



Grand Lodge Bulletin

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

Masonry's Participation in the Spiritual and Psychological Reconstruction of those serving or who have served in the Armed Forces.

ON August 12th last, an article appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, under the title, "When Daddy Comes Home". The writer, "J.H.G." ventures into a field to which few are turning their thoughts in these days. That field is the field of "Spiritual and Psychological Reconstruction," and my position taken in what I have to say is that this field is fundamental to every other field of endeavour. The article is so germane to our subject that I crave your indulgence while I present it to you.

In all the planning for the post-war years that is being done the world over, planning that includes economic and political reconstruction, vast schemes for rehabilitation of the wounded and the demobilized, great plans for raising living and health standards; in all this nothing is being done about the greatest of post-war problems, the problem of intimate human relationships. Nothing is being done because nothing can be done, for it is a problem which only the individual concerned can work out.

No one who thinks beyond the smiling faces of the returning service men and their happy, reunited families can be unaware of this problem. This war has literally torn years from the family lives of our young people—precious years, formative years, years which can never be regained and which will condition the many more years which are to come.

To thousands of young Canadians—and Americans and Russians and Britons too—Daddy is not somebody who comes home at night to supper, who fixes wagons, goes for walks, plays ball, reads stories aloud and occasionally administers a spanking. Daddy is a picture on the wall, on the table, or on mother's bureau. He is a nice looking man in a fine uniform and someday he will come home again and it will be such fun!

Yes, he will come home again. There will be fun. That is for sure. But after the fun, after the happy reunion has been enjoyed to the limit, there will come the period of adjustment. There will be a man in the house again after so many years and the effect

upon the household, though it consist of a single room or a mansion, will be profound. What is more, it will be a strange man in the house. The ordeal of war will have changed him considerably, perhaps deeply; just as the ordeal of trying to be a father and a mother to growing children will have wrought profound changes in the personality of the mother. Family life cannot be picked up where it was dropped two, four or five years ago. The intrinsic nature of families, of life itself, makes that impossible. Instead a new life must be created; and for many it will be so very, very hard. There will be some heart-breaks, some disillusionment, but in the end there will be a new life for human nature is adaptable to new conditions and new surroundings.

For the returning service men, and of course for their families, it will be a new adventure. For many of the men one of life's greatest adventures—the early growth of a young family—will have passed them by. But there will be compensations, very great compensations.

For the younger service men the problem of re-adjustment will be infinitely more difficult than for the older men. Many will come back to young wives and babies. After two, three and four years of having everything done for them, of having others worry about their welfare, they will suddenly find themselves on their own. Then they will not only have to worry about themselves but about their families as well. The test of responsibility will be thrust upon them. Thousands of them, who went straight from school and college to the forces, will discover the new world of business and the task of making a living. What was once a life of great simplicity will become a life of vast complexity.

It is true that governments may help in these re-adjustments. There will be committees and organizations galore to help fit the service men back into civilian life. But none of these organizations can solve the problem of human relationships. This must be solved by the men and women and children

themselves. They have got to work it out, almost hour by hour and day by day. The daddy who was once a picture on the wall must grow into the family in a sort of self-grafting operation. The organizations, the committees, the rehabilitation schemes will help only to provide the service men with an economic base from which to operate. But the ultimate happiness of all these human beings does not depend upon jobs or work. It depends in the final analysis whether a happy home life can be achieved. Without that, work tends to lose its meaning, to become merely drudgery, or, at best, futility. With it work takes on new meaning and becomes a means to a greater end. The orators have been saying that these returning service men will be the builders of a great new Canada. If they succeed only in building happy family lives for themselves and their wives and children a great new Canada will follow automatically.

The problem of intimate human relationships is beyond peradventure of a doubt, the greatest of post-war problems—as it is at any time—but we must emphatically disagree with any suggestion that “nothing can be done, for it is a problem which only the individual concerned can work out.” True enough the individual concerned must play his part for you cannot do much for a person who refuses to help himself. Nevertheless, here is the spiritual and psychological field, and this is exactly what we are interested in just now.

