

GRAND LODGE BULLETIN

Grand Lodge of Alberta..... A. F. and A. M.

Vol. 2.

April 1937

No. 8

THE PESSIMISTIC NOTE

The other day I met a Grand Lodge officer whom I hold in high esteem. He quietly asked me why I had adopted so pessimistic a note in the Grand Lodge Bulletin. I have received several comments on the Bulletin from Lodges and individuals but, strange to say, this is the first direct criticism I have been offered and I appreciate it all the more for that.

That evening I read over the back numbers of the Bulletin in the light of the worthy brother's remark but cannot agree that the contents are unduly pessimistic. They are critical in places without doubt, but this has been deliberate and if the choice of clippings reflects my own view that must be expected in a "one man show". If it is true that I am critical, and I hope I have been sanely critical, what of it? To the best of my knowledge I have made no statement which was not strictly true nor expressed any belief which I do not feel sound. In my humble judgment Freemasonry is due not only for criticism but for deliberate and serious re-examination if it is to serve this day and generation as it can.

Nor need these comments be interpreted as an attack upon the ancient philosophy of the Order. Setting aside the peculiarity of opinion of ritual makers over the decades since Freemasonry was reborn in 1717 and which modern knowledge must reject as little short of nonsense, the real criticism of Freemasonry is not on its faith or foundations but on its effect in action. Its effect on its own devotees, upon the men who have taken its obligations, and their influence upon the life of our country.

Consider the number of men under thirty years of age who have been added to the ranks in the last five years. It is not enough to answer that during the depression young men did not have the fee we demand. Fewer young men may have the fee, but fewer still have the inclination.

Mother Nature will take care of us in due course. Is Freemasonry to lapse into the possession of a few inelastic old men, to die with them? Therein may be the fatalistic view but it must stand, for in the opinion of the present writer the facts of the hour suggest a parlous position.

To my good brother and to any other of the same mind I venture to quote a

paragraph from my address as Grand Master in -1929- the year of the financial catastrophe and the commencement of the depression:

"Agitative movements are not always destructive for they may direct attention to the quiet and orderly progress of the institution, driving in spite of deadweight and setback, to the destined goal. They may assist in removing useless husks and timeworn irritations and help us to speed the wheel of progress toward that goal".

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since that was written, but I believe it still true and that we are not doing much about it!

A.M.M.

WHY I AM A MASON

(The fifth and final answer)

Our duty to our neighbor consists in being socially useful. This means that our constant and unremitting aim should be to make the world a better place because of our having been in it. No matter what our calling may be we can make of it something more than a mere job. We can find in it a field for service. I AM A MASON because Masonry throughout the entire body of its teaching emphasizes this responsibility so to live that succeeding generations may rejoice in the social benefits resulting from our efforts.

A.E.O.

MASONIC CHARITY

Masonic charity is primarily not corporate, institutional, but individual and personal.

True Masons practise charity themselves; do not send "cases" to Lodges and Grand Lodge. They do not pay Lodge dues for the purpose of ridding themselves of the poor. They give aid personally, for the enrichment of their own souls.

They regulate the dollar costs of Lodge charity. They keep their Lodge credit good. They save with fortitude and justice, and spend with temperance and prudence.

From the address of M.W. Bro. Leslie M. Scott,
Grand Master, Oregon, 1954.

THE CORONATION

The Grand Master hopes that each lodge in the jurisdiction will at their regular meeting (or emergent meeting if they so wish) in the month of May, mark this momentous occasion in some fitting manner. He would suggest that as the King Emperor in solemn ceremony dedicates himself with his beloved Queen to the service of all his peoples, high or low, rich or poor, each one of us, his subjects, as Masons in open lodge, should rededicate ourselves to the service of our country, the Dominion, and the great Empire of which it is a part, by expressing our fealty to the Sovereign who is the visible head.

At the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge a message of loyalty on behalf of all lodges will be sent to their Majesties through the proper channels.

GOD SAVE THE KING!

