



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam HARRIS, P.G.M.

Masonry, It's a Good Thing to Belong to

Did you ever ponder on this statement, did you ever come to this conclusion in your hour of distress?

I'll tell you why I am writing a message to you on this topic. A brother mason was introduced to me the other evening and he said, "You know I heard you had a serious spell in hospital a while ago, and I want to tell you of my experience. Some months ago I was in an accident and taken to hospital in a serious condition with my head and eyes bandaged and while lying in bed in great pain and a feeling of confusion and loneliness, I heard a man step into the room. I could not see him, but he approached and took my hand that lay outside the covers revealing a masonic ring, and I felt a grip. The unseen stranger said, 'How are you, is there anything I can do for you?' I said, 'No'. He replied, 'I see you are a mason, it's a good thing to belong to, isn't it?' He walked away. I had been a mason for many years but had become lax in attending Lodge. His words started me thinking, and I saw the beauty, strength and brotherhood of Masonry in that instant and have returned to lodge eager for its teachings and never failing to receive strength and food for my soul from its lessons."

Well, I was taken by his sincerity and have thought much on this statement, "Masonry, it's a good thing to belong to." I first asked myself who were its first founders, what is the story of the Master Mason's Lodge? Of course, the first question was easily answered, our founders were SKI, HKT and HA, the first three Grand Masters. The story of our Lodge is the building of the Temple at Jerusalem dedicated to God's service under the direction of these three Grand Masters. Why did King Solomon build this Temple? If we read the books of Exodus, and first and second Chronicles, we find there that no man seeth God and liveth, yet on Mt. Sinai, Moses spent forty days and forty nights with God, and God gave him two tablets of stone on which He had written His ten Commandments, and He gave Moses many instructions for his people, including direction for the building of the Ark of the Covenant in which the two stones were to be placed.

Now this Ark was taken from place to place by Moses, and later by David, resting not in a

permanent home but in a Trysting tent, until it pleased God to order David to prepare to build a House to the Lord God Eternal, at Jerusalem. But since David, the King of Israel, had spilt much blood, God ordered that David's son Solomon should build the Temple, and that Peace should reign in Solomon's life, that the Temple could be completed in Peace. It was so done and God filled the Temple with glory.

When you ponder on the above, you at once realize that this Temple built to house the Ark of the Covenant containing the two tablets on which God wrote the ten Commandments, was built by orders from God to Moses on through to David and eventually was completed by our King Solomon, who asked for and received the help of HKT and HA, and in their mysterious way became the first three Grand Masters. So our origin seems then to have a distinct connection to these three great men who, under King Solomon, were commanded by God to build the House of the Lord God at Jerusalem.

From that beginning of Operative Masons down through to 1717 when it was transformed to Speculative Masonry the same usages, customs, signs, symbols, and teachings have prevailed. From God to man and down through the ages unchanged in principle and teachings, "Masonry, isn't it a good thing to belong to?"

In all cases of difficulty and danger in whom do you place your trust? In God. This is the first question asked the initiate as he enters our Lodge. His answer "In God". (Which after a reflection on the question should be answered by him without prompting) marks him as a man worthy of our teachings, for a true belief in God is the foundation of our Order and is the main reason it has existed down through the ages and spread out over the entire earth. Its power lies in the fact that it holds no animosity towards anyone and embraces all who profess their faith in God, and who live by His Commandments. Evil forces have beaten it down but have never extinguished Masonry. Without this belief in God no nation or people can long exist, and with Masonry founded on true belief in God, isn't it a good thing to belong to?

Did you ever consider what 15,000 Masons in Alberta alone would do with the hours of relaxation that they now spend in their Masonic

Lodges, if there were none? No Service Club, Social Club or entertainment offers any such opportunity for character building, soul inspiration or knowledge of God and His teachings, and yet the cost in dollars for this great opportunity is less than any other organization. You could go to no other source for soul refreshment and enlightenment except the Church. It offers many branches and roads of travel that can consume a lifetime of study and enjoyment that will better fit the soul for God's acceptance. It is the greatest source of fellowship, Christian enlightenment and moral education in existence, outside the Church. Masonry, it's a good thing to belong to.