Let us at once recognize that not all the men in the armed services will look to government agencies for assistance when they return. No one will deny or fail to acknowledge the debt we owe to them. But there will be many who belong to that thrifty, independent class of folk who prefer to “paddle their own canoe”, and are even now preparing for the opportunity to do just that. Scores of examples of such men could be given. This is the spirit of the pioneer which has made our country what it is. This is the spirit of thrifty initiative which will make the difficult days ahead easier for all of us in Canada. These are the men who present no problem. That should not relieve us of our responsibility in the field under discussion. We owe to all such sincerest encouragement. Canada would be a better and happier land if all of us would emulate their spirit of thrift and independence, and leaned less on the growing tendency to paternalism. They merit our praise and best co-operation.

But the vast majority of the sons of Canada who come back to us, and the loved ones whose men folk have paid the supreme sacrifice will present to the brethren of the Masonic fraternity a rousing challenge to prepare now for the tremendous task of reconstruction and rehabilitation, or suffer the sure consequences of irreparable loss. If no one in Canada is alive to the immediate and pressing task to minister effectively to discharged members of the Armed Forces, many of whom are already being returned to civilian life, we will be faced with a repetition of the

tidal wave of sensuality, vulgarity and corruption that followed the last war.

Surely we must do all in our power to see to it that the stopping of this war is not worse than its prosecution. If men are to emerge from an existence dedicated to killing and the employment of brute force, it will be by the faith of individuals who believe that God intends men to be not only free but pure as well. Our concern must be that they emerge from the present narrow existence into one of wider interests, sounder judgments, and equipped with materials—physical of course but spiritual as well—necessary to taking on mature roles in a democratic and Christian state.

Returning service men, for the most part, are not problems to be solved. Rather, I suggest, we as members of society, are the main problem. Man's extremity is always God's opportunity, but the opportunity may be lost through our indifference and blind selfishness. Many of these men—members of our families and our neighbor's family—have had a real and vital spiritual experience, the value of which we must not fail to capitalize upon. Many of the letters from boys in the thick of the battle reveal the fact that this experience has been as real as it is intense, and deeply moving. They are not coming back to us under any disillusionment. Many of these young chaps never had a job before. Society would find no place for them till war came, and many went into the service disillusioned. They went reluctantly and many of them cynically. Now that the disillusionment has gone, and under fire, and through the rigors of the campaign, they have come to a broad understanding of what freedom and faith mean. They have seen what the Nazis and the Japanese doctrines do to human personality. While they may not go for shibboleth and ballyhoo, and are suspicious of propaganda, they have come to believe in and appreciate the fundamental values of democracy and the Christian faith.

Folks often worry about the morals of their boys. Did it ever occur to you that these boys of yours worry about the morals of the people at home. The stories of strikes by labour unions, who exploit the national emergency for their own advantage, or of industrialists who lack any sense of fairness and justice, whose greed and selfishness have crushed out all humanitarian feeling these have given rise to much anger and bitterness. Stories of juvenile delinquency, in which they fear their own sweethearts and wives and children may be involved, disturb them. They are equally angry at those who play the black markets or avoid their responsibilities in taxation or the buying of bonds. They express concern about any evidence of racial antagonism or religious persecution at a time when we are fighting systems which have flourished on bigotry. And they ask: “What are our great institutions doing in the home front to combat these enemies of the cause for which we fight and die?”

The day of the geographic pioneer is gone forever:

the day of the pioneer in personal friendships is upon us. We of the Masonic fraternity should be "labourers together" with the men who represent us at the battle front. They are "comrades with us" in the rebuilding process after long years of destruction. The task of Reconstruction is not solely a question of money and goods; that is already adequately planned for and provided. If these constitute the only help we can think of we have missed everything worth while. We dare not take our responsibility superficially. Let us face the high meaning of it all, get beyond human help and compassion, to the job of imparting to our returned brethren a faith that will give life meaning and content again, faith to restore their souls, and build into them something that is eternal. This is the important, yea essential job Freemasonry is qualified to undertake.

