



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam HARRIS, P.G.M.

ANCIENT FREEMASONRY

Freemasons may well believe their society to be one of the most ancient in the world, for its philosophy, its symbols, and its principles emanate from the Creation of the Universe by the Great Architect Himself.

The question of the origin or age and usefulness of Freemasonry has often occurred to the brethren, more especially to the newer members of our Order. As an organized society with a written constitution it may not be so very old, but from the dawn of time man has groped for spiritual light, which he inwardly felt to be there but could not find, spurred on in his tantalizing search by the signs and regularity of the changes he observed in the natural world around him. From time to time a glimmer of Divine Light would be caught momentarily by one of the ancient thinkers, and then vanish.

"The Voice of God's Protection told me
 He loveth all He made;
 I seem'd to feel His arms enfold me,
 And yet was half afraid:
 And I said:
 Oh! that I knew where I might find Him!
 His eye would guide me right:
 He leaveth countless tracks behind Him,
 Yet passeth out of sight."

The ancient philosophers felt convinced there was a Master Mind, a Supreme Being who created the Universe, and that all men were children of this Supreme Being. It is this belief which has revealed to them and to the prophets of Holy Writ, viz., the Fatherhood of God, with its corollary, the brotherhood of man, which is the foundation of speculative Masonry, although veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

Its emblems have a different reference to the beauty and symmetry of the material universe as created by the Grand Geometrician and to the harmonious proportions of His works. We are frequently reminded to make a study of the liberal arts and sciences, and, more especially, geometry, "which is established as the basis of our art", and that "geometry or Masonry originally anonymous terms is of a divine or moral nature". The problems of geometry may, to those of us not too familiar with them, appear

deep and uninteresting, and yet they do unfold to the mind, if we could only see them, eternal truths having a moral lesson, although only revealed to men after thousands of years of searching by many philosophers and mathematicians. The present age has inherited the light shed by these now familiar truths disclosed by God in His own time to certain humble men in the dim past. Freemasonry is continually searching for additional light, which we feel and believe to be there but cannot find. Nevertheless, we are confident in our Faith that the Great Architect Himself will in His own good time unveil further knowledge to some simple, faithful craftsman, which will lift mankind one step higher towards the perfection intended by Him.

In the centre of our lodges stand the Great Lights, the repository of the plans and designs for the building and beautifying of the New Temple. Hovering above is the greatest of all emblems, The Symbol, assuring us that while the earth remains those plans and designs shall not be destroyed or changed, neither shall the light be extinguished. True, to the human mind these plans and designs are difficult to carry out, and seem, even to the wisest, far too beautiful for the skill of man to interpret and practise. However, did not The Divine Master Himself understand our weakness, our ignorance, and our blindness when He said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"?

From the foregoing it will be seen why Freemasonry differs from the other societies and service clubs, excellent as many of these are for the welfare of the community. Every applicant for admission to our society must be known to be of good morals and have a sincere belief in the Supreme Being, that He created the world for His own purpose and that we should endeavour to so discipline ourselves that we may be found acceptable as craftsmen to help in the building of a new Temple fit to become a dwelling place for the Spirit of The Most High.

Then, brethren, let us enter our lodge together properly clothed for the labour that awaits us. After receiving assurance that we

are secure from the uninitiated and intruders, guarded by the allegorical flaming sword, we may listen to our well skilled brothers remind us that we are, symbolically, in representation of the Grand Lodge above, the Temple of peace, harmony and brotherly love. Have we not been told, "nothing is allowed to enter which has the remotest tendency to disturb the quietude of its pursuits"?

Possibly one of the most outstanding Landmarks of Freemasonry, like a lighthouse on a rocky shore, is that religious and political discussions are neither directly or by insinuation permitted in the lodge or at harmony after the lodge is closed. Around us may sit brothers of diverse backgrounds, but all having the same belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Here there are no boastings or hatreds, for we are all craftsmen, each striving to accomplish the task set before him — to add something worthy towards the building of the New Temple. And further — all Freemasons stand for law and order, coupled with the great freedoms of conscience, of religion, and of speech, for they are of divine origin.