Masonry has a definite purpose. In a small way from time to time it has expressed itself in some tangible form of public enterprise in the fields of education, Masonic homes for aged members, or child welfare, etc. But this expansion into worldly things is often criticized, and at most is a small reason for our existence. From its beginning when the first Temple was built as a permanent home for God's glory and a House for the Ark of God's Covenants, down to the present time, our real purpose has been to prepare in every Christian man's soul, who enters its portals, a more proper resting place for God's teachings, a more receptive place for His words of instruction, that we may be better enabled to take our place in society and there be better fitted to fulfil our duties towards God and our fellowmen, in carrying out the duties and obligations of our everyday life in whatever field of work we engage in.

This achievement of Masonry in making good men, better men, by instilling into their souls the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, and by giving them a clearer insight into the knowledge and teachings of God is a tremendous influence in the world of today. Such men at large, using their influence and power, are assisting in a great way to make this a better world to live in, and to keep down the influences of evil. Any source of good that does these things such as Masonry, is a good thing to belong to, isn't it? Never fail in your duty to your Lodge; receive and absorb its teachings and true meaning by constant attendance and apply and carry its influence out into your daily life. Keep the House within your soul fit for God's glory and enact His covenants for when God returns He will stand between the Cherubs on the cover of the Ark of the Covenant, and give judgment.

R.W. BRO. LEROY W. BOND,
Deputy Grand Master, Alberta.

Nowhere will a thinking Mason find greater dividends for the time spent than in the field of Masonic study. Not only in reading, but in contact with other Masons, finding as we have found fundamental Masonic thinking in a brother in overalls working in a garage, or a business or professional man in a small town.—Masonic Tidings.

THE VALUE OF FORGETTING

If you want to add to your happiness and prolong your life, forget your brother's faults. Forget the slander you have heard; forget the temptations; forget the fault finding, and give more thought to the cause that provoked it. Forget the peculiarities of your friends and only remember the good points that make you fond of them. Forget all personal quarrels or histories you may have heard "by accident", and which, if repeated, would seem a thousand times worse than they are. Blot out as far as possible all the disagreeable things of life; they will grow larger when you remember them, and the constant thought of the acts or meanness, or, worse still, malice, will only tend to make you familiar with them. Obliterate everything disagreeable from yesterday; start each day with a clean sheet, and write upon it only the things which are lovely and lovable.

—The Philaethes.

CANDIDATES SHOULD BE SELECTED

The fact that Masonry should not be open to any man who can pay the fee, but should be restricted to those who have the necessary background and the right attitude of mind to appreciate the Craft, is well exemplified in the following paragraph taken from the "Masonic News", Illinois:

Many a man does not understand what Freemasonry is all about. He reads that Masonry is a system of morality based on the belief in the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the brotherhood of man. Then occasionally one asks, "What has God got to do with it?" Right therein he shows his abject failure to understand the purpose of life. And when he further reads that it strives to teach a man the duty he owes to God, to his country, to his family, to his neighbor, and to himself, more than one replies, "I know all that now". Thereby his weakness is shown. He maintains that he already knows all — that he is about perfect, and that Masonry holds nothing for him.

If he should seek personal gain by membership, he is not worthy of being a Mason. If he has any mercenary motive in his mind, he will never be a worthy Mason. There are many more things that might be said, but it is sufficient to maintain that there is many a man who is not worthy of being a Mason, and brethren should see to it that the membership is kept undefiled.

—Bulletin, Grand Lodge of Texas.

ENGLISH MASONIC VETERAN

Rev. Thomas T. Blockley, who retired in 1948 as Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Oxfordshire, England, celebrated his 85th birthday on May 22nd, 1949. He became a Mason in 1889. He was appointed Grand Inspector General 33°, A. & A. Rite for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire in 1936, and is Past Great Prelate, K.C.T.

FREEMASONRY IS A BALANCE WHEEL

Every nation in a varying degree seems to be in a turmoil. It would be necessary to go far back in history to find a time when there was more under-surface fermentation in the social and political composition than at the present. Expert observers say that Europe may boil over at any minute. Even our own country, removed from the national and radical jealousies that have rent the continent for many centuries, has changed from a "melting pot" to a "test-tube".

