

Wishing Everyone a Merry Christmas

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Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam Harris, P.G.M.

Harmony

"The time draws near the birth of Christ: the moon is hid; the night is still; the Christmas bells from hill to hill answer each other in the mist."

Christmas spells harmony; in fact, we might speak of the symphony of Christmas. Above the hills of Bethlehem, the Angelic Host proclaimed the harmony of immortal souls—"Glory to God in the Highest and Peace on Earth to men of good will." Kings and Wise Men from Eastern Lands had found a higher King and bowing low in humble obeisance, they presented unto Him their gifts of gold, of frankincense and myrrh—gold for a King, frankincense for a Priest, myrrh as a silent prophecy of a crown of thorns. Then they departed to their homes "another way"—a better way, for their hearts were in tune with the Infinite. There was the peaceful, yet exultant joy of a mother as she looked with hope and prayer upon the placid face of her first-born child. Even the stars joined in concord, for astronomers record a remarkable conjunction of two planets which probably constituted the "Star in the East" which heralded His birth. When this King was born, the gate of the Temple of Janus at Rome was shut, in token of peace throughout the whole Roman Empire. Milton records this revealing portent—

"No war or battle's sound,
Was heard the whole world round;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And Kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by."

The whole universe is articulate with harmony for when the corner stone of the earth was laid, "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Then the Great Architect "looked upon all that He had made, and behold, it was very

good." Ancient philosophers of the long ago, seeking for truths which had been lost, believed that the stars in their predestined courses produced a heavenly melody, the music of the spheres, but man's ears were so calloused with the earthy and the earthly that he could not hear it.

"From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man."

(Dryden)

Herein do members of our Ancient Craft, in tune with the symphony of Christmas, find much that is strangely familiar and deeply precious. Masonry means harmony, for harmony is the soul of the Universe and unfolds in the Universe of the soul. Harmony of sound is music. Harmony of word to thought is poetry. Harmony of color is beauty; the most beautiful thing in nature is the rainbow. Harmony of cog and wheel and axle makes the perfect mechanism. The most perfect machine in the universe is the Universe itself. No oiling does it need, no winding, no repair; every planet in its orbit; every star in its appointed position. There in infinite space, the great system rolls without a murmur—for endless years the same. All thy works praise Thee, Thou Great Architect of the Universe!

But the most perfect and complete harmony is found in the realm of man's soul as he seeks and finds Faith in God, Hope of immortality and Charity towards all men. Herein is the end for which all things were and are created. This is the foundation stone of Masonry. Listen and you can hear this music in the symphony of Christmas. All the revealing symbolism and mystic beauty unfold in the Builder's Craft enshrined in Masonic lore. The very form of the Temple in which he meets unveils the symmetry of the good life. It has been described as a double cube for in the measurement of a cube, the length and breadth and height are equal, sym-

bolizing the perfect proportion in which the true aim of life, the breadth which enfolds all mankind and the height which looks upward to God are complete.

Perhaps the rectangular Temple, reaching from East to West, has a symbolic allusion to the geographical pattern of the ancient world at the time of the building of Solomon's Temple. The Mediterranean with its bordering states, reaching from the Pillars of Hercules to the Valley of the Euphrates thus forms a proportionate rectangle "which enclosed the whole inhabited part of the globe, denoting the universality of Masonry. In every clime, the Mason may find a home and in every land a brother." Within this sacred Temple, harmony abides. Its sessions open in harmony; they close in harmony. Nothing discordant or divisive can find a place within its precincts. The T. with watchful eye stands at the portal to turn back any intruder who might linger near, for his presence would spell discord. Thus does the moral power in the heart of every faithful Mason stand guard against the wiles of temptation and the raucous jangle of the lower self.

There is the harsh jarring discord of Envy with its satellites of hatred and malice. The annals of Scottish operative Masonry preserve a tradition which tells of its disintegrating power.

