



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor, pro tem: Sam Harris, P.G.M.

A View of To-day's Freemasonry

TO view Freemasonry of today, one should first take a quick glance at the background of the Craft. Not to the Era of masonic antiquity, of which the Solomonic origin is the pivot, but to the early days of Collective Speculative Freemasonry. That period of the 18th Century which followed the most important event of all masonic history, when in A.D. 1717 at the heart of Empire "Wide, Wide World" Freemasonry was instituted, to quote the renowned historian R. W. Bro. Wm. J. Hughan. Or to use the common definition of other writers, "The time of the Revival", which brought about Masonry's transition from an operative guild which embraced a symbolic masonic fraternalism limited in extent, to that of a Society of high moral philosophy universal in its scope. The doctrines promulgated and plans formulated at that important Craft Assembly in A.D. 1717 were both idealistic and sound. Upon these fundamentals, and those included in the original constitutions of the other Grand Lodge Bodies of the Craft in the British Isles, the structure of our Masonry of today was built.

Illuminating the present structure, one will find the highlights of masonic privileges. Only one of these privileges is necessary as a guiding light to view our Freemasonry of today. That one which is best described as "a right of select men of every persuasion, who being brethren, are privileged entering into masonic fraternal bondage of conciliatory friendships, brotherly love, and mutual endeavor in all things for the benefit of mankind" which to brethren of the world wide realm of the Craft of today, is a universal privilege. To be in bondage yet free is paradoxical. Such bondage however, being masonic, and stronger than ever during this trying time in world history, is the very essence of absolute freedom equal to meeting the challenge hurled at our Institution of decency by the forces of infamy and despotism. It is questionable, if we of the Craft, of this and all other Grand Jurisdictions of regular Freemasonry, are fully conscious of the power and influence of the Society at this particular time, in all English speaking countries of the world. In this connection,

it is most encouraging to find through modern research, that the part being played by Alberta masonry in the many avenues of endeavor leading to Victory and the winning of the peace, compares favorably with that of all Sovereign Bodies of the fraternity. Of "Your" present day freemasonry you may be justly proud. Yes, humbly proud, for our Sovereign Body in Alberta, being but forty years in existence, is one of the younger members of the family of Universal speculative masonry brought into being two hundred and twenty-seven years ago.

This epistle on masonry of today arises out of questions in the minds of those of us who seek for further light and truth as pertaining to our present masonic day and age. In answer, it can be truly said that the history of the present global war now being enacted and recorded will reveal that masonry's light of higher philosophy shines in brilliance through its good works, in all countries of the United Nations.

"By your good works you shall be known" may be aptly applied to today's freemasonry, as the vast multitude of members of the Craft within the broad masonic circle, qualify their right to masonic identity by the practice of masonry's lessons necessary and applicable at this particular time.

It is noticeable during war time, that the application to masonic study is much less than during periods of peace. It is evident however, that academic application to masonry is bearing fruit of actual practice. This was clearly revealed in the extensive practice of masonry's lessons on higher philosophy while the state of emergency existed during the first three years of the present Global War. Though to a slightly lesser degree, this same practice still prevails, even though the brighter light of assured victory has broken through the dark war clouds, which hovered so long over the Empire and her family of Nations. It may also be said that the application of present day masons to the vital things of today, is clearly revealed by outstanding leadership given by Freemasons in practically all organizations functioning for successful prosecution of the war, and preparation for the reconstruction of a

better world to follow the inevitable "V" day of brighter light, so confidently looked forward to by all freedom loving people of our war torn globe.

The grandeur of today's masonic endeavor is that its contributions of service, wealth, time and energy are not given in the spirit of sacrifice, but in the more noble spirit of willing desire to exemplify masonry's higher philosophy of life. Even though the outer world may deem the Craft's contributions to be sacrificial, true masons deem them only as their fraternal right and privilege. Greater are the dividends of masonic honor paid on the bonds of brotherly love, than the total of all expected rewards of perishable material values.

True, our masonry of today is not the acme of perfection. Such claim would be both false and unwarranted. Masons are members of the human family and have human weaknesses and frailties. The Craft however, being a preparatory college wherein its brethren are taught the worth while lessons of life, has within its mystic circle a vast army of Craftsmen who embrace and put into practice a faith of super excellence, which penetrates far and beyond the confines of its Lodge rooms. For this standing in the realm of the human family we are humbly thankful.

