



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: A. M. Mitchell, P.G.M.

## A POINT WITHIN A CIRCLE

*"The point represents the individual Brother; the circle, the boundary line of his conduct toward God and man."*

**P**ERHAPS at no time in the world's history has the weight of significance in this time-honored sentence borne more heavily upon the shoulders of the individual Brother than in the present. In the daily social contacts with his fellows, every man has intimations of his own individuality and of his particularly personal responsibility to himself as a living entity, different and entirely separate from every other. In the scheme of things it seems well that this is so, for in the aggregation of differing individualities lies the hope of the race.

The message of the particular admonition from which the sentence is taken is all too often lost, as is many another in the ceremonies and lectures, by the fact that the depth of its significance is covered by words. Should you who read this doubt, take a walk outside alone on a dark but starry night. You will find yourself so definitely a microscopic point in the macrocosm of the universe that, if you have sensibilities at all, you will gasp as in discovery and listen with sharpened senses when next you hear the ritualist deliver the well-worn phrases.

The effect of such an experience may be to make the individual despair of his own impotence, but that, too, will force him to recognize that if impotent as an individual he can join forces in common cause with other individuals and, despite fundamental differences, unite in mutual understanding and support.

This, indeed, is Freemasonry. It is not a system whereby any individual or group of individuals may force their will upon others, but the expression of the knowledge that within the circle of human experience the individual can contribute to the group and the group to the common stock.

Then, too, the individual Freemason must realize that upon his shoulders rests the weight of representation of Freemasonry among those with whom he comes in contact. He is the keeper of the gate, the custodian of the faith and, in the measure of his individual loyalty, is the strength and weakness of the group, for here, as always, the strength of the chain is the strength of its weakest link.

## MARCH REGULAR MEETINGS DECLARED RALLY NIGHTS

The Grand Master has declared the regular meetings in March of all Lodges in the Jurisdiction to be Rally Nights for the **Grand Master's War Defence Fund**. It is his desire that suitable programs be arranged by each Lodge for the occasion.

**A Minimum Objective of \$25,000.00** has been set for this fund, which is for the relief of suffering and distress caused by the War. All members of the Craft in Alberta should rally to its support and thereby demonstrate their loyalty to their country and to the principles of Freemasonry.

Many a young Mason coming to the Order with fresh mind grasps the significance of the hoary old ceremonies in greater measure than we are willing to credit but, alas, finds shortly his enthusiasms blunted, his sense of discovery dulled and vanished because the elder brethren seem to accept the oft-repeated truths as mere ceremony to be performed of necessity that he may become one of the band.

Let him be assured that his young enthusiasm and his keen perspicacity are the lights constantly illuminating for his elders the experience of the ages and their own individual responsibility to recognize, practise and propagate as fundamental for human progress those things which by all men have been found good.

The individual's reaction to his environment, the one the point, the other the circle, is his hope of survival now and hereafter and the contribution of his experience to the accumulated experience of his forbears is the continuing force which carries humanity forward.

When the intimations of individual personality come, as they will, to the point within the circle of circumstance, let him remember that he has but to stretch forth a hand to find a Brother searching in the self-same secret places of the heart, that in union is strength and that in the words of Henley, as a Free and Accepted Mason:

"I am the Master of my Fate,  
I am the Captain of my Soul."

A.M.M.

## PROGRESSIVE MASONRY

### 2. SYSTEM AND MORALITY

By R. W. Bro. A. E. OTTEWELL, P.G.R.

(The Second of a Series of Six Papers)

*Editor's Note.*—Opinions expressed and speculations advanced in articles of this kind are the writer's own. Official approval of Grand Lodge is neither expressed nor implied.

"MASONRY is a system of morality." In this statement there are two important words. They are "system" and "morality". The word "system" is derived from a Greek word which means "to put together in an orderly way according to some agreed plan." The plan used may be any one of several possible choices. But once the particular one to be followed has been selected it should be consistently used. It will be recalled that the instruction to the candidates for one of the degrees contains a review of what is supposed to have been learned previously and also a statement of the teaching of the particular degree. The attempt is made at this point to show that the teaching of Masonry is arranged in an orderly way. Few men ever learn to arrange their thoughts or ideas according to any plan. The practicing Mason should make some effort to do so.