A WORLD LEAGUE OF FREEMASONRY

In the Transactions of the Masters and Past Masters Lodge No. 13, of Christchurch, New Zealand, issue of July 1936, is a timely and interesting article concerning a proposed League of Freemasons, written by C. W. Tremewan, from which the following is extracted:

"It is quite evident that apathy and indifference to the laws of God are the main causes of the present-day world problems. What a different picture would be presented to the world if the late Sir Alfred Robbins' vision of a League of Freemasons were accomplished! He said: 'If this were adopted as the Masonic Ideal, means would be found to make it real. While statesmen have striven to stabilize a League of Nations, there could be set up for the brethren allied in principle and practice a League of Masons. Reverent recognition of the Eternal, resolute renouncement of the political — these are the foundation and cornerstones of the Masonic system. On such a basis a superstructure could be raised, perfect in its parts and honorable to the builders, embracing as in a house of many mansions the vast Masonic family, independent as units, united as a whole....It may be only a vision, but a vision inspired,'

"In the pursuit of so high an endeavor, difficulties exist only to be dispersed. If Freemasons throughout the world were united zealously and earnestly, what inestimable service they could render, and what a tremendous influence they would wield, not only to the Brotherhood but to mankind, by more intimacy of association, elevation of idea, and intensity of aim. It has been stated that if a hundred men in any country were convinced of the desirability of a certain issue, they could change the current of thought of life in that country.

"As we go through life we are often brought up against things which seem too much for us. Difficulties tower above us like a mountain. Yet how often, when we have summoned up all our faith, and cast ourselves in utter trust upon the power of God, these difficulties have fallen before us. Think how the message in Zachariah 4, given by the prophet some two thousand years ago — 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts' — is precisely the one needed to-day, at this difficult time of world re-construction. The supreme need of all men is such a faith in God as can remove mountains of difficulty. This should then stimulate us to more earnest prayer for the peoples of the world and the leaders of the nations, that they may trust not in human devices nor in the 'might' of force, but in the 'power' of the spirit."

FOR ALL ETERNITY

"For Eternity deals with the long haul! They who are Eternity-minded are stabilized. Nothing disastrous can happen to them. Their ups and downs compensate. They expect their ship to pitch and roll, but they know it will not capsize. When some mental, moral or physical victory is won by a group — for a season — they do not raise the hysterical shout that the Kingdom has come! And when some circumstance has brought on a period of savage selfishness, ruthless fraud, and the various phenomena of retrogression, they do not whine — 'Lo, there goes the Kingdom'. If you are Eternity-conscious, you are not only insured against being kited into transient ecstasies — loaded with the makings of disappointment — but protected against buckling under the strain of some apparent catastrophe."

— Lloyd C. Douglas in "Green Light"

OPPRESSION

It is common knowledge that in certain European countries Masonry has been made the victim of vicious and stupid persecution. Grand and subordinate Lodges have been dissolved and individual Masons threatened with loss of business, of liberty, even of life. It has been (and is) a campaign of attempted annihilation, a chapter torn by present day dictators from the history of the Dark Ages.

I have read many letters from these over-seas brethren, and they have told simply and vividly their own story of oppression. While they voice a profound regret over the loss of fraternal contact, their messages reveal an undercurrent of confidence in the enduring vitality of Freemasonry, and a hope that they may live to see it resume eventually its rightful and honored place. And it will be so; an eclipse is not destruction.

Was it not Emerson who said that if humanity were permitted to view a glorious sunrise but once in half a century, it would be an event of transcendent importance? And is it not a fact that we must lose our greatest privileges before we realize how rich we were in their possession?

Picture our state of mind if we were to be suddenly deprived of all our Masonic rights and privileges - temples closed - fraternal bonds broken - the ministrations of Masonry alive only in memory.

Yet the values are in no degree lessened because they are actually and securely ours. We do live in a country founded upon liberty, justice, and equality of opportunity, free thought, free speech, a free press; Masonry in our nation is not threatened. But have we not seriously discounted our own usefulness and our own rewards by taking all this too much for granted?

One serious problem is that of attendance. Far too small a proportion of the resident membership avail themselves of the fine privilege of attending the various meetings. They unthinkingly cut themselves off from the influence of Masonry as it is always found in the Lodge room, and from the fraternal associations likewise possible. Furthermore, the inspiration of their presence is needed, first, by the officers who have, for the time being, the chief responsibility of a constructive administration; second, by the one who is crossing the threshold of Masonry, who may naturally wonder why degrees which are so impressive and significant to him have aroused the interest of so few of the membership.

These over-seas brethren who have had their Masonry so ruthlessly cut from under their feet (but not out of their hearts) would be happy to have restored to them the privilege of attending Lodge. Let us feel a deeper sense of loyalty, and cease magnifying a slight inconvenience into a valid excuse for absence. Furthermore, it is squarely up to the Worshipful Master and his associate officers to inject a note of Masonic interest, in addition to the degree work, into every meeting. A wealth of material is available. Attendance will be better when the membership understands that there is an intelligent and persistent effort to make the Lodge meeting not merely an incident, but an event.

— Burton H. Saxton, P.G.M., Ohio.