Brethren, it will not be easy. Give these men a farm, some stock and implements, a job, an income, a home, write your cheque, pay your taxes—these things are easily done. Let us not cheapen our task and responsibility into something easier. Let us not seek to escape the tension at this point. It is said by Yeats of Dante that he "set his chisel to the hardest stone". That might well be said as the word for us all in this day. May the Freemasons of Canada possess themselves of a conviction that if our fraternity starts doing things, big results will follow. Let us bring relief and help through the real spirit and art of Masonry—which is charity, or love—into the lives of men. That can be accomplished only when we set out to gain and to hold their friendship and confidence. We must have confidence in ourselves and in the principles of our order. What an opportunity is before us! To mediate to others the art of right living through personality! The character and the role of Freemasonry in Canada for the next century will be determined by the manner in which Freemasons respond to this challenge. If ever there was a time when we ought to throw aside our smug respectability, our complacent conservatism, and our excessive caution it is now.

R. W. Bro. Rev. P. T. PILKEY,
Deputy Grand Master of Manitoba

The above was R. W. Bro. Pilkey's contribution to the Conference of the Grand Lodge Officers of the four Western Masonic Jurisdictions, held at Banff, Alberta in September, 1944.—S.H.

CONGRATULATIONS

Our sincere congratulations are extended to M. W. Bro. W. R. Simpson, P.G.M., who has been appointed as Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia to succeed our late distinguished brother, M. W. Bro. Frank S. McKee. It will be remembered that M. W. Bro. Simpson favoured us with his presence when our Grand Lodge convened in Calgary in 1941. We trust the Most High will give M. W. Bro. Simpson good health and strength in order that he will be able to serve his Grand Lodge for many years to come.

S.H.

TODAY'S CRYING NEED

The crying need of our world today, says an Episcopalian minister, "is the revitalizing and the extending of human brotherhood. What has happened to us is almost enough to destroy our faith—brother has been set against brother, to maim, and slaughter, and kill; innocent hostages have been stood against walls and shot down to satisfy with their blood an insatiable lust for revenge; women and children have been murdered in fiendish ways; and thirty million people are homeless and hungry. This has happened in large measure because the faith we held had not enough works, because brotherhood had no reality, because we talked of one God as Father of all but never acted on that belief in our dealings with other men and nations."

In other words, the world's crying need today is a greater exemplification of the Masonic Spirit. In brotherhood lies the future hope of the world. Without it, each brief span of peace merely means preparation for another, and a bloodier, war. Until universal brotherhood becomes a concrete reality, the world will be merely an armed camp, with men who should be brothers, working side by side for the advancement of civilization, standing with uneasy hands on the hilts of their swords, awaiting an inevitable act of aggression.

What greater boon, then, can we, as Masons, confer upon humanity than by spreading the Masonic light? The Axis has ruthlessly stamped out Masonry in conquered Europe, but now the tide has turned and the aggressors are fleeing back to their vaunted Fatherland, Masonry will rise again, as surely as hope will be reborn in men's hearts. And the Craft will thrive in direct proportion to the rebirth of freedom, hope, brotherhood. It is no accident that the Craft has always prospered in those countries where men are most democratic, progressive, free, and withered when confronted with paganism, despotism, intolerance.

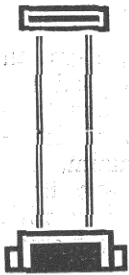
—Masonic Trestle Board.

PEACE

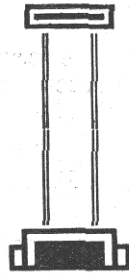
Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among free men there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case and pay the cost. . . . Still, let us not be oversanguine of a speedy final triumph. Let us be quite sober. Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in his own good time, will give us the rightful result.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
Courtesy 'Masonic Tidings.'

