



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam HARRIS, P.G.M.

EASTER - TIDE

Upon the occasions when I have been invited to write or to speak at Eastertime, Masonically, except for that ancillary Degree to our Order which specifically deals with the doctrine and teaching of Easter, I have usually accepted with some diffidence—not for lack of appreciation of the honour and privilege accorded me, but rather that, holding the beliefs I do and pledged as I am to proselytise, I might inadvertently occasion some hurt to the feelings of those among us who cannot wholly accept the Christian view of Easter.

One is not helped by the use in our Ritual of that rather unfortunate word, "enthusiast"—"not to be an enthusiast . . . of religion."

I say "unfortunate", because our modern view of an enthusiast is most probably very different from the conception of it in the minds of those ancient stalwarts who compiled our Ritual.

Enthusiasm in those early days had within it something of a whole-hearted defence, not completely free from bigotry, which element, happily, time has eradicated, and save for a few (and these probably uninstructed) there is little bigotry now in the hearts of true believers in God. And we must never forget the first and most important of our Antient Charges which gives me the assurance I am writing for the eyes only of believers.

However much it may have become secularised in these latter days, Easter is pre-eminently a religious festival and, of course, a Christian Festival, though for the purpose of this article I seek not to stress this.

With all this in mind, and with the experience of nearly half a century in Freemasonry, I am always amazed at the apparent indifference of many of our Brethren to Religion. In one of our most beautiful Charges we are expressly forbidden to introduce into our Assemblies discussion upon two highly controversial subjects, Religion and Politics, and one recognizes immediately the wisdom of this in the desire to preserve harmony within the Lodge. Yet it is undeniable that very few men can exist without the one, even if they permit themselves a half-hearted avoidance of the other.

From my earliest inception into Freemasonry until now I have repeatedly talked with Brethren

and Fellows who conscientiously and quite reverently defended their avoidance of organized religion on the grounds of the sufficiency to exemplify their belief in God to be found in the six or eight monthly attendances in a Masonic Lodge. I am now perfectly certain in my own mind that this conception of Freemasonry is completely at variance with the lives of the Founders of our Order and their intention concerning the manner in which Freemasons should demonstrate among themselves, no less than to the uninitiated, their belief in Almighty God.

It will be patent to the most regular attendant at Lodge how little homage we pay to the Almighty Creator in any of our Working and that worship is most lamentably conspicuous by its absence.

I hesitate not to say that Religion is inseparable from Freemasonry. A greatly respected Past Grand Master of our own Grand Lodge, recently deceased, quite often gave me his opinion that Freemasonry was the handmaid of Religion—a view of our Order I have encountered in many lands.

Man is by nature religious. Whether he wills it or not, there come some sober moments in every man's life when he imperceptibly drifts from the material things of life to the things spiritual.

No matter how engrossed he may be in worldly affairs, the end of his days will not dawn before he will be confronted with the subject of religion. He may be elated over his success in science, in business, vain perhaps of his intellectual acumen, but unless he suffers from a superiority complex he will surely one day ask himself, "Who endowed me with this wonderful intellect of mine? Whence comes this measure of success?"

Here, reason may exert itself and confront him with what we know as religion, which Cicero defines as meaning "the exercise of careful attention," or, as another has said, "Religion means 'to bind', indicating the relationship of Man to God."

If we view the word objectively, or as a thing, we must look upon religion as a system of truths, laws and practices which man recognises and observes in paying worship to God. And, taking it subjectively as it exists or should exist in the individual, religion is a virtue which inclines or teaches man to render to God the honour, love and

worship which our Order expressly tells us as His due.

I want in this short article to avoid the very appearance of defending the particular creed I embrace, and herein I am reminded of having initiated into Freemasonry men of several faiths—Jews, Hindoos, Islamists, Parsees and Jains, as well as a Confucionist and a Christian Scientist. In the last two cases the candidates obligated upon our own V.O.T.S.L.

Once a man's mind becomes conscious of the existence of religion, of a bond which binds him to his Creator, he usually becomes inquisitive to know more of this relationship. In his quest, if he be sincere, he is likely to arrive at certain fundamental truths, certain laws and practices which need to be observed.