However, the much more important word is "morality". What is morality? Do we all understand it to mean the same thing? Here again we may get some help from a study of the derivation of our word. "Morality" comes from a Latin word which means the habitual, customary or generally accepted way of doing things or of behavior. The word referred to is "*mores*". There is a Latin motto which reads "*mores sunt maximi*". A free translation would be "character is the most important thing".

One of the things which impresses the student of history is that what is accepted as the usual way of conduct at one time is not accepted at another. This depends on standards which are simply measuring sticks. What is to be used as a standard depends upon the common agreement of the people who live in a community at a certain time. The Puritans who came to America in the *Mayflower* fled from the Old World because the standards accepted by the majority of their fellow countrymen were not acceptable to them. They were undergoing what amounted to persecution because they would not conform, particularly in matters of religion. When they arrived in New England they set up a society with their own code of religion and morals. The curious thing is that although they sought religious freedom they in turn would not willingly allow others in their new home to have what they claimed for themselves. In their view many things not considered immoral by the majority in their old home were judged to be immoral if not even irreligious in New England. Some persons were believed to have commerce with the Devil and were tried for witchcraft if we are to believe the

records. Even matters of conversation and dress came under review and regulation. So we see two standards of morality existing side by side in time and only separated by geography.

In some parts of the world polygamy is an accepted custom. A Mohammedan in Africa or Asia may have several wives and be without reproach. A Canadian who marries more than one is tried for bigamy. To own human beings as slaves was socially and morally acceptable even in North America within the memory of people still living. Now the owning of slaves would be frowned upon. Again in different times and places drunkenness and sexual promiscuity involved little or no reproach but in our community are considered immoral.

It is not easy to decide just what the so called moral law should approve or condemn. What has been suggested is that the moral law is not a fixed and unchanging thing, but is subject to change and, it is hoped and believed, progressive development.

In a democratic society an attempt is made to have the powers of government derive from the consent of the governed. But there is a practical limit to the application of this principle. Clearly, criminals would not by their own consent send themselves to jail. So the matter is settled by the device of majority rule. But if majority rule is to work without anarchy two things are necessary. The majority must use its power with restraint and the minority must accept gracefully the fact that for the moment its views do not prevail and that it must await the time when those views will prevail.

From the above it should be clear that what is considered moral conduct at any time will be determined by the agreement of a preponderant majority of the people of good will of the community. And further, the standards will change from time to time. The danger which will occur will depend upon the views with respect to conduct which prevail. What those views will be at any given time in turn will depend upon the efforts being made by individuals and groups to cultivate and strengthen beliefs in the things thought desirable.

Masonry has great principles which its devotees believe will, if applied, be helpful. They have not yet been applied in any general way. Progressive Masonry must leave no stone unturned in an effort to prepare society to adopt new standards which will ensure a continuously more healthy moral tone in the community and the world.

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"The purpose of Freemasonry is to educate the individual to do the right thing, and if Masonry is to function to the point of greatest efficiency, we must as individual members, give the best we have to it, and become an active part in the whole in promoting the principles it promulgates."

—Tyler-Keystone.

## THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS OF MASONRY

By V. W. Bro. WM. R. DAVIS, Calgary

(Conclusion)

*Editor's Note.*—Opinions expressed and speculations advanced in articles of this kind are the writer's own. Official approval of Grand Lodge is neither expressed nor implied.

SOME seventy years ago the Masonic world was electrified when it was announced that the Grand Lodge of England had severed all communication with the Grand Orient of France. Popular belief was then, and to some extent is still, that this was done because the latter body had removed the Bible from its altar. This was true, but not the whole truth. The truth was that the French Body had removed the requirement that all its members should affirm belief in a Supreme Being, thus removing a Landmark of which the presence of the Bible is the symbol, the peg marking the point.

