nifty idea for rich sinners, but Martin Luther didn't like it very much. He thought it was just a money making scheme. Additionally, there is very little evidence of the existence of purgatory in the Bible. Pope Clement VI made some very loose biblical interpretations to support the idea.



Bro. Ben Wallace

Real or imagined, I often find myself in my own version of Masonic purgatory. There seem to be two Master Masons inside of me, both vying for control. I admire men who can immediately assess any situation, decide where they stand on the issue, and dig in to defend that position. I'm not like that. I find that when I take that approach, I often find that my initial snap decision was not the correct one. I prefer to listen to all sides of a problem, decide what my course of action will be, and develop a plan. This makes me appear indecisive at times, but saves me from painting myself into corners. Masonically, the problem I'm dealing with has had me in the assessment mode for quite a while, with no answer in sight.

On one shoulder sits the blue lodge Mason. The love I feel for my blue lodge runs deep. The men of Blackmer Lodge are the men who sat in my living room and talked to me about the fraternity. They ensured I was duly and truly prepared for the degrees. They guided me when I was in darkness. These brethren spent many hours teaching me the ritual. They are the men I feel comfortable with. It is them I encounter at a local restaurant and have fellowship with. If I pass first, they will be the ones looking after my widow. When I am old, they will be the men who help me up the stairs to the lodge room. And when I am dead, it is they who will bury me. They accept me for who I am, and I them. They are good men. Next year, hopefully, they will choose me as their leader. I hope I can live up to their expectations. Having attended Wilkerson College, I feel *almost* prepared to preside in the East. I have a general outline of a plan. I have many goals to pursue, but I keep telling myself to slow down. My first obligation is to keep the ship "steady as she goes". I have to keep fighting down that other Mason inside me. He is the radical. *(Con't on page 7)*

The Chaplain's Corner

By: WB Rick Smith, PDDGM

In the previous two issues of The Traveler, we considered scripture references in the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft Degrees. Let us now review the scripture from the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

The Book of Ecclesiastes was supposedly written by Solomon in order to show the vanity of the world, and of human life and that no happiness can be expected by the human soul, but in the fear, love and obedience of God.

Of all the quotations, allusions, facts and names from the Great Light which are a part of the Masonic ritual, none has a more secure place in the hearts of the brethren than the first seven verses from Ecclesiastes 12.

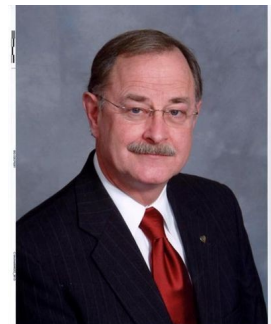
With the delivery of the scripture of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12 Verses 1 through 7, we begin the lessons that are taught and reemphasized throughout the degree. This passage of scripture begins with an admonishment to reflect on our Creator and remember our duties in the days of our youth, looking to God for grace and strength. We should do this early, while the body is strong and the spirit active. When a man has the pain of reviewing a misspent life, his not having given up sin and worldly vanities till he is forced to say, "I have no pleasure in them", renders his sincerity very questionable. The Twelfth Chapter begins with the admonition to every person that should remember to worship and praise God as his Creator beginning in the early days of his youth, while his mind is still strong and sharp, and not distracted by trivial or worldly matters, or weakened by the physical infirmities of old age.

Of the two favorite interpretations of Biblical commentators, one makes this dramatic passage a description of old age and senile decay. Verses 2 through 5 give a figurative description of old age and its many infirmities. The other a reference is to the seldom experienced and much feared thunder storm in Palestine. The physical interpretation may be most easily considered verse by verse:

1. "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them".
2. "While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:"

The darkening of light and luminaries refer to coming blindness or extreme near-sightedness, and the clouds which return after the rain to a continuation of poor sight, even after much weeping.

3. "In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened."



WB Rick Smith, Chaplain

Keep watching for upcoming issues to read the conclusion of this special three part article.

Change and Dining Out

Brother Benjamin Franklin is quoted as having said “when you are finished changing, you are finished” and I think there is a lot of truth to that statement. This year we are going to see at least one change in Wilkerson College Lodge. We are going to meet later in the afternoon at our June and December stated communications and, after the meeting and program, we are going to reconvene at a nice restaurant for an evening of good food and fellowship in a private to semi-private setting.

As in the past, our meetings will be closed to non-Masons but our program and “dining out” will be open to our families and guests. The June and December dinners will require reservations and it is intended to be somewhat of an upscale event; something that we would be proud to invite our wives and guests to!

At the present, final arrangements have not been made for our June 12th meeting in Chapel Hill but please mark your calendar and keep checking www.wcl760.com for updates.



