

Grand Lodge Bulletin

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

M - DAY

BRETHREN! What is the Hour? It is High Twelve! It is common knowledge that the world today faces an historic hour; the clash of the titanic forces of nationalism and mechanistic materialism has created a world crisis. Into that arena all of us, no matter of what race we belong, are irresistibly drawn. From the consequences of this clash, whether disastrous or glorious, none of our children will escape. What, we all ask, will come of it? Above all what has Freemasonry to say and do at such a time? The momentum of change is breaking every existing frame in which man has tried to set his life. The family—the Nation—the Lodge—the State; Parliament—Trade Unions—international law—Empire—every single category of human life is not simply challenged but dissolving and reshaping under our eyes. It has fallen to us during our life time to watch the most tremendous crash of historic dominations that man has ever seen. While Burke and Pitt in the time of the French Revolution, exhausted the resources of their oratory on the horror and the peril of a single revolution and the collapse of a single throne, we have seen, in the space of one decade, a stupendous intercontinental, political earthquake that has smashed Imperial thrones, and threatens ancient oriental Dynasties.

Our own vision is indeed still blurred with the flying dust and debris of that awful cataclysm. The Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs "have been joined in equal ruin." We have watched the Romanoffs ruthlessly exterminated and the Sultan seek an ignominious refuge in the Arabian desert. The most ancient dynasty in the world—the Manchu throne in China—has been wiped out, and the Chinese people left to grope their way through anarchy to a new order of life.

It is a crisis in the life of systems of society, with dramatic adventures in experimentation, as well as in the grafting of secular western government and civilization, upon ancient and oriental nations.

It is, in an even deeper and more revolutionary sense, a crisis in the individual lives of men and

women of every race. Have the old authorities—moral, spiritual or governmental—any real meaning for us? Men everywhere peer into the turmoil of this turbulent human scene in search of some sign from which the future of our race may be divined.

Obviously, the material things of life have failed and we are searching in the wilderness of confusion for something we have lost.

Quite recently a statesman remarked:

"We are in the midst of political insecurity—intellectual bewilderment, and spiritual paralysis."

Another stated:

"We are facing a stupendous revolution—an unparalleled revival—or else the second coming of Christ."

About the same hour, another gave rise to this:

"Confusion is one of the dominant characteristics of our age—every picture of contemporary life has a background of confusion."

Consequently, we are engaged in a titanic struggle between material and spiritual forces. Civilization itself, as we know it, is at stake. The sonorous lines of Milton for this period are quite true—

"Chaos sits

And by decision more embroils the feud

By which he reigns."

What is the object of Civilization—of Freemasonry? Is it a system we have evolved to give us more work and sufficient leisure—or less work and more leisure? Is it something that will develop a system or develop man? Is it intended to exalt machinery or to exalt intelligence? Is it something whereby we gain the whole world and lose our own souls? Is there anywhere a master word that can guide humanity? Are we losing faith in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man? Has any prophetic voice, whether scientist or master-organiser, statesman or philosopher, theologian or poet, a message to give to us?

These questions are being asked, not by the philosopher only, or by the statesman, but by the heroes

who are fighting to save Democracy. "over there" in the trenches, and by men in the railway train, the club, and by the fireside. They are debated by wireless. They fill the world with their clamour. Are they to remain unanswered?

This is where Freemasonry answers the questions and to a certain extent points the "Way Out".

Joseph Fort Newton, author—leader and Master Mason, when asked: "What is your judgment of the future of Freemasonry?" replied: "The great danger is that Masonry, if it loses its intellectual and spiritual emphasis, may come to be regarded as merely one among many such orders to belong to, having nothing very unique and distinctive. Whether Freemasonry is to be as beneficent and influential in the future, as it has been in the past, depends upon men of the Craft, their valuation of its inheritance, and their loyalty to its spirit. Those of us who step into the background bespeak for our younger brethren the blessing of God, beseeching them to keep what has cost so much, and means so much, for the Craft and for the world."

Masonry was never intended to be a popular institution redeeming the world by force, might and noise, but by the still, small voice, without ostentation, working quietly from the individual Mason throughout the body politic.