This has been called "the religion of nature" (natural religion) ascertained through human reason and through the natural powers of reason a man arrives at the knowledge of the existence of God.

He may go farther, enquiring as to the nature of God; man's duty towards God, duties of worship, of love and of thanksgiving. It is thus that he will reach other truths, those concerning his own nature and destiny, his duties—which again we are enjoined upon to observe—his duties to himself and to his fellow-men.

Those of us of an older generation must often be appalled at the diminishing number of those openly professing religion—and by this I mean the practice of foregathering communally for religious purposes, whether in church, chapel, temple, synagogue or hall—and in this respect Freemasons appear but little removed from the ordinary man-in-the-street. Human society is so complex; we have a lack of leisure; a reluctance for concentration of mind, sometimes dignified by the term meditation; an inability to follow reasoning. This is especially noticeable in Youth, when in reality never more needed, when the character is in process of formation and when the principles of religion are so essential for the proper formation of character. If in youth we have failed to grasp the importance of religion, the acquisition of it is all the harder through the course of years.

By nature, man craves for the good, the true, the beautiful. Religion confirms man's reason that God the Creator is the possessor of all good, all truth, all beauty. And religion confirms more than this—that justice must be meted out to all, that obedience is due to just authority, that love is due to that which is good and loveable and that gratitude is owed to the Giver of great gifts.

From this we readily observe what honour, reverence, love and obedience we owe to God, the All-good, the All-just, the All-loveable.

All these may be found within the covers of our Ritual, yet how perfunctorily we scan them and how little are we influenced by them.

I think it may be conceded how necessary is religion for all sorts and conditions of men, and the exercise of religion demands worship—public

worship. Prayer alone, we are enjoined, may be held in secret.

From the Fatherhood of God springs the Brotherhood of man, upon which our Order rests. Hence the Family also, whence comes the Community, and from the Community the Nation, and so on, until the family of all nations is bound together with God, the Father of all, through that universal bond we call religion.

An Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem described our world of today in these words: "The pageant of twentieth century civilization has produced profound disillusionment, for moral progress has not kept up with these advances. In scene after scene of this pageant perils and defects occur—politics without principle, diplomacy without honour, promises without fulfilment, nationalism without love, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, industry without morality, buildings without homes, marriage without sanctity, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice, Sundays without worship, religion without God."

"Heaven and earth will rejoice when religion once more becomes the guiding and motivating force of all human endeavour."

—M.W. BRO. CANON CRANE-WILLIAMS,
Past Grand Master, Alberta.



BE WIDE IN 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.



THE SILENT MASON

The silent Mason is one who lives and acts out his principles in all his intercourse with his fellow men. We believe in Masonry that acts silently. We want no loud cry in the market place or vain pomp and show. The Mason who tries to live our principles without ostentation will be a pillar of strength to the noble institution. The humblest craftsman who has been made a Mason in his heart is worth more than any number of distinguished members to whom its teachings are vere verbage.

—A. J. Morris.

BUILT TO A PATTERN

Frequently we hear someone make comment which indicates that he believes it would be a splendid thing if Freemasons were of a pattern that would distinguish them as Freemasons. The suggestion is that each should fulfil his obligations in the same manner, should give exactly the same attention to his civil duties, should be the same kind of husband, the same kind of father, should be completely informed on Freemasonry, should have the same cheery disposition, should give the same attention to his Brethren, should play the same part in Lodge work, etc. In other words, each Freemason should be an ideal, and all should be the same kind of ideal. Each Freemason should be an example and the conduct of each Brother should be such that the world will not hesitate to follow a path worn by the feet of Freemasons, but we must wonder what the result would be if each fulfilled his obligations in exactly the same manner, if there were no Brethren toward whose actions we were called upon to show charity, if there were none for other Brethren to guide away from paths that the feet of Freemasons should not tread, if there were no members of our Fraternity who needed to be exhorted to perform their civil duties, if each Brother performed his duty toward his Brethren in such a way that there was no need for others to point out those duties, if each Brother had exactly the same idea as to the part he should take in the work and exactly the same idea as to how the ritual should be presented, if each Freemason gave full time to the study of Freemasonry and there was no need for the informed Brother to inform the less-informed.