Listen carefully to the matchless phraseology used by the principal officers and speculate on their meanings, and we shall find that although familiar from repetition they lift our minds far above the everyday world and its problems and cause us to feel we are truly in the presence of the workmen engaged in preparing and beautifying an earthly dwelling place for the Most High.

The symbols around us may have a special moral interpretation for each brother. As the beauty of a flower garden in summertime with its many colours may appear in different ways to each of us, so may the symbols convey a different thought to various minds. It would be unreasonable to expect all to see and think alike, but as Freemasons we are agreed they do convey a moral and a spiritual meaning.

Although our assemblies require a serious deportment, yet a smile as we clasp our brother's hand carries more warmth of feeling between one another than a stiff, formal handshake. Are we not brothers, each carrying his own burden along the path of life? We cannot tell what load a brother is bearing, but a smile and a cheery word may for a time lighten the weight from his mind.

As the labours of our meeting draw to a close, it is with regret we know we must soon part to take up again the duties of life which lie before us in the outside world, with all its struggles and discords. Do we not feel better for having sat and talked with our brethren for a brief time, first contemplating the works of the G.A.O.T.U., and then ending the evening with a social half-hour in a lighter vein? Truly it has been as a refreshing oasis along the way of life.

—V. W. Bro. Malcolm J. Brodie,
Past Grand Steward, Alberta.

THE OPENING CEREMONY

The ceremony of opening a Lodge is of considerable importance (writes the "Masonic Record," London, Eng.). It is designed to weave a spell about those Brethren present and to prepare their hearts and minds for what is to follow. Just as a flower unfolds its petals and displays its centre to the sun which renews its life, so the opening of a Masonic Lodge is a symbol of the opening of the human mind and heart to the G.A.O.T.U. Entered upon and completed with due reverence and in stately manner, it prepares the mind for the wise and beautiful teachings of the Craft. The opening ceremony of the first degree is suited to the E.A. as a call to life and a means of lifting one's mind above the level of mundane things. In the second degree it is a call to advancement in the philosophy of Masonry and stimulation to habits of industry and perseverance. The opening for the third degree emphasizes the need for further and more sacred contemplation, that we may be the better enabled to fulfill our duties to our Creator and to mankind, and thus be able by trust in the Most High to face our inevitable end with courage and conviction. Thus the ceremonial of opening the Lodge in the three degrees is worthy of the best thought of those present, for the symbolism of the ceremonies is susceptible of the most profound interpretation, revealing to those who have minds to comprehend the spiritual realities of life.

—Texas Grand Lodge Magazine.

BE MODERATE

Freemasons, of all men, should be deliberate in judgment, candid in consideration, charitable in construction, moderate in condemnation. If you feel moved to criticize a Brother, suppose you see him first. Talk over the matter in question and discover his viewpoint. Probably it is a difficult angle from that which presented itself to you. Perhaps he can tell you things you did not know. On the other hand, perhaps you can enlighten him and lead him to see the error of his way. How much better to convince and reform him than to convict and destroy. At any rate, it is a satisfaction to be sure you are right before you go ahead.

—Exchange

PURPOSES OF MASONRY

The Masonic Fraternity seeks no control over processes of government and the enforcement of the law, and as an organization, it takes no part in the solution of social and industrial problems except through influence of its teachings upon the character and conduct of its members. The primary purposes of Masonry are to enlighten the mind, arouse the conscience, stimulate the noble and generous impulses of the human heart. It seeks to promote the best type of manhood based upon the practice of Brotherly Love and the Golden Rule.

—Exchange

A MASON'S TRUE SECRET

In the tragedy of the third degree, as portrayed, we see the symbol of all the trials and temptations of men, coupled with the ultimate end of all evil things.