We, as members of this Grand Lodge, have a great part to play in shaping the future of Alberta. For this reason, we need a well instructed Craft, wherein the principles of the Order may be presented in a clear and lucid manner. In every lodge there are several well informed brethren who are qualified to expound the various aspects of Masonry. Therefore, in order to arouse more interest, explain to all and sundry, why we address the Great Architect of the Universe in the first Degree; the Grand Geometrician in the second; and the Most High in the third. Continue by telling why the heel is slipshod; why the Lodges have a Druidistic flavour; why the ritual savours more of the poetry of Milton and Chaucer than the proverbs of Solomon; why Shakespeare is a part and parcel of the ritual.

Explain further, the fascinating origin of the cable tow, and why the Junior Warden rules the Lodge during the hour of refreshment. Pursuing the educational idea, we still continue to teach all candidates that "Masonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."

What does all this mean to the initiate? —nothing more than a Chinese puzzle. Assist him to tear the veil aside, and peer into the real meaning of the Craft. The divine story of the "Garden of Eden" is likewise veiled in allegory, until the teachings of Christianity pierce the symbolic ideas and depict the future redemption of mankind. Let the flood of modern research and intellectualism play on the veil so long obscured. Such an exposition would stimulate greater interest at our regular meetings.

Personally, I am not in the least interested whether Jacob, Solomon, or any of the ancient patriarchs were Freemasons, but I am vitally interested in knowing whether the modern patriarchs of Masonry are measuring up to the demands of today.

Modern Freemasonry demands modern methods of application, and the world at large is waiting for us to adjust our Masonry to the changing conditions of a modern and complex civilization.

Masonry should not be the veneer of an arrogant self-seeker. It should be the garment of wisdom, to make a man more human and brotherly, not less so, but more of a man in its broadest sense. And Masonry should make him who receives it first of all more human. It should ally him to all that interests humanity. It should fit him to be the companion, not of the cultured alone, but even more of the uncultured and the ignorant. Knowing better than the ignorant themselves what is moving them, he should address himself to the real life and sympathies with which his superior knowledge has made him familiar. Culture and learning are important—but they are not the vital necessities of life. A Mason may be a good citizen and a worthy father, while never having heard of the Ulysees of Tennyson, or the classic of Scylla and Charybdis.

Masonry stands forth and declares that there are in this world unchangeable realities, which if destroyed will in their destruction destroy all that is worth human thought and enterprise.

In these days of constant change, this Great Order stands for cohesion, for an unshackled conservatism, free and progressive along lines of assured certainty. Ancient Masonry would say to modern times—

Hold fast to the true and the tried.

Let not the superficial gilt, blind the eyes to the gold of the ages.

That which has been proven—

HOLD FAST.

The Masons of today will shape the policies of tomorrow. It is for us to say whether they will be high or low, whether our country will be foremost in the rank of world nations, or will sink to the level of mediocrity.

At the beginning of another year, we must re-consecrate ourselves to our country's service, whether we choose wisely from the threads of our heredity, our education, the honour of our Lodge and the strands of our environment, the materials which shall be woven on the loom of our national life and character, and the Canada that is yet to be. If we fail in this high enterprise, our name shall bear the stigma of disgrace through all generations. But, if we succeed, our name shall be written large on the pages of history; and posterity shall acclaim us as men and Masons worthy of our heritage and responsibilities.

Brethren! What is the Hour?

It is past High Twelve—

Waiting for—

MASONIC ACTION.

—Ven. Archdeacon S. H. Middleton, B.Sc., E.D., P.G.M.

EXTRACT FROM G. L. OF SCOTLAND

EXTRACT from the Proceedings of the Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, held on Thursday, August 3rd, 1944.

FREEMASONS' HALL, LONDON

The Most Worshipful Grand Master Mason said: "I am sure that brethren will learn with regret of the damage which has been done to Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London, within recent weeks. I am quite certain that it will be your wish that we should express our sympathy with the United Grand Lodge of England, and hope that no further damage will befall their Masonic Temple." (Applause).

It will be remembered that our M. W. Bro. G. M. Blackstock, K.C., P.G.M., attended on behalf of our Grand Lodge the dedication of this Freemasons' Hall, on July 17th, 1933. On his return M. W. Bro. Blackstock gave several splendid talks regarding the dedication and the Temple, these talks being accompanied by lantern slides. His report to Grand Lodge will be found on Page 94 of our 1934 Proceedings of Grand Lodge. This report is well worth reading—again—if you have already read it.

