

Book Review by W. Bro. Rob Lund

THE SECRET TEACHINGS OF ALL AGES—By Manly P. Hall

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OUTLINE OF MASONIC, HERMETIC, QABBALISTIC AND ROSICRUCIAN SYMBOLICAL PHILOSOPHY, Being an Interpretation of the Secret Teachings concealed within the Rituals, Allegories, and Mysteries of all Ages

This book, published in 1928, is a major work that provides an outline of the teachings of all the major mystery schools throughout the ages.

It starts off with Ancient Mysteries and Secret societies that have influenced modern Masonic symbolism: Druidic, Mithraic, Christian, Gnostic, Serapian, Odiric, Eleusinian, Orphic, Baccic, Dionysinian, Cabiric, and more. It moves on to Hermetic, and the Pyramid mysteries, Isis, Osiris, Solar mysteries, zodiacal, and oracular mysteries. There is a large section on Pythagoras—philosophy, mathematical, musical, and color symbolism. The Hiram legend is addressed.

There is a large section on symbolism of fishes, insects, birds, animals, reptiles, flowers, plants, fruits, and trees, as well as stones, metals and gems.

Ceremonial magic is addressed and a treatise on the elements and their inhabitants, including elemental beings.

Then comes a large section on Qabbalistic thought, the Tabernacle in the wilderness, an explanation of the Tarot, and the theory and practice of Alchemy. Rosicrucianism is mentioned, as well as Christian Mysticism, and there is an interesting section on the true meaning and interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John.

Islam is addressed briefly, and American Indian symbolism.

These are tied together in a section on Masonic symbolism.

Those who have read other books by Manly P Hall will know that he is well versed in ancient mysteries, and it really shows in this work. While he is sometimes heavy reading, there is plenty of interest to all, and will keep you engaged.

Hall finishes off with a concluding chapter that summarizes the philosophies expounded in the book. This chapter left me awed! This conclusion sums up, for me, in words I am unable to come up with myself, a statement of what life should be like and how it should be lived, and is really a summary of what Freemasonry is all about, and what it means to me. In fact, extracts from this chapter will be reproduced elsewhere in this publication.

This is a must-read for all Masons.