It concerns the famous "Apprentice Pillar" in Rosslyn Chapel, Midlothian, which this year is celebrating the Quincentenary of its foundation by Sir William St. Clair in 1450. (For pictures, etc., see Illustrated London News of September 30th, 1950.) That beautiful column, with its spiral of flowers and foliage winding down its clustered shaft, was, according to the legend, the work of an apprentice who was a better craftsman than his master. The latter being unable to execute the design of the pillar from the plans furnished to him, had to go to Rome to examine a similar one there, and on his return found that his apprentice had, in his absence, overcome all difficulties and finished the work. The skilful youth, like the brilliant young craftsman who cut the keystone for the secret vault, was regarded with immediate disfavour, and the master, instead of rejoicing at having trained such a workman, was overcome with jealous envy and killed the apprentice with a blow from his hammer."

But the true Mason banishes this baneful discord, for "he writes his Brother's vices in water but carves his virtues in enduring marble."

In these days of wars and rumours of wars, Christmas challenges the world to pause and calls all nations to live in harmony and good will. A mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one. "All that is harmony for Thee, O God, is in harmony with me as well."

"By this Stream have blossomed earth's fairest flowers of love and service, liberty and freedom. By these welling waters, the human soul has discovered life—a new creative and conquering life, a more abundant life which ceaseth not with the tomb. This Stream brings cleansing to the sin-stained soul and to the feet of the traveller soiled with the dust of the winding trail. Power springs from these waters to free man from the guilt and grasp of evil, to give

him strength for the upward climb to the altar steps of God.

Peace broods by this Divine Stream for "He leads me beside the still waters," and as we listen in the silence, we shall hear the angels sing—"Glory to God in the Highest, peace on earth to men of good will."

RT. REV. BRO. A. H. SOVEREIGN, D.D.,
Peace River Lodge No. 89, A.F. & A.M.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE CRAFT

You will never know how much the Grand Secretary and myself and the other Grand Lodge Officers attending with me have appreciated and enjoyed our visits among the Masons of Alberta at our District Meetings and elsewhere. The interest and attendance at these meetings has been most outstanding, in many instances setting records. The initiative, individuality and high character of these meetings coupled with their Friendship, Joy and Spiritual value have made them an example of Masonic endeavour.

May this spirit of Brotherhood, Happiness and Christian fellowship, together with the Angel of Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards all men be with you and your loved ones throughout this Christmas Season and continue on through the New Year to follow.

LEROY W. BOND,
Grand Master

Extract from an address given before Plantagenet Lodge No. 1454, E.C., in Western Australia by the Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England, R.W. Brother Sydney A. White, M.V.O., P.G.W., on the occasion of his recent visit to Australia.

"R.W. Bro. White continued with an exhortation to Freemasons generally to try to live Freemasonry in their daily lives. Masonry was a philosophy of life based on highly religious principles to which anyone could be admitted so long as they acknowledged the G.A. of the Universe, regardless of creed or political opinion. As an instance, he mentioned that in India he had attended a lodge which used no less than five Vs. of the S.L. He cautioned brethren to be on their guard against godless and materialistic elements who might seek to enter Freemasonry for base ends. "Freemasonry is growing rapidly and is strong enough to be carefully selective of its candidates," he said. "It would be better to be without a candidate for a year or two than to make a mistake."

The West Australian Craftsman.

MOMENTS

Guard well your spare moments—they are like uncut diamonds. Discard them, and their value will never be known; improve them and they will become the brightest gems in a useful life.—Emerson.

The whole secret of remaining young in spite of years and even of grey hairs, is to cherish enthusiasm in one's self by poetry, by contemplation, by charity—that is, in fewer words, the maintenance of harmony in the soul.—Charles Caswell, editor of "Masonic Pocket Magazine."

CHRISTIAN PRECEPTS IN MASONRY

(Extracts from a Masonic Sermon delivered to Masons in St. John's Church, Prescott, Ontario, by a Brother Mason, Most Rev. G. F. Kingston, Anglican Primate of All Canada.)