For some considerable time the basement of this Temple was used nightly to give shelter and refuge for many homeless who unfortunately lost their homes in the terrific bombing of London. S.H.

GLEANED FROM "THE FREEMASONS' CHRONICLE", LONDON, ENGLAND

As mentioned last week, today, 2nd December, marks the 25th Anniversary of the initiation into Freemasonry in 1919, of His Majesty the King, to whom all the Craft joins in offering, in loyal duty, most sincere congratulations.

The month of December for His Majesty is one of coincidental dates, for it is not only that of his Masonic birth but also of his actual birthday which falls on Thursday, 14th December, his 49th anniversary, as distinct from the celebration of the Official birthday held, mainly for ceremonial parade reasons and the preservation of established customs, in June. It was also in the same month, on 11th December, 1936, that His Majesty succeeded to the Throne, but three days before his 41st birthday, and thus the month is rendered one of significant anniversaries.

It brings also in its train sad recollections, for it was also the month of the birth of our late and lamented Grand Master, H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, who was born on 20th December, 1902, and whose daughter the Princess Alexandra also has her birthday on 25th December.

7. REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES.

To the United Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of England.

Admission of Candidates

The Board considers it necessary, once again, to

remind members of Lodges of the necessity to exercise the utmost care in proposing and seconding candidates for Initiation. The attention of Sponsors is particularly directed to their responsibility in this matter, and the Declaration that is required of them in the Proposal Form. It cannot be too strongly stressed that their acquaintance with the Candidate must be of such a nature that they can, by their personal knowledge, vouch that he is a man of good reputation and integrity, and well fitted to become a member of the Lodge.

The Board cannot lay down a minimum period for a Candidate to be known to his Sponsors—it is the extent of the knowledge which is important, and Lodge Committees are desired to investigate every case in that light. Many instances have of late come under notice where some doubt arises as to the scrutinies being adequate.

The time is approaching when there may be an influx of Candidates into Masonry and Lodges are asked to exercise every possible caution to see that only those who are suitable are admitted to the Craft.

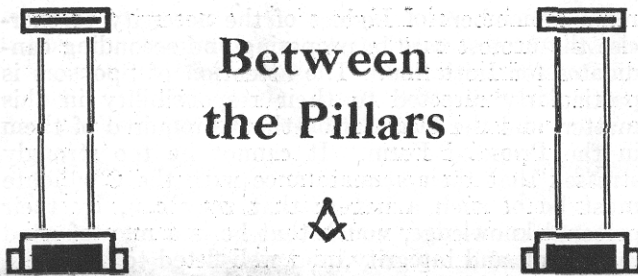
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The Masters and Wardens Association of the Lodges in Edmonton advise they have been pleased to visit several members from points outside of Edmonton who have found it necessary to visit the city for hospitalization purposes. This Association wish to continue giving this service and the new Secretary's name and address is: Bro. George Johnson, 9918-87th Avenue, Edmonton. Will visiting members please phone this address? S.H.

BETWEEN THE PILLARS (Cont.)

Lodge offers many privileges which are open to the individual Mason as to the Lodge. Membership gives no man the right to DEMAND these things of either the Lodge or Grand Lodge, but if, thanks to circumstances and good fortune, they are offered, every member has the same right to enjoy such privileges as has any other.

Beyond all these specific duties, rights and privileges stands a more general region in which all are mingled together; the whole domain of Masonry's teachings, her ritual and symbols, her history, her ideas of jurisprudence, her philosophy, her literature, the whole Royal Art. That Royal Art includes a multitude of truths, ideals and teachings and every Master Mason owes a duty to be faithful to them. It is his right to be taught in the Art and to have it in its fulness, none of it being reserved for a privileged few. It is his to enjoy all the privileges it offers to the spirit, the mind, the heart. All that Freemasonry is, all that it means, all that it has to give or offer, belongs to every individual Mason in the same way and to the same extent as to all others. However onerous your duties may prove to be, or however rigidly your rights may appear to be regulated, such burdens sink into nothingness by comparison with this one privilege, that Freemasonry in all her height and breadth and length and richness belongs to you to use and enjoy to the utmost.