We, as Masons, are taught that the ultimate and complete happiness and contentment comes after we leave this mortal earth. We are to live in hope of a glorious immortality. Be that as it may, we do know that life here on earth is full of temptations and ruffians that are continually demanding of us the things that we cannot give.

At some time or another in life, everyone of average experience has been confronted by some person who is impatient and demanding about some particular thing. He has heard the equivalent of the statement — "Speak not to me of time, place or patience, but give me the answer **now**, or I will do so and so."

The impatience of man, his lack of understanding and his disregard for other people or their living conditions, other than guided by his own selfishness, are the cause of a great percentage of life's tragedies. The arrogant, the self-centered, the overbearing, the thoughtless and the contentious individuals are always making their demands and making threats of what they will do, if their wishes are not immediately complied with.

Many men have been tortured to death; others killed outright, for refusing to reveal some secret that they had, or were thought to have possessed. That secret was not tangible. It was a personal conclusion or conception which could not be imparted to the impatient contender. Honor was at stake, in most cases, and it was considered that a man without honor was lost, even to himself. Death was therefore preferable to mental anguish of dishonor realized within the heart.

At no place, or at any time, are the true secrets of a Master Mason given to us, for the true secrets of a Master Mason are those which he, himself, thinks out **for himself**. They are his personal conceptions and his own conclusions, that he has developed from the study of Masonry. No two of us will arrive at exactly the same end product, for each of us has lived life as we have met it, and not as someone else tried to tell us. Our conclusions will represent the mode of life as we have experienced it and our deductions will be colored by our standards of the worthwhileness of different things of life.

Our Fraternity is safe from anyone willingly revealing the secrets of a Master Mason, because no man will reveal his innermost heart and soul.

The secrets of a Master Mason represent the individual's incentive to live, to work, and to worship as he chooses.

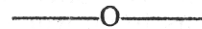
A Master Mason carries within his own heart the only answer to the question of what, to him, are the secrets of a Master Mason. They are

what he reads into life, and the deductions that he has made for himself about the ultimate rewards of this life. We, as Masons, must formulate our own answers to life's great question, and to do that we must have such faith as portrayed to us by the example of Hiram Abif. We, like Hiram, will have many demands made upon us, but the demand that we lay bare our innermost heart and soul will never be met with acceptance. The secrets of a Master Mason are, therefore, safe forever.

There is no way to regulate a man's mind by exerting outside influences. He can direct his thinking in any channel which he chooses, for the control of a man's mind is his alone.

We can control our minds and the things that we think about, but that control is an individual problem that no outside influence can change.

—Bro. W. R. Sadler in Masonic Histriology.



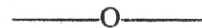
BE WIDE IN YOUR SYMPATHIES

Be wide in your sympathies! If people have faults, failings and weaknesses try to overlook them. A good deal of self-righteousness gets in at times between us and our opinion of others. If half the world could see themselves as the other half see them, there would be a universal compromise on the basis of common faults, and everybody would be shaking hands with everybody else.

We should cherish sentiments of charity toward all men. The Author of all good nourishes much piety and virtue in hearts that are unknown to us; and beholds repentance ready to spring up among many, whom we consider as unworthy.

That every day has its pains and sorrows is universally experienced, and almost universally confessed. But let us not attend only to mournful truths; if we look impartially about us we shall find that every day has likewise its pleasures and its joys.

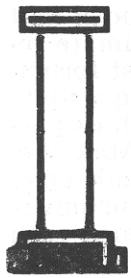
—Chicago Scottish Rite Magazine.



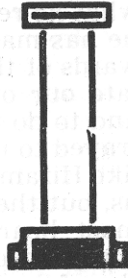
Our Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Howard B. Macdonald, M.L.A., will attend the Masonic Grand Masters' Conference from February 19th to 21st, 1950, which is held annually in the City of Washington, D.C., U.S.A. He has been invited to address the Conference, the topic of his address being "Freemasonry versus Communism and Fascism."



I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging the future by the past.—Patrick Henry.