What then has this view of today's Freemasonry revealed? To those within its fold who sincerely endeavor to keep high the standard of the household of the faithful, it is a superior Order of men of goodwill. A vast body of freemen, who as freemasons, are specially blessed with the advantage of masonic culture, which effects an understanding and practice of the higher ethics of life. In other words, a system of fraternal science unequalled in the recorded history of mankind.

Today's Masonry therefore, being a perpetuation of a sound orthodoxy, embraced and put into practice by its brethren, holds a high place in the realm of the world's free peoples, and brings honor to those within its mystic circle.

A. G. R. BOND, S.G.W.

"MOUNTIES" TAKE PART IN RITUAL

A colorful scene was presented when the annual "Police Night" was held early this year by the North West Mounted Police Lodge No. 11, of Regina, Saskatchewan, with all the chairs filled by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in uniform, and with past masters in uniform assisting in the degree work. A. H. M. Downey of the R.C.M.P., son of a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, and an Honorary Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan, received the Master Mason degree.

Sixty-one lodges were represented by 192 Masons, some of whom had traveled over 100 miles to be present.

Unity Lodge, No. 51, of Edmonton, has a similar Annual Royal Canadian Mounted Police Night. See April 1944 Bulletin.

Our M. W. Grand Master, Grand Secretary, and Saskatchewan's Grand Representative near the Grand Lodge of Alberta M. W. Bro. W. J. Botterill, P.D.G.M. visited the North West Mounted Police Lodge, No. 11, of Regina, on October 28th last, the occasion being the 50th Anniversary of the Lodge. Our old friend R. W. Bro. Robt. A. Tate, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan, is also Secretary of N.W.M. Police Lodge, No. 11. May they celebrate many more Anniversaries.

S.H.



WORDS SIGNIFICANT ONLY BY MEDITATION

We often hear it said, "There is not an observance in Freemasonry that does not have a deep significance" and as we ponder over the meaning of our mystic ceremonies, how often are we impressed with a significance we never saw before. However, there is another side to it. Unless we do ponder on the significance, if we are content to view the observance with no thought of its meaning, it will become so familiar that it will sink into the unheeded. Words, pregnant with meaning and full of the grandest significance, become, through force of mere repetition, a mere form of words, a sham, monotonous.

Pope once said, "The proper study of mankind is man." Not man in general, not the species alone, but as an individual human soul. It is to the individual man that Freemasonry appeals, in order that each one may become a living stone in one divine Temple.

Freemasonry appeals to every human sympathy, brightens every human hope, and is identified with the cause of our common humanity, while, at the same time, it directs us to the source of all light and power. Its teachings are often misinterpreted, but more often they lose their power through a sing-song, monotonous repetition—they sing into the unheeded. It is only when we study Freemasonry as a whole and see its beautiful Ritual in proper perspective that we experience never-ending delight in constantly reviewing what we so often hear. We must study our Ritual, not merely as an abstract symbolism, but as a tangible reality; not as a meaningless ceremony, but as a mirror in which to read our own hearts.

Let us ponder well the language of the Ritual—not as words merely, but as vehicles of profound instruction. The wealth of wisdom found in its every phrase will then be seen, like the revelation of a new and radiant world, which will open to our view the beauties of the universe—the glory of heaven.

—C.C.H. in *Iowa Grand Lodge Bulletin*.



ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the wish of the Masters and Wardens Association of the Lodges in the City of Edmonton that out of town members who are confined to either of the City Hospitals, advise W. Bro. H. J. Faulafer, 10018-100th Avenue, Edmonton. The Brethren living in Edmonton will be only too pleased to visit any brother from out of town.

S.H.

MASONIC AMBITION

"Ambition," we are told, "is the infirmity of great minds," and most of us recall instances where the natural powers of a man have been diverted from high ideals to the gratification of selfish ends; a desire for more power, wealth or popularity. How many potentially great men have been diverted from the nobler impulses of their youth to follow after these shadows? In its origin the word means self-seeking activity, and the general acceptance of the word is a selfish one. Yet there is a nobler meaning to be found in it, and no man could achieve any high purpose without the prompting of ambition, which is the desire to change conditions for the better.