No regular Grand Lodge of Masons ever did or does insist on the presence of the Bible in the English language being on the Altar of its Lodges. Lodges of Mahommedans and Buddhists place their own sacred books on their Altars and are not considered to have violated a Landmark. The conception of Deity in all the sacred books is the same—a Creator and Lawgiver inspired by benevolence, entrusting his people with his own powers, giving them freewill in their use, with the choice of good and evil and aware of the result or consequence of observance or violation of the laws which He laid down for their use.

In the course of the centuries, students of the science of Geometry have evolved certain immutable maxims, one of which is in common use among Masons. We say, and repeat, that "A square is an angle of ninety degrees or the fourth part of a circle." Thus if a line is drawn upward from the surface of the earth so that it will form an angle of ninety degrees with the plane of the horizon, these two lines will form what is technically known as a square.

Every builder knows that if he wishes his wall to remain standing and perform its intended functions he must observe this principle. If he fails to do so the result will be disappointing—the wall will fall. Wishing to form an arch, which is a deviation from the principle of the square, he knows that he must have an equal and opposite deviation or his wall will not continue to support the superstructure. That would be the result of the violation of a Landmark and it is not within the power of man to change it. This same law or principle has operated unerringly in all ages, in all climates, and with builders of every race and colour. The landmark is not the square itself, but the recognition of the principle that if man's effort is to be permanent and successful he must observe the law and "act upon the square".

The theory is now advanced that an "Ancient Landmark" can be distinguished from an "Ancient

Usage" or "Established Custom" by virtue of the fact that it is invisible. Our geometrical axioms teach us that "a point is that which has position but no magnitude," and it has already been shown that an Ancient Landmark is a point. The same idea appears in the letters of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 4-18.) He there states that the "things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

The Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Tasmania, speaking to the Annual Communication in 1939 makes the following remark:

"Edward Caird, in one of his works on the evolution of religion, summed up some movements in this penetrating judgment—

"THE IDEA CREATES THE INSTITUTION, AND THE INSTITUTION CRUSHES THE IDEA. This is the judgment of history on many great movements that promised well and failed miserably."

It seems to the writer that our approach to the interpretation of the expression "The Ancient Landmarks of Masonry" is of great importance if the Institution is to exist and fulfil its purpose, and there is danger that the Institution will crush the idea if care is not taken against associating the expression with the things which are symbols and of making the symbol of more importance than the thing symbolized.

To obtain a knowledge of the mind of the Creator has been the object of man throughout all the centuries. The result expresses itself in what we call Scientific discoveries, discoveries of the laws of nature in the physical or spiritual world. We have not yet learned all that is to be known in the first category, and it is certain that we are even more ignorant of the laws which come within the second. In our more recent years we have placed the emphasis on discovering more about the physical world and neglected the spiritual branch of knowledge. We are probably paying the penalty for that neglect in the devastating conditions which are now afflicting the whole world. We are being brought down to earth with a vengeance and are faced with what is to our unaccustomed minds a stupendous reality in the threat of invasion by infidels who are worshippers of such a symbol as the "Aryan Superman". Even if there is such a being they forget that he is created by a greater being still.

There are few who would dissent from the view that out of the present chaos there will emerge a changed world, but as yet there are few, if any, who can envision these changes. When we arrive at any coherent conclusions and seek to crystallise them in law and embody them in procedure and custom, let us be careful that we distinguish between that which is unchangeable and that which is ephemeral—between the Ancient Landmark and the Ancient Usage.

In every Masonic Lodge there are brethren who belong to different religious denominations differing from each other on points of doctrine and church government. But they all utter the same prayer—"Thy kingdom come . . . on earth as it is in heaven."

The Ancient Landmarks of Masonry will only be fully known and respected when the Kingdom of God is established on earth. Now we are looking at the dim reflection in a mirror, then we shall see face to face. Now my knowledge is imperfect, then I shall know God as fully as God knows me.