With reference to press reports of statements by a Lutheran pastor, alleging that "A Mason cannot be a Christian", the following forceful sermon refuting this misconception was delivered by Most Rev. G. F. Kingston, Anglican Primate of all Canada, during the last week in June, 1950. Place: St. John's Church, Prescott, Ontario. Occasion: Church service for Central Lodge A.F. & A.M.

Most Rev. Kingston took his text from First Chronicles, 2-1:

"Determine to Build"

The first principle of Masonry is to build character. In their ritual, Masons state their belief in a Supreme Being, and the "G" in the Masonic Symbol stands for God.

No Mason should attempt to find his religion in Masonry, for the order is not meant to provide it. The Church supplies a full religion—that is the Church's task.

In this busy world, Masonry provides one of the few remaining quiet places where a man can contemplate. The increasing rush tends to destroy those things in the home which were held so precious a generation ago. Very little is left of the influence meant to make the home a place for social development of family prayer, and the reading of the Bible. The world is constantly pressing very hard to destroy the good influence of the home.

In Masonry, the members have a call to quiet contemplation, to get away from the rush of the world—as in church—away from their daily avocation for a quiet period of worship of God.

Like the rich young ruler who asked Christ what he should do to gain life, many today have lost their scale of values. It is in Masonry that brotherliness and kindness are held in so great value. If we learn to face life, then we shall face death, not with fear and trembling but with a belief in the life beyond.

Fellowship is said to be the greatest test of brotherhood, for it cuts across racial, cultural and social differences. Not only to Masons but to everyone, there is a message and a challenge in the text, "Determine to build", so that the test of character will be upheld in the strengthening of moral purpose.

R.W. BRO. MOST REV. G. F. KINGSTON, P.G.C.,
Primate of all Canada.

A SQUARE DEAL

As Freemasons, we are not out to give all our Brethren a unsolicited fair deal, without, to borrow an Irish Masonic expression, "being swayed by dislike on the one hand, or undue preference on the other?" By doing this, we shall uphold the integrity of the Order and its principles, and sustain its profession of impartial equality within its sphere.

Each candidate accepted should be made to understand that Masonry is in all essentials a plan of life—a way of living.

WHY?

In my sanctum the other day I was just thinking—just letting thoughts pass through my mind. A word, a little three-letter word, fastened itself upon my thoughts. It is a word that occurs frequently in our Ritual. We are required to answer many questions beginning with this little word "why".

These thoughts occurred to me:

Why did we petition the Masonic Institution for admission?

Why did we take the several obligations?

Why do we continue to serve Masonry instead of letting others bear the burden?

Why do we travel 100, 200, or 300 miles to attend a meeting which lasts only a few hours at best?

Oh, how many times can we ask ourselves, Why?

Then another word entered my mind, one we also often hear in our Ritual—"because".

The answer to many of our questions:

Because we love Masonry.

Because we love our fellow men.

Because we love our Lodge.

Because we love our town, our state, and our nation.

Because ours is a labor of love.

Because we love our families, our schools, and our churches.

Because we love our God.

So may we continue to meet, act, and part as Masons. May this privilege be ours until that day when the Great Architect shall intercede and raise us to that eternal Lodge where we shall meet to part no more.

Finally, let us all give thanks to our Benefactor and Protector for the many blessings bestowed upon us as men and Masons, and at this Thanksgiving Season may we share our blessings with others less fortunate.

"Faith, Hope, Charity, and the greatest of these is charity."

M.W. BRO. DON CARPENTER,
Past Grand Master, Iowa, in S.R. Bulletin.

R.W. Bro. D. H. Galbraith, P.D.D.G.M., Vulcan Lodge No. 74, was the writer of the article "MASONRY and DEMOCRACY" which was published in last month's Bulletin. It is sincerely regretted that Bro. Galbraith's name was omitted from the article.

S. H.

After all, it is what is in the mind that counts, and we can control the mind.

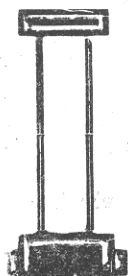
The teeth may be false but let the tongue be true.

The amount of knowledge a person has is not so important as the amount of it he uses to his own good.

—Chas. J. Dennis

What is conscience? It is the guardian of the very best within us.