Regardless of how many may strive toward the ideal, we never shall have Brethren molded to a pattern and there always will be many needing assistance and guidance from the few believed qualified to give assistance and guidance. Undoubtedly it is well for Freemasonry that this is so. If we ever reached the ideal at which we aim, if our efforts should end in complete fruition, there would be little to keep us functioning. There would be no need for functioning and then would come inactivity, lethargy and decay. We do not want Freemasons built to a pattern.

—Bro. E.B. in Oregon Mason.

Never say of anyone that he was rejected, if he was. That is no concern of anyone outside the Craft. Never wash dirty linen in public, that is for the Lodge to do inside the tyled door. Tell inquirers of what we do for charity if asked, but never shout it from the housetops.

It is with regret we announce that Bro. Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, the writer of the adjoining articles, recently passed away at the age of 73 years. Bro. Dr. Newton was an outstanding writer on Masonic subjects and was the author of "The Builders," "River of Years" and numerous other books.

—S.H.

TRESTLEBOARD

The Master Craftsman still draws his designs upon his trestleboard. He who shapes our destiny, He who ever rules and guides the affairs of men, calls us today to draw designs on a physical, but we must realize that we are also drawing them on a spiritual trestleboard. So long as we live we cannot escape making some designs upon it. Some may be worthless, some may be productive of good results. This depends on the manner in which we subdue our passions and endeavour to contribute to the well-being of our fellow men. Thus may we do our part in the great scheme of things to make this old world a safer and a cleaner place for the generations yet to come. Let us make no mistake—every design will be there—we are building a spiritual trestleboard. Then, my brethren, may the lines be straight and clear, the angles carefully fashioned, the circles properly circumscribed, that when this record of our lives, this spiritual trestleboard, is presented before the Great Architect of the Universe may it gain for each one an entrance into that spiritual building, "that House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens."

—M.W. BRO. R. CARSON,
Prince Edward Island.

IN THE QUARRY

"Freemasonry appeals to me, first, by its fellowship; and next to the home and the House of God, it is the most blessed influence in my life. Its simple and profound faith, its wise and practical philosophy—uniting the wisdom of love with the love of wisdom—illumine my mind, as its genius of fraternity warms my heart. But still more, Masonry appeals to me as an agency for the organization of moral faith, practical brotherhood, and social idealism, the worth and power of which we have not yet realized . . . In a day when the brotherhood of the world is broken our ancient and noble Craft has an opportunity, the like of which it has never known before, to use its influence and power to spread that fraternal righteousness without which the future will be as dark as the past."

—BRO. DR. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON.

WHEN IS A MAN EDUCATED?

When he can look upon the universe, now lucid and lovely, now dark and terrible, with a sense of his own littleness in the great scheme of things and yet have faith and courage.

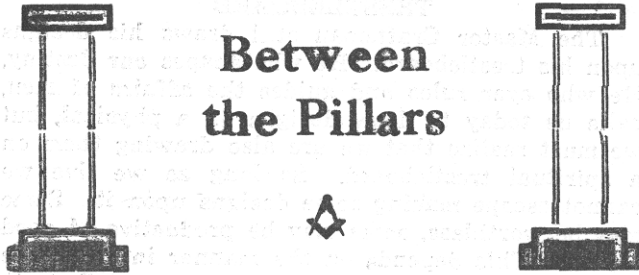
When he knows how to make friends and keep them, and above all when he can keep friends with himself.

When he can be happy alone and high minded amid the drudgeries of life.

When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something besides mud, and into the face of the most forlorn mortal and see something beyond sin.

When he knows how to live, how to love, how to hope, how to pray—glad to live and not afraid to die, in his hands a sword for evil and in his heart a bit of song.

—BRO. DR. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON.