Happy Birthday to the Following Members

MARCH

Dalton Mayo - 30
 Fred Sessions - 24
 Gary Handy - 17
 Jesse Bowman - 25
 Jim Medlin - 25
 Joel Black - 7
 Lance Cable - 10
 Rick Moore - 11

APRIL

Ben Oakes, Jr. - 5
 Jonathan Johnson - 12
 Ozzie Bass, Jr. - 21
 Robert "Boog" Powell - 5
 Tom Gregory - 8
 Ben Wallace - 18

MAY

Bill Simpson - 14
 Doug Wright - 17
 Jim Tyson - 20
 Kevin Kubacki - 9
 Larry Thompson - 11
 Mark Edwards - 15
 Roger Meacham - 24
 Vernon Smith - 10



The Strength of your Temple

By: Bro. Josh Edwards

In my favorite fiction, the main character has developed what he calls a "memory palace". This is a place where he stores everything important to him. Sights, scents, and sounds, all stored as rooms in this ever growing mental-structure. This character and his story are unimportant, it's more the concept behind the palace that inspires this week's message.

In your quest for further light, there is a place deep in your subconscious where you store your memories. You may not have named yours like the character above, but it's there. I have one. It's where your catechisms are stored, your oaths, your handshakes, and our secret word...all there. In addition to these there is another item stored here: Your Masonic motivations.

In some masons the motivation is subdued, taken out at gatherings and meetings. In others it stamps and snorts like a wild horse trapped in a small stable. There's no punishment or judgment leveled against one mason's motivation versus another. We all know that you get out what you put in.

But that's a message worth discussing later...maybe next week...

In your Masonic memory palace, or rather your Masonic memory "temple", you keep the things that mean the most to you. But what holds it together?

With every temple there are bricks: stones that make up the walls and floors of any structure. They may be hewn in some distant quarry or chiseled free from their rough forms on the psychological job site, but they're there. They have to be. Now we know that the great temple was built without mortar. Each stone cut to a precise measurement and fit with divine-skill with it's brothers in the foundation.

I wouldn't dare to say that I have that skill, to work with such precision. As today's Masons, there are very few whom I've met that could lay claim to such talent. We are left to chisel the rough stones and place them with mortar. By this I mean that in our pursuits for this skill, we must study what has come before. We must learn what the master craftsmen knew. Like it or not, for the most of us, we are no more than entered apprentices in the massive construction of Masonry in this era.

So what do we use as mortar in our Temples? Our actions.

Each Mason begins each day on the level. We all wake with the same opportunities in Masonry. Given that we all have different lives, incomes, family obligations, and problems, but in our Masonic lives we all stand and start each day equal. It's what you do within the hours of your day that establishes the strength of the mortar in your Masonic Temple.

Every action that you commit to, every speech, every decision strengthens or weakens your stance in Masonry. We all need to be aware of this. It's an undeniable fact.

Our actions as Masons effect the world. Think about it: You're in the grocery store. An elderly lady can't reach an item on an upper shelf. Do you walk by? Do you help her? Your decision not only effects that poor woman's life (if even for just a moment), but everyone else on that aisle that notices the act will be effected by your kindness.

These acts seem little and sometimes beneath us. I'm guilty. I've passed by someone in need because I was either in a hurry or didn't "want to get involved". I know that those decisions I made were wrong and I know that those actions weakened a wall in my Temple. Can you say the same? Are you aware of your Masonic short-comings? You wouldn't be human, much less Masons if you didn't.

But I do not dwell on my failures as a Mason. I use them as motivation to better myself among the craft. I encourage you to do the same.

Be aware of your actions. Understand that your temple is held together by the mortar of your behavior as a Mason. The strength of your Masonic Temple is only as strong as that effort. Understand that the importance of brotherly love and fellowship extends beyond the doors of your lodge room.

The world needs to know that masons are what we claim to be; a strength in our communities. We can stand on the walls of our temple and shout to the world how great Masonry is, but words fade. How many great speeches have you heard? How many of those perfectly laced words do you see laying on the ground.

(Con't page 5)

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None. They vanish as soon as the wind that carries them dissipates.

But the actions of great men are eternal. The temples that these men built (Masonic or not) remain throughout history. They stand with the mortar of their actions holding their walls fast against the tide of time.

We, as Masons need to strengthen our actions. We need to show the world that we are reliable, true and worthy of their respect. How do we do that?

By coming together. By removing the divide that splits our fraternity. By overcoming the racial cracks that the outside world perceives as our traditions. We need to change the way Masonry appears on the surface.

I have my actions in mind. I have a team of brothers that stand with me in the North, that are working towards this goal. We are strong in our beliefs that we will make Masonry stronger for the Masons of the future.

No longer will our temples be made of white stone alone. Our temples are rising with new, marbled granite and these stone will be stronger with that mixture of elements.

These bricks are grand. The concept behind them is simple: unify Masonry. But none of it will matter if our actions weaken the mortar that binds them together. So we, the Masons in the North, are working to improve through our actions. We have our plans.

The author of this article, Brother Josh Edwards, is a member of Bula Lodge No. 409 - Greensboro Scottish Rite Valley and is a graduate of Wilkerson College class of 2009.