—Landau



Between the Pillars



MASONIC MEDITATIONS An Address of Welcome to an Initiate

Colonel Edward M. L. Ehlers, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of New York many years ago, and who was a soldier in the Civil War, in which he was severely wounded, used to deliver the following speech to initiates of his home lodge:

"My Brother: With the right hand, I welcome you to the fellowship of our Lodge and to the ranks of our ancient and honorable Fraternity, whose cornerstone is Charity. Charity is the brightest jewel in the Masonic crown. Charity is the Corinthian pillar whose emblature adds Strength, Beauty and Grace to the Masonic fabric. Charity is the radiant spark emanating from God, the inexhaustible source of love. If we attempt to eulogize its charms, the cooler powers of the mind melt into ecstasy, the heart is at empire, and every discordant passion bows before its lenient sovereignty.

"Not the charity circumscribed by the narrow limits of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, binding up the wounds of the afflicted, but the broader nobler Charity that regards all men as Brothers. The Charity that is swift of foot, ready of hand, in the cause of a common humanity. The Charity that writes a Brother's Vices in water and his virtues in enduring brass. The Charity of which He who spake as never man speaks was the Illustrious Exemplar. Let this, the Mason's Charity, burn upon the altar of your heart a living fire. That charity whose superstructure is Friendship, Morality, Brotherly Love; whose capstone is holiness to the Lord. Liturgies and creeds, articles of faith and rules of discipline, stain the rubric pages of history, and speculative points of doctrine have occasioned more misery in the world than all the crimes for which nations have been punished and recalled to their duty.

"We arraign no man's political opinion, nor do we interfere with his religious creed. To himself and his country, we leave the one, and to his conscience and his God we commit the other. To the altar of Masonry all men bring their offerings. Around it all men, whether they have received their teachings from Confucius, Moses, Zoroaster, Mahomet, or the Founder of Christianity; if they believe in the universality of the Fatherhood of God and of the universality of the Brotherhood of man, here meet on a common level. The rich man, the poor man, the sovereign, the subject, are lost in the Common Brother. The Christian returns to his temple, the Jew to his synagogue, the Mohammedan to his mosque, each better prepared to perform his

duties of life by the association of the universal brotherhood.

"It is to this institution, born of Heaven in the gray of the world's morning, before poets sang or historians wrote, that I am privileged to accord you a Craftman's greeting. And I charge you, by the noblest instincts of your manhood, by all that you are and revere, by the ties that bind you on earth, by your hope of heaven, so to live and so to act that your Masonic life may be an open book, known and read of all men.

"Finally, my Brother, I so assure you that whatever good you may do is but duty done. If a sorrow you have lightened, or a tear wiped away, if of poverty's load you have taken a share from some weary burdened soul, if you have lifted a cup of cold water to the lips of a famishing Brother, or mortal, then so far have you illustrated the divine teaching of Masonry, then so far have you done as the Master commanded. May He, without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falls, bless your fellowship in our Lodge, and to His Great Name shall be all the Praise."

This oration is worthy of much meditation by us as Masons.

The Florida Mason

PRINTER'S ERROR

The attention of the Brethren is drawn to the transposition of the pages in the 1950 Proceedings. Page 125 should be 123, and 123 should be 125, etc.

It is regretted that 5 Lodges do not receive copies of the Grand Lodge Bulletin for distribution to their members. Is your Lodge one of these? The cost is small. Please send your orders to the Grand Secretary.

In all ages, he who violates his plighted word has been unspeakably base. The word of a Mason like the word of a knight in times of chivalry, once given must be sacred, and judgment of his brothers, upon whom he violates his pledge, should be stern as the judgments of the Roman Censors against him who violated his oath.—Albert Pike.

Tyranny is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value . . . and it would be strange if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.—Thomas Paine.

To be a member of a Masonic Lodge and not understand its symbolism is as inconsistent as to be a citizen and not understand the principles of government.

Friendship is the shadow of the evening, which strengthens with the setting sun of life.—LaFontaine.