

T.F.S.
Three, five, and seven
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By Ed Halpaus, for the education Committee of the G.L. of MN
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“All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief. They are all brothers. The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it. You might as well expect the rivers to run backward as that any man that was born a free man should contend with penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases.” Chief Joseph

The Saint John’s Bible and G. Washington & B. Franklin

By Ed Halpaus, FPS

Every four years, when a new U.S. President is sworn into office, Masons speak of the Bible from St. John’s Lodge in New York City; the Bible Brother Washington used when he took the oath of office as President of the United States of America. Brother Alan Boudreau.ⁱ In his paper “George Washington and New York City,” gives us some interesting information about that Bible and Washington’s inaugural ceremony.

The “Presidential Bible” was presented to St. John’s Lodge by Jonathan Hampton in 1770; it is a King James Bible complete with the apocrypha. The Bible was held by M.W. Brother Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor of New York State, and Grand Master of Masons in New York when he administered the oath of office.

Brother Washington placed his right hand on the open Holy Bible, at the conclusion of the oath Washington bent forward as he spoke saying “I solemnly swear,” and kissed the Bible. The Chancellor replied “it is done,” and proclaimed to the gathered audience “Long live George Washington, President of the United States.”

In the history of the U.S, and world there have been many who tirelessly worked together towards the goal of liberty and freedom. They may not have all had a real affection for each other, but many if not most of them did: Two who did truly like each other were W. Brother Washington and M.W. Brother Benjamin Franklin.

It has always been a tradition in Masonic Lodges in the U.S. to commemorate Washington’s birth-date, at a communication near the 22nd of February, with some traditional food and some information about our Brother and first President of the United States. There has been quite a bit written about Brother Washington, and I would say that it might be possible to have a library composed of only books and articles about him. I read once that more has been written about him than any other single American.

Rather than write something new about him here, (as if one could,) I would like to share something with you that I have in a rare book.ⁱⁱ These are letters from Brother Benjamin Franklin to Brother George Washington and Brother Washington’s letter in return to Brother Franklin.

These letters demonstrate the affection these two Masons had for each other, as well as the patriotism both had for their country. The United States owes a lot to these two men, and as Masons we can all be proud of all they did for freedom.

To: George Washington from Benjamin Franklin. Philadelphia, 16 September, 1789.

“Dear Sir;

*My malady renders my sitting up to write rather painful to me; but I cannot let my son-in-law, Mr. Bache, part for New York, without congratulating you by him on the recovery of your health, so precious to us all, and on the growing strength of our new government under your administration. For my own personal ease, I should have died two years ago; though those years have been spent in excruciating pain, I am pleased that I have lived them, since they have brought me to see our present situation. I am now finishing my eighty-fourth year, and probably with it my career in this life; but in whatever state of existence I am placed in hereafter, if I retain any memory of what has passed here, I shall with it retain the esteem, respect, and affection, with which I have long been, my dear friend, yours most sincerely.
B. Franklin.”*

From George Washington: To Benjamin Franklin. New York, 23 September, 1789.

“Dear Sir,

The affectionate congratulations on the recovery of my health, and the warm expressions of personal friendship, which were contained in your letter of the 16th instant, claim my gratitude. And the consideration, that it was written when you were afflicted with a painful malady, greatly increases my obligation for it.

Would to God, my dear Sir, that I could congratulate you upon the removal of that excruciating pain, under which you labor, and that your existence might close with as much ease to yourself, as its continuance has been beneficial to our country and useful to mankind; or, if the united wishes of a free people, joined with the earnest prayers of every friend to science and humanity, could relieve the body from pains or infirmities, that you could claim an exemption on this score. But this cannot be, and you have within yourself the only resource to which we can confidently apply for relief, a philosophic mind.

*If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know, that you have not lived in vain. And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured, that, so long as I retain my memory, you will be recollected with respect, veneration, and affection by your sincere friend,
George Washington.”*

ⁱ A Daily Advancement in Masonic Knowledge, Published by the Masonic Book Club. P.O. Box 1563 Bloomington, IL 61702-1563

ⁱⁱ The Works of Franklin, Vol. X by Jared Sparks

Words to Live By: Never let yesterday use up today!

The Education Videos by our education committee can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/glmned>

The latest Masonic Monday Question, and some of the past questions, can be viewed at www.Lodgebuilder.org and at www.mn-masons.org

**Seek to mentor a Brother Mason:
It's good for him, it's good for you, and it's good for Freemasonry!**