Did you know that Wilkerson College Lodge has a new website? The address is the same: www.wcl760.com but the look is totally new. We have done our best to collect papers and presentations from previous speakers but there are several that we are missing. If you have presented a program to the lodge in the past and you do not see it listed in the "Masonic Library", please get in touch with Larry Thompson at larry@thompsonenv.com.

A special thank you is in order for W.B. Lloyd Wilkerson who made the new website a reality!

Wilkerson College 2010

By: WB Larry Thompson, PDDGM

The enrollment deadline for Wilkerson College has passed and we have a full class once again! Unfortunately, our Dean of Admissions was forced to turn away six candidates who did not meet the admissions deadline this year – a Wilkerson College first. We hope that these brothers will have the opportunity to attend next year.



WB Larry Thompson
Assistant Dean

The college received eleven requests for financial assistance and, thanks to your continued support of Wilkerson College Lodge we were able to help meet some of these requests through our scholarship program. As in years past, the lodge will once again sponsor the *Dan Weatherington, Dean Emeritus Scholar* and the *Dudley H. Sheppard Memorial Scholarship*.

We continue to receive complaints each year that information pertaining to the college is not readily available to the general membership. In an effort to help resolve this problem and create a “permanent home” for Wilkerson College, the Board of Regents have given tentative approval to begin the process of procuring a dedicated website for the college. Look for the website to be unveiled within the next few

Upcoming Lodge Schedule 2010

April 10, 2010: Meeting hosted by Friendship Lodge No. 763 - Broadway, NC
M.W. Brother William L. Dill, Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina will be our guest speaker - Meeting begins at 11:00 AM

June 12, 2010: Meeting hosted by University Lodge No. 408 and Mosaic Lodge No. 762 - Chapel Hill, NC
Brother Steven Campbell will be presenting "Waterloo" - semiannual "dining out" to follow the meeting ([reservations are required](#))
Meeting will begin at 4:00 PM with our dinner following at 6:30 PM

August 7, 2010: Meeting hosted by Widow's Son Lodge No. 519 - Roanoke Rapids, NC
W. Brother Mark Sanders will be presenting "The Correlation of our Degree Lectures and the Scriptures" - Meeting begins at 11:00 AM

October 2, 2010: Meeting hosted by Orphans Lodge No. 761 - Oxford, NC
Speaker to be determined - Meeting begins at 11:00 AM

December 11, 2010: Meeting at the Greensboro Masonic Temple - Greensboro, NC
Officer Elections and Installation Ceremony - semiannual "dining out" to follow the Installation of Officers ([reservations are required](#))
Meeting will begin at 4:00 PM with our dinner following at 6:30 PM

The next issue of "The Traveler" will be published on or about June 12, 2010. Anyone with articles or suggestions should contact Gary Handy, Editor at garyhandy@msn.com or Larry Thompson, Assistant Editor at larry@thompsonenv.com

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Wilkerson College Lodge's Mission Statement

The mission of Wilkerson College Lodge is to foster a flame of brotherly love and friendship that will surpass all differences, envelope all similarities and consistently travel that level of time in search of how to make good men better. As speculative Masons, education will be our greatest tool, so as to instill in our future Masters qualities of leadership, responsibility and compassion.



Mailing Address

Purgatory

continued from front page

The radical Mason is a super hero, and he sits on the other shoulder. He wants me to fight the good fight for every cause. I'm Admiral Farragut saying, "damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead". Or I am Washington, marching on Trenton. Next I'm Cliff Porter, proselytizing for the very soul of Masonry. Then maybe Don Quixote De La Mancha tilting windmills. Perhaps I'm GM Toby Fitch singing "this Little Light" to 400 white guys. I want every member to dress up for lodge, because it is that important to them. I don't want keep our education program short, so that we can be home early. I want to explore the more esoteric and mystical aspects of the craft. I want Masonry to be special. Dan Weatherington asked in Miracle "what could twenty-five of thirty good, and involved Masons in a lodge accomplish?" It was this sentiment that induced me to join Wilkerson College Lodge. It is Wilkerson College Lodge that quenches my thirst of the radical Mason. That Mason who will drive halfway across the state for a two-hour lodge meeting. I pray that Wilkerson College Lodge continues to be the proactive, educational, and enlightened force that keeps me motivated. I love this radical Mason that lives inside me. But I must keep him segregated from the Blue Lodge Mason.

And so I find myself drifting between these two Masonic identities, constantly wondering which one is the real me. Am I neither, or am I both. Purgatory. Of course, maybe I'm looking at this wrong. Perhaps instead of trying to amalgamate the two into one, I should accept the two sides for what they are. My blue lodge can continue to be the base, satisfying my more elemental needs. The Blackmer brethren will provide the comfort and stability that they always have. Wilkerson College Lodge can continue to nurture the need for further enlightenment in Masonry. Through their continued commitment to education, they constantly provide insight into the true teachings of the fraternity. This, and a constant dedication to excellence in every aspect of the workings of Masonry, may allow me to have the best of both worlds. Instead of melding the two into one, perhaps as I've heard somewhere, the key is to maintain harmony and balance.