Between the Pillars



THE MAKING OF A REAL MASON

The making of a Mason is a solemn occasion. We do not mean that the ceremonies should be conducted with long faces and a sad demeanor. Quite to the contrary it is an event which should lift the heart and soul of every brother who witnesses it. We should quietly rejoice because the initiation signifies that another man has been found who, though in darkness so far as Masonic principles are concerned, yet has so fashioned his life as to be worthy of joining us in brotherhood.

The making of a Mason begins technically when the Lodge accepts the candidate's petition. From that time on the process is a continuing one until death intervenes. No man has yet completed the task of learning all there is to know about the Craft, the lessons it teaches, the blessings it has to bestow. Neither has any man been able to reach the full heights of true Masonic living which is, or should be, at all times our goal. However, a real Mason continues to strive through all of his life to approach as nearly as he can to those divine standards of fellowship and conduct outlined in the various lectures, charges and instructions which age-old experience have proved sure supports and guides along the way.

It is safe to assume that every candidate comes to us sincere in his desire for more light and eager to earn approval as a real Mason. He took a solemn obligation to conform to the Craft's rules, regulations and principles. But what we, his brethren, must remember is this: he can not do it alone. The principles of Masonry never meant any brother, new or old, to be left alone. That is one reason why the ritual counsels the new brother to converse as often as possible with brethren who presumably have progressed further in the light.

It is sometimes said that the true beginning of the making of a real Mason is found in the first degree when the newly obligated brother is placed in the northeast corner. Yet very few, if any, of the brethren on first finding themselves in that place comprehend the full significance of it. Understanding of it comes later as increasing light reveals it to us. But now, having that understanding, an obligation instantly is laid upon each one of us. We should try in all ways possible to bring to the young brother full comprehension of the lectures and charges he hears.

There he first learns of the working tools he is to use. And there he begins to see unfold the

glorious truths and the noble principles by which all future decisions, personal as well as communal, must be made. There too he discovers the significant symbolism in his being so stationed to receive these instructions.

This is one of the most important lessons to be learned in Masonry. Here is laid down the corner stone of the Masonic life we all hope the new brother will build. How well he succeeds will depend upon how well he learns to use the tools of this degree and to what extent he absorbs and applies the truth taught in the charge and the lecture which follows it.

Here is where our obligation to him begins to function. Here is where the ties of brotherhood, the genuine spirit of fraternal regard come into play. Few men, left to themselves to make their own way, will become real Masons and too often when a brother fails we who are older in the Craft are at fault. However, it should be made plain to the newly obligated brother that he can not hope to receive Masonic truth as water is poured into a pitcher and that merely taking the degree is not sufficient. After that he must diligently search for and the Lodge must freely give the desired light. That is how a real Mason is made. A few first laws he must become familiar with are those of courtesy, kindness and willingness, not only to a fellow Mason but to all mankind. These principles and qualifications are applied to all members of the Craft, not only a new brother. It is our duty to share in these principles; therefore let us be zealous to see that we do not fail.

—Editor, The Masonic Chronicler.



THE MASTER'S WORK

A Mason's laudable ambition should be the Mastership of his Lodge, for it is a great honor to be a ruler in a Masonic Lodge. The individual who fails to gain some useful lesson as a result of serving a term as a Master is indeed strange. We know of no better position than that of a Mastership of a Lodge for a person desirous of becoming acquainted with the proper conduct of meetings.

The Master who directs his Lodge rather than rules it, is far more likely to be successful than he who attempts to govern it. It may be possible for the newly installed Master to endeavor to direct his Lodge before aspiring to rule it. In the former case the personal element of the Master comes much more to the front than in the latter. We can say with confidence that the members of the Lodge will be far more ready to fall in with the directions of their Worshipful Master than to obey a Brother who overestimates the power with which he is invested and thus makes himself an autocrat.

A Master cannot afford to be too autocratic in his bearings. If he is genial in his conduct towards the Brethren, and sincere in his work, he will doubtless win their approval and by so doing is bound to have both a successful and harmonious year in his Lodge.

—Masonic News.