The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania has twelve Lodges without a name, they have just a number.



Between the Pillars



The Past Master

EXPERIENCE has shown, the lodge that has a regular attendance of a large number of its Past Masters is a strong, active lodge, and yet occasionally one hears the remark that such and such a lodge is ruled by the Past Masters and the brother who has not been in office has little or no voice in the discussions or business that comes before the lodge. It is to be feared that sometimes this remark appears to be justified.

Having passed through the Master's Chair, the Past Master naturally has a more intimate knowledge of the workings of his lodge. However, there is the danger that with this knowledge and self-assurance he may unwittingly awe the brother who has not been privileged to have had this experience, and by so doing takes away the interest of this brother to the detriment of the lodge.

Now, the testing time for a brother who has been honoured to be elected and installed Worshipful Master comes after his term of office has expired. Will he attend as regularly and be pleased to sit among those who have not held this high office?

Degree work is not the principal purpose of Freemasonry, very, very important as this is: for it is necessary that a stream of new blood continues to flow into the lodge to replace those who are passing on. Also, the lessons conveyed during the conferring of a degree are the fundamental beliefs of our Order, and each brother will say he learns something fresh and ennobling every time he hears the glorious ritual of the three degrees.

However, the lodge does not meet primarily for the conferring of degrees but that brother may meet brother in the calm and quietness that reigns behind the Tyled door—where for a brief moment the anxieties and perplexities of everyday life are excluded. Differences of opinion on religious, political and other contentious subjects are forgotten and for a short space of time we meet our brother on an equality not to be found elsewhere. This is where the practical test of a brother's Freemasonry shows itself.

Is the Past Master content to attend meeting after meeting, and happy to leave the direction of the work to his successors? If he attends just as regularly and is happy to sit with those who have not held office, what a power for the good of the lodge he becomes. The very fact of a brother being a Past Master indicates he has for many years given liberally of his time and substance for the advancement of his lodge, so that his influence is at all times

felt among those who have not occupied the Master's Chair. This dignity does not, or should not, give him a spirit of aloofness and superiority with a desire to enforce his views on others, for are we not all brothers, and "he who is placed on the lowest spoke of fortune's wheel is justly entitled to our regard?"

Sometimes a brother may have something really worth-while to contribute but through modesty or shyness, and perhaps awe of the Past Masters, remains silent or does not attend. If you ask this brother why he does not attend more regularly it is unlikely he will tell you, and the Craft and lodge is poorer by his absence.

Let the Past Masters make it their object to give an extra welcome to all those who have not held office, thus fortifying and strengthening the ties that bind all those privileged to bear the honourable name of a Freemason.

V. W. Bro. M. J. BRODIE, P.G.S.



MASTERSHIP

Some time ago one of our leading Masonic journals held a prize contest asking the best possible answer to the question, "What does my Mastership mean to me?"

In the two hundred or more replies submitted the following was judged the best: "A high honor, honored by the traditions of all time, and superlative in its dignity; a grave responsibility, that my authority shall be wisely exercised, and that my conduct shall increase, rather than diminish the dignity and happiness of my office—a joyous opportunity, to give willingly of my best in thought and deed to the service of mankind, that true Brotherhood may become more of a reality and less of a platitude and by such services to be greater value to my fellow men and to myself as well—these are the things that Mastership means to me."

—Masonic News.



FAITHFUL SERVICE AND LABOUR OF LOVE

It has recently been brought to my attention that V. W. Bro. Harry Wood, Grand Steward, installed his successor as W.M. of Strathmore Lodge, No. 53, which is Bro. Wood's Mother Lodge, in 1925 and has installed all the W.M.'s since that time, 1945 being the 21st consecutive occasion. V. W. Bro. H. W. B. Bell was D. of C. on 20 of these occasions. Truly records of which any brother can be proud.

S.H.



A few copies of the 1944 Proceedings of Grand Lodge are still available and may be obtained by applying to the Grand Secretary. Price 50 cents per copy.

S.H.