### THE BADGE OF A MASON

**R**EVIVAL by the Nazis of the yellow badge to be worn by all Jews in conquered territory as a symbol of shame was thwarted in Antwerp recently. The Gentiles of that community protested against such a base scheme and showed their sympathy for the Jews by wearing the badge themselves. Philip Solomvitz, a Jewish editor and writer, has an interesting word to say about this, and points out just how far the Nazis will go in order to humiliate the Jews and feed their own hate.

It seems the enforcement of the decree compelling all Jews to wear a yellow badge is merely the revival of a similar decree made in Paris in the year 1217. A passage is quoted from "Or Saure," where the author, R. Isaac ben Moses, a Jew from Vienna visiting France, describes how the Jews were compelled to wear little yellow discs, which sewn to their garments became the badge of their humiliation and shame.

The story should interest all Masons everywhere. Every true Mason has a "distinguishing badge" which he wears and which sets him off from other men—a badge which he is proud to wear for it is "more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, and more Honorable than the Star and Garter."

One wonders what passes through the minds of some of the brethren as they don their aprons and enter open lodge. The tattered state of some of the aprons is no criterion, one hopes, of the individual's love and regard for the Craft. One brother the writer knows fondles his apron like a precious treasure as he takes it out of its satchel. Every now and then he has it cleaned and the ornaments re-silvered. His apron is a true badge of honor and he is justly proud of it.

It is significant that in conquered countries like France today, French flags are torn from their staffs and every symbol of the glory that was France is removed. But more pitiful and more significant of that country's complete subjugation is the removal of the Masonic apron from the sight of men. It is the last state of complete slavery.

In these desperate and difficult days, every Mason ought to see something tremendously important in the badge which distinguishes him among men.

Not only the symbol of purity and innocence, it has become the symbol of his very freedom and liberty, for where that apron can be worn, there liberty is still prized among men. Every Mason ought to know that while upon his head honors may fall, fame and success be heaped upon him, there is no honor so distinguished, so emblematic, so great as that which came to him when he was first invested with the "distinguishing badge of a Master Mason."

—W. J. Bell, *Lloydminster.*



### ROCKYFORD LODGE BURNS MORTGAGE

Rockyford Lodge, No. 123, on the evening of November 16th last, was the scene of a happy event when the mortgage on their hall was burned with appropriate ceremony.

The liquidation of this debt marks the passing of the last real estate liability in the whole of District No. 16. M. W. Bro. V. H. Macaulay, who instituted the Lodge in 1921, took a prominent part in the ceremonies and the meeting was attended by a number of Brethren from King George Lodge No. 59, and Mount Lebanon Lodge No. 54, Calgary. The District Deputy Grand Master, on the occasion of his official visit, presided.

—C. R. Walrod, *Secretary.*



### A VETERAN PASSES

Word comes from the M. W. the Grand Master that he presided at the funeral services of a veteran Mason when Bro. Robert O'Brien was laid to rest, aged 92 years and a Mason for 63 years.

Bro. O'Brien was initiated in Welsford Lodge No. 26, Windsor, Nova Scotia, on May 9, 1877, and admitted to Fraternal Lodge No. 92, Princeton, Minnesota, of which Lodge he was a member at his death. He homesteaded at Salt Prairie in 1917, was farming there, doing his daily chores and carrying his six foot five as straight as a ramrod almost up till the day of his final call.



### COURAGE

A great deal of talent is lost in the world for want of a little courage. Every day sends to their graves obscure men whom timidity prevented from making a first effort; who, if they could have been induced to begin, would, in all probability, have gone great lengths in the career of fame.

The fact is, that to do anything in the world worth doing, we must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold danger, but we must jump in and scramble through as well as we can. It will not do to be perpetually calculating risks and adjusting nice chances . . . a man waits, and doubts, and consults his brother, and his particular friends, till one day he finds that he is sixty years old, and that he has lost so much time in consulting relatives that he has had no time to follow their advice.

—*Sidney Smith.*