Between the Pillars

THE SECOND DEGREE

The Fellowcraft degree is the favorite degree of the Craft with many Freemasons. The high idealism of its teachings is strong in its appeal to many earnest seekers after Masonic truth and wisdom, for it represents the practical application of the instruction given in the initiation ceremony.

In the first degree a candidate is taught certain things. Light is given to him that he may pursue the path which leads to knowledge and duty, and to Him who gives to duty its reward.

In the second he is given instruction in those things by which he will have to fashion the design to which he will build his own temple of character.

Our system is speculative and symbolic. Freemasonry is based on operative and practical Masonry. The degrees of the former have their counterpart in the divisions of the latter.

Masonry comes down to us from the middle ages, a period in which trade guilds flourished, a time in which many of our great European medieval cathedrals were erected, when operative Masonry was at the zenith of its power, and at the heyday of its art. These guilds had three great divisions, the apprentices, the journeymen, and the Masters. The first, those who were receiving instructions in their art; the second were of a class who, having finished their apprenticeship, had to move from place to place to gain experience, hence the term journeyman. This stage was necessary before they were recognized as Masters, and allowed to take an apprentice and instruct him in his trade.

Now it is the journeyman stage of operative Masonry that is symbolized in the Fellowcraft degree of speculative Masonry. Just as in operative Masonry the tradesman had to apply the instruction he had received, and prove himself worthy before he was admitted to the Master Division, so in speculative Masonry the Fellowcraft has to cultivate and practice the tenets and ideals imparted to him in the first degree.

He must show a certain aptitude, a sincerity in his application, an eagerness to advance, an idealism in his conception of the Order, and its possibilities, as a formative factor in the great ideals of Universal Brotherhood, international good will and world-wide fellowship.

The practicability of the second degree teaching is reflected in the prominence which is given to the *Second Working Tools*. They are those used in the practical construction of the building. The moral significance is elaborated, and it is shown that their operative use has a counterpart in speculative

teaching. The whole idea is the practical application of the Masonic teaching to our everyday life.

The world today is greatly in need of a practical force that will inspire men to high thinking, better living and nobler efforts. Such a force is to be found in Freemasonry.

—Masonic Trestleboard.

APPLICATIONS

Too much cannot be said about caution in regard to the character and morals of those who are seeking entrance into our Ancient and Honorable Fraternity.

Much depends upon the Brother who recommends an application; ask yourself the following questions: How well do you know the applicant?

Are you taking into account the fact that he may someday become Master of your Lodge?

Are you fully aware of his circumstance, his mode of life, his associates, and his ability to comply with our rules and regulations?

Remember, my Brother, that these questions are of vital interest to all. Simply because you know the man, does not qualify him to become a member of the Masonic fraternity. By the exercise of caution, you will have performed a service to your Lodge and to your Brethren, making sure that we admit no one among us who is not worthy of that honor.

There are, in many European countries, forces at work to destroy all that we hold sacred and inviolate. Where dictatorship abounds, free Masonry no longer exists.

To admit even one who is affiliated in any way with Communist connections, would be a grave mistake.

Be therefore careful, my Brother, and remember that eternal vigilance is the price for freedom.

It could happen here.

—W. BRO. CLAUDE G. PIERCE, P.M.

SYMBOLISM

The symbolism of Masonry is the soul of Masonry. Every symbol of a Lodge is a religious teacher, the mute teacher also of morals and philosophy. It is in its ancient symbols and in the knowledge of their true meanings that the pre-eminence of Freemasonry over all other orders consists. In other respects, some of them may compete with it, rival it, perhaps even excel it; but by its symbols it will reign without a peer when it learns again what its symbols mean, and that each is the embodiment of some great, old rare truth.

—ALBERT PIKE.

A NOBLE RESOLVE

Here is a noble resolve: "Give me wide walls to build my house of Life—the north to be of love against the winds of fate; the south, of tolerance, that I may outreach hate; the east, of faith, that rises new each day; the west of hope, that dies a glorious way. The threshold 'neath my feet shall be humility; the roof—the very sky itself—infinity. Give me wide walls to build my house of Life".

—Exchange.