It has been truthfully said that nothing ever stands still—it either goes forward or backward. We, of course, want to go forward, but we want to progress on well-founded principles. We do not want to embark on vast uncharted seas without the compasses of Wisdom to guide us; the carefully considered plans and well-founded precedents of Strength to sustain us and carry us on through to the Beauty of worthy accomplishment that will stand the test and justify the effort. There are so many plans and schemes abroad designed to cure all our ills and remedy, almost overnight, conditions some of which have existed as far back as man can remember. Certainly many of these conditions should be remedied, but it cannot be done in the wholesale manner or within a brief period. We cannot digest such large doses of perfection, such liberal portions of happiness and prosperity, without getting prepared for it. Like the tunnel worker, we would get the "bends" if the pressure was reduced too rapidly.

In a world seething with "isms" and unrest and craving to try something—almost anything new and different from the past practices, straining to achieve some Utopian goal, the path towards which is dubious and uncertain, and the Promised Land and itself rather vague, there must be people who will be level-headed enough not to be stampeded by all the fanfare and shouting; there must be cohesive body of opinion that will act as a balance wheel, or a steadying influence, to keep the machinery from flying apart from its own wild effort. There is probably no Order or organization better adapted to play that part than Freemasonry.

Freemasonry has come down to us through a long and ancient line, and even in its present speculative form it is well over two centuries old. While it has gradually changed through the ages, in some of its more superficial aspects, yet these changes have been made slowly and with great care and have developed little by little on the main body of its modes and practices. The progress it has made has been so well grounded on a sound foundation that it has been necessary to cast aside and make false starts. It has taken a little longer, perhaps, but it has been worth the delay, and its continued and flourishing existence is a monument to the value and wisdom of our policy.

—London Freemason.

Build your church within your heart and take with you everywhere.

—Anonymous.

SALUTING

Saluting the Worshipful Master upon entering or retiring from the Lodge while at labor is something that is taught the initiate, but how many know the significance other than that they were so instructed?

The purpose of giving the salute is to avow all Brethren present that one remembers the obligation and the penalty. It is held that, when the salute is done in a haphazard, slipshod manner, it is a fair indication of the impression the initiation has made upon the candidate. The initiate may not be so much at fault for the impression he creates, however, for the responsibility is of officers conducting the work.

—Masonic Craftsman.

THE ENGLISH WAY

The English way of conducting Freemasonry is upon solid foundation and suffers no fear of suspicion. Its members, whether old or young, holding many opinions in a general way, meet and agree in Freemasonry and all seem pleased, and indeed relieved to meet within the peaceful walls. That is a distinct characteristic in favor of the Craft, and long may it continue.

We remember an American brother visiting a small English Lodge. He said he was a member of a Lodge with several hundred members, and he marveled at the congenial happy Lodge he was visiting; it so happened that all the members were present and entered into the proceedings with zest and considerable interest.

The American brother remarked that with such a happy and congenial Lodge he should have thought there would be many desiring to be initiated. The reply was that the Lodge took only one candidate at a time and every officer did his utmost to impress the entrant and assure a real Masonic welcome to the Lodge.

That is the English way of doing things, and there are many more instances of special characteristics.

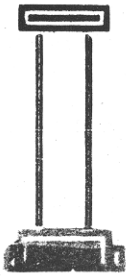
—The Freemasons' Chronicle.

AN OLD MASON SAYS

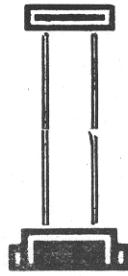
Remember the past but do not unduly dwell upon it. Recall your sins with regret and repentance and with hope and faith that they are forgiven. Be grateful that opportunities were given to you to be kind and helpful to others. Have hope that by example you have taught the precepts of the Fraternity.

The future is in the hands of God. In His kindness and wisdom have full faith. The present is with you with opportunity and responsibility. In all you do have in mind what we teach and let your conscience be your guide. If in your life or in your mind there is that which is evil or harmful in act or example, cleanse yourself of it. Comfort the sorrowing, strengthen the weak, guide the wavering. Let there be both service and sacrifice that the world may be made better. Be assured that Heaven records all and that there you will be building "that temple not made with hands".