In Freemasonry, as in the world at large, there is room for ambition; the spirit of the Craft is an inspiration to higher things. The fact that its members are average human beings, prompted by the ordinary passions of men, will incite the individual to seek advancement from varying motives. Within the little sphere that is the Lodge the Master holds a place of eminence and authority, to be enjoyed for a term of one year, unless circumstances make it advisable that his fellows should elect him for a second term. The position is one of honour in the Craft; once a member has occupied the chair his status is raised, making him a member of Grand Lodge for as long as he continues to pay his dues to a lodge. Briefly, the Craft is a progressive science, and every member is encouraged to seek advancement by merit, and his zeal is rewarded by a higher status with accompanying privileges.

Freemasonry's greatest privilege is the service of humanity. The quality of this service will depend on the character of the individual, but the member who sees only the gratification of his personal ambition in attaining the chair has missed the finer meaning of our teachings. Many of the finer Freemasons have never attained the chair of a Master in a Lodge—their opportunities of service have come in some less distinguished position, and their energies are spent in quiet but fine devotion to their ideals of a true Mason.—*The Freemason*, London.

MASONRY MUST STAND THE TEST

The statement has been made that Masonry is going to be judged, and in the near future, strictly by what it has done and is doing, and this sentient thought should sink deep into the mentality of every member of the Fraternity (states "The Fraternal Record"). Of what avail is all the teaching, preaching and training, the inculcation of lofty principles of right and justice if they are employed idly and indifferently while the world at large is in stress and need? More urgently than ever before, Masons are called upon to demonstrate the substance, the real utility of precepts that can never be lost to the memory of the sincere Mason. Actual accomplishment must outweigh all speculative theories as against glib and hollow eloquence, fossilised ideas of prejudiced so-called disciplinarians, and a rank and file

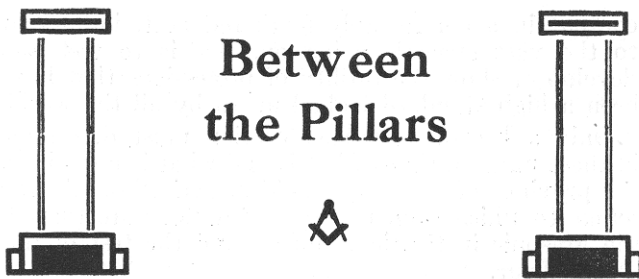
content in a comfortably feathered nest, indifferent to the vast struggle going on, that is to test and develop or show the futility of professions that have been a high standard looked up to by all the world.

Only a broad, deep construction must determine in these unusual times what is and what is not within the province of Masonry's field of activities. As the refuge to which even the eyes of nations are turned, the Masonic institutions must stand the test of this crucial hour.

THE SUN OF VICTORY IS RISING

Addressing the brethren of Katanning Lodge, No. 30, W.A.C., on the occasion of its Installation meeting, the Grand Master of Western Australia (M. W. Bro. Dr. J. S. Batty) said:—

"The brethren have been installed under different conditions from last year, when all life and installations were under the shadow of great disaster, and nothing we did turned out well. Today we are living under different conditions, the last six months having turned the tide. The Allied Nations have fought an uphill game, how serious we did not then know, but the sun of victory is rising and it will not go back. Let us all be thankful, for the release of the world is the relief of the Craft, banned for four years in the occupied countries. Although tyrants may destroy lodges they cannot destroy the tenets and principles of Freemasonry that are ingrained in the hearts of every Craftsman, and the time is coming when they will have the opportunity to again practise those principles to which they have devoted their lives. We are fighting to win the war, we must also fight to win the 'peace', and the basis of harmony and peace is that of the principles of the Craft, and no other will suffice on which civilization can live. All our efforts to win this war will be in vain unless we can ensure that all our force and sincerity, righteousness of purpose, and everything we possess is used to see that this peace is won, only then will fighting cease and peace continue. What is it that we want—more wars or happiness to build a structure for our children, so that they can live in harmony? We can win this war and still lose civilization; we must give great thought to evolve a world of happiness. It is necessary to build upon such principles so that every man, woman and child is free from want, to enjoy a free conscience and faith, and have the leisure to partake of luxuries common to all. There must be no high, no low, it must be a world with sufficient food for all, education for all, and shelter for all. The scheme is to help each other, the scheme that was given to the world 2000 years ago, which are the principles of Freemasonry from that time—Love, Honour and Charity to all men. We must punish the offenders with one end in view—that the sweetness of life may return purified and enhanced. We must make every possible effort—there must be no barriers to race or colour, for the tenets of Freemasonry is the only thing that is pleasing to the 'Most High God'.—*Western Australian Craftsman*.