Between the Pillars

The Duties, Privileges and Rights of a Master Mason

PART IV

YOU will not find the duties, rights, and privileges of a Master Mason anywhere stated and numbered in a few words. They are scattered here and there, some in symbols, others in the form of customs, others in laws. Some are explicit, others are implied.

A Master Mason's first duty is obviously to live by and act consistently with his obligation; unless this is done he cannot perform his other duties nor will he be able to claim his rights and privileges. With this as a foundation, a number of those duties can be discussed in detail.

It is a Master Mason's duty, legal and moral, to pay his share of the financial costs of the Fraternity, promptly and ungrudgingly, whether in the form of dues or assessments.

If he is unaffiliated, he has the right to petition for membership in some Lodge. He may choose the Lodge to which he makes his original petition, but he should seek for membership in some Lodge regardless.

He has the right of affiliation. If he moves permanently to some other community he is not required to maintain membership at a distance in his first Lodge, but may petition for membership in a more convenient Lodge. In Alberta he has the privilege of affiliating with a Lodge in another jurisdiction than his own while maintaining membership in his Mother Lodge.

Visiting in Lodges in which he does not hold membership is both a right and a privilege, though not a duty. It is a right in the sense that he may seek admittance into any regular Lodge; it is a privilege in the sense that this admission into that Lodge is contingent upon his being vouched for, or examined, and being permitted to enter by the Worshipful Master. If a Mason is not permitted to enter a given Lodge at one time, the fact does not cancel his right to seek to visit it at another time or to seek to visit any other Lodge.

If he seeks to visit a Lodge he has the privilege of being vouched for if some member of it has sat in Lodge with him, so that he is not compelled to undergo examination every time he seeks to visit.

Masonic Relief, like visiting, is both a right and a privilege. Every Mason has the lawful right to ask for it upon need, without derogation to his dignity or endangering his standing. He may make his request to some Lodge or some Master Mason.

It is a privilege in that neither a Lodge or a Master Mason is compelled to give relief. The Lodge is not an insurance society, an organized charity, or a death benefit association, nor is any guaranty given any member that he will receive what he asks. Each Lodge and each Mason is under obligation to heed the call for relief, but each is free to use judgment whether or not to extend relief, and, if so, in what form.

A Master Mason has the right to ask for a demit or a transfer certificate, and, if he is clear on the books and no charges have been or are about to be preferred against him, the Lodge must grant it. It is not compulsory that a Mason shall remain in a given Lodge, for, if it were, membership might be degraded into a penalty. A Mason may hold his membership where he is happiest or it is most convenient, provided he is elected to membership in that Lodge.

If he is brought to trial in his own Lodge on charges of un-Masonic conduct and found guilty, he has the right of appeal to the Grand Lodge. This right is his guaranty against possible injustice, more particularly against local prejudice or spiteful persecution by some private enemy.

Every Master Mason has the right of Masonic burial. In practice his family has the right of requesting this honor. This right is of more importance than may at first appear. If, without giving cause, a Lodge refused to give Masonic honors at death the community naturally would think that some secret disgrace attached to the dead, known only to the Lodge, and both his name and his family would suffer accordingly. It is the rule in Alberta that the brother himself must have requested Masonic burial.

Among the most important of his rights, though exercised under unhappy conditions, is a Mason's right of trial by his peers, under regulated conditions, with freedom to present evidence. This assures him that no Lodge can degrade him without a fair trial. Neither his Lodge nor any officer or member can remove him out of malice or spite; nor can he be made to suffer the penalties of Masonry out of idle gossip or hearsay. Right of trial guarantees him all the securities of justice.

A Master Mason's privileges are to be described in principle and in spirit rather than in detail because they vary much and depend on local conditions. He has a right to a voice in his Lodge, to vote and to hold office. He has also the privilege of giving Masonic service, one of the principal sources of the joy in Masonic life. A Lodge may do many things which are neither required or prohibited by law. It may hold social affairs, give special entertainments, offer special programs, foster some Masonic educational enterprise, run a library, maintain club rooms, maintain a bed or a ward in a hospital or a lot in or even a cemetery of its own; all according to its abilities or the wishes of its members. In a spirit of service and not from compulsion, the Grand

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