—Selected.



Between the Pillars



IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS

Termites destroy more property than do earthquakes. Rats are more destructive than tornadoes. More fire loss is caused by matches than volcanos. More people are killed by automobiles than by army tanks. Microscopic bacterias are more deadly than the atom bomb. More money is stolen in minor thievery than in major embezzlements. More character is damaged by small evils than by flagrant violations of morality. More heartache and sorrow is caused by little words and deeds of unkindness than by open acts of dislike or enmity.

An earthquake disaster stirs the world to sympathy and action; we seldom think of the termites. A violent tornado fills us with terror; we live with the rats. Almost breathless we read of an erupting volcano; but note only the headlines about burned homes. A thundering tank battle stirs national excitement; five times as many killed on the highways are hardly noticed. Everybody shivers in horror over the devastating explosion of an atomic bomb; silent, invisible bacterias fill our hospitals and cemeteries. A million-dollar embezzlement is news for days; a million little thefts each day go unnoted. A scandal or murder in high places rates columns of space; small deviations from honor are not news. There is recourse against open slander or libel; there is no defence against a lifted eyebrow, an inflection of voice, a veiled inference, an unkind word or a slight.

Perhaps these things are true because most of us live in a world of commonplace events. Familiar things lose their power to excite or interest us. We turn on the radio and expect music. If a Hottentot turned that knob the result would frighten him half to death. It would be a mystery, fearful mystery, and his curiosity would be boundless. We are not different. The spectacular, the unusual, the mysterious all excite us and we are avid for the stimulation. Little things, common things, are passed by in our watch for the stupendous events that will stir dulled interest.

And so it is to no small extent in our daily work of building worthy lives and nobility of character. We Masons come into the Lodge stating that one of the principal reasons for doing so is the subduing of our passions which, of course, is necessary to improvement in Masonry. It is a laudable desire and purpose but takes time, study and effort to achieve. Advancement is made by steps. As more self-control is gained more light is seen. More light reveals more

weaknesses to be overcome, and thus progress is made toward the goal of a Master Mason.

Some proceed rapidly, some slowly and some not at all. Probably the greatest obstacle is encountered at the very beginning when the job of subduing passions is tackled. Here we are apt to revert to habit and look for something spectacular, a whopper, to grapple with and overcome. Most are somewhat chagrined to find that they haven't any raging monsters within themselves to subdue. Passions are popularly supposed to be vile and vicious tendencies always stalking their victims, lying in wait to attack and devour. The average candidate can't find any such things in himself. If there had been it is not likely he would be a candidate at all. So, what has he to fight and subdue?

If he is an average man he has plenty and the longer he lives and works in Masonry the more he will discover because Masonry is a progressive science. Its work is never finished and the Mason who, before death, lays down his tools thinking the job on himself is done will wind up in the rubbish pile of useless stones rejected by the Master Builder.

Few of us do big crimes that shock the world, but all of us do little evils that hurt somebody, ourselves most of all. Little acts of selfishness, unkindness, harsh judgments, biased opinions, misread motives, repeated though unproved gossip, petty schemes, small ambitions, ignoble jealousies — these and many others are the passions most likely to mar character and to interrupt Masonic growth. These are the termites, rats and matches that destroy more lives, wreck more happiness, ruin more character than all big evils combined. But these, because they seem small, we pass over, condone and excuse, and besides, we rather like them. They prove we are human. They do, indeed. They also prove we have done a poor job of subduing passions, which leaves us, truly very human.

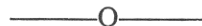
There is little that is spectacular in building character, therefore those who look for excitement in Masonry will be disappointed. The true Mason builds his life as his Operative brother built a temple, stone by stone, each one shaped, fitted and laid by expert and faithful use of all the tools of a Master Mason. It is a slow, sometimes discouraging process, but a finished temple is a thing of beauty.

—Editor, The Masonic Chronicler.



The illusion that times that were, are better than times that are, has probably pervaded all the ages..

—Horace Greeley.



HOW TRUE

Before I judge another's deeds,
Another's faults deplore,
Perhaps I should cut down the weeds
Around my own front door.

—Charles E. McKnight.