Between the Pillars

Interpretation of the Ritual of the Sublime Degree of
a Master Mason
PART ONE

YOU have been raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. It is indeed a sublime degree, which a man may study for years without exhausting it.

Any interpretation of this degree must necessarily be a hint only; yet a hint may stimulate a man to reflect upon it for himself and to study it more thoroughly in the future.

In the First and Second Degrees you were surrounded by the symbols and emblems of architecture. In the Third Degree you found a different order of symbolism, cast in the language of the soul—its life, its tragedy and its triumph. To recognize this is the first step in interpretation.

The second step is to recognize that the Third Degree has many meanings. It is not intended to be a lesson finished; but rather a pointing out of paths, a series of inspirations, an awakening of the faculties, like a great drama, picture or symphony to which one may evermore return to find new meanings.

There are many interpretations of the Degree, all true and all legitimate. But most essentially it is a drama of the immortality of the soul, setting forth the truth that, while man withers away and perishes, there is that in him which perishes not.

That this is the meaning most generally adopted by the Craft is shown by our habits of language. We say that a man is initiated an Entered Apprentice, passed a Fellowcraft, and raised a Master Mason. By this it appears that it is the raising that most Masons have found at the centre of the Master Mason Degree.

What does this raising signify? If you have the answer to this question you can afterwards find your way into most of the other meanings of the Degree.

The Problem of Evil

The most difficult of all experiences to deal with is that made up of the evils of life: hard experiences, sin, defeat, suffering, disease, pain, loss of friends or fortune, enmity, treachery, crime, wickedness, sorrow, death. Herein lie our most trying ordeals. If we can find the wisdom to deal with these, our characters will be secure, our happiness assured. What are you doing about evil in yourself and in the world about you? This is the question life asks of each of us. If we fail of the right answer it enforces the worst of all penalties upon us.

Evil may be brought upon us by our own acts, or come through no responsibility of our own. If evil comes upon a man by his own acts we feel that it is

a just compensation. But what of the evil that comes upon a good man? Such we call tragedy, the supreme evil as it were.

Evil in the form of tragedy is exemplified in the drama of the Third Degree. Here is a good and wise man, a builder, working for others and giving others work, the highest we know, as it is dedicated to God. Through no fault of his own he experiences tragedy from friends and fellow Masons. Here is evil pure and unalloyed, a complete picture of supreme human tragedy.

How did the Craft meet this tragedy? The first step was to impose the supreme penalty on those who had possessed the will to destruction and, therefore, had to be destroyed lest another tragedy follow. The greatest enemy man has makes war upon the good; to it no quarter can be given.

The next step was to discipline and to pardon those who acted not out of an evil will, but out of weakness. Forgiveness is possible if a man himself condemns the evil he has done, since in spite of his weakness he retains his faith in the good.

Degree of Master Mason

The next step was to recover from the wreckage caused by the tragedy whatever value it had left undestroyed. Confusion had come upon the Craft; order was restored. Loyal Craftsmen took up the burdens dropped by traitors. It is in the nature of such tragedy that the good suffer for the evil, and it is one of the prime duties of life that a man shall toil to undo the harm wrought by sin and crime, else in time the world would be destroyed by the evils that are done in it.

But what of the victim of the Tragedy? Here is the profoundest and most difficult lesson of the Drama, difficult to understand, difficult to believe if one has not been truly initiated into the realities of the spiritual life. Because the victim was a good man, his goodness rooted in an inflexible faith in God, that which destroyed him in one sense could not destroy him in another. The spirit in him rose above the reach of evil; by virtue of it he was able to be raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular.

The secret of such power is in the Third Degree, symbolized by the Word. If that Word is lost a man must search for it; if a man possesses that Word he has the secret of the Masonic art. To rise to the height of spiritual life is to stand on a level above the reach of tragedy or the powers of evil. To have his spirit rest in God, to possess a sincere and unvarying faith in truth and goodness, is the inner secret of the Master Mason. To teach him this is the purpose of the Third Degree.

(To be continued)

REWARD

The man who really seeks to serve does not desire reward in money or in fame. The old maxim is true that the man who seeks a monument should not have one, for the man who deserves one does not need or desire it. Monuments, as such, seem to be unnecessary.—*Selected.*