

Wishing Every Brother a Happy New Year

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Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam Harris, P.G.M.

Masons at Their Best

Christian communions have had, at intervals, preaching missions, that is, a series of divine services acquainting congregations with the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Some time ago the Federal Council of Churches in the United States had such a mission, and with it a watchword which should be repeated and emphasized over and over again. It was this: "When the world is at its worst, Christians ought to be at their best." Similarly, we might say when the world has struck bottom, when it has gone as far as it can in greed, selfishness and hatred, that is the time when Masons ought to be at their best.

Mediocre Masons will never do much to make a bad world better. Much of our present distress is largely due to the fact that man has become satisfied with the life that he is living, the thoughts that he is thinking, and the deeds he is doing. He has lost the ambition and desire to spend himself and be spent in doing something beyond himself, which he feels and knows is his duty to do. The course of history was changed nineteen hundred years ago, not by a multitude of half-hearted Christians, but by a solitary person whose will was surrendered to God, and who, after a while was able to influence others. The Mason ought to be at all times at his best, for if he is not careful he will reflect his environment instead of influencing it.

We are deeply concerned over the problems that are facing the world today and waiting for a solution. The events that are taking place all around us, remind us that we are world citizens with inescapable interests and responsibilities. As one nation cannot prosper when another nation is in need, so no nation can be at peace when war is abroad. In the past we have made the serious mistake of transferring our responsibility to others. We have been inclined to sit back and wait to see what our leaders will do. That is what we did after the first World War and you know what happened. Our problems will never approach a solution until we begin to realize that they rest as heavily upon us who are average citizens as they do upon prominent officials in places of great authority.

The Immediate Past Grand Master, M.W. Bro. H. B.

Macdonald, gives his conception of the purpose of Masonry in the world today. "I believe that Freemasonry has a real purpose to serve in the world of today. If all the members of the Masonic Order were true to its teachings and philosophies they could bring about a transformation in world affairs, ushering in a new day of peace and brotherhood. I feel Freemasons must practice outside the lodge the great truths they receive within its tiled recesses."

We frequently speak of world problems as though the matter were plural when actually the world has but one problem and all other difficulties flow out of that one, the problem presented by man himself. If we were able to solve the problems contained in man all other problems with which man is confronted would be solved automatically. Our Lord said "The Kingdom of God is within you"; that is, the desire for a new and better world is wrapped up within us and the attainment is wrapped up within us. While the world of our Lord's day was very much like our own, He did not speak of a new world or a new order, but a new man. An outward renovation of the world will not suffice. Unless men experience a spiritual change from within a better world will never become a reality.

Freemasonry involves at least two basic elements. For a Mason to be at his best he must first of all have a deep personal trust in God. I am using the word trust rather than the word belief. For trust is one of the first words the Entered Apprentice has to deal with in his initiation. "In whom do you put your trust?" It is so easy for one to believe in God and never trust Him. There are relatively few atheists in principle, but many in practice. It is therefore essential in all the crises of life to have the trusting heart. We can face any situation, however difficult and trying, if we have this strength and confidence. The best definition I have ever seen of religion is the one given by Donald Hankey, a chaplain who died in the first World War. He said "Religion is betting your life there is a God". That statement will be appreciated by all Masons, for a good Mason will

have that daring faith "to bet his life on God".

The other basic element of which I wish to write is that of being "a real person". For a Mason to be at his best depends on what he does with his life, in other words, making the most of his personality. Every Mason, operative or speculative, is a builder. The more noble edifice he builds as a speculative Mason, the more efficient operative Mason he becomes. Man's greatest building is his own life, his greatest monument his own character. His greatest achievement is the erection of himself, "that the man he ought to be shall ever be appearing above the man he is". It has been said that Freemasonry is one of religion's handmaidens, in that we have in our hands that philosophy that can guide men's thinking and men's actions.

Because of its secrecy those outside the pale of membership in the Masonic Order have no way of judging us as Masons except by the daily conduct of our lives. Thus we can see the importance of reverence for individual personality and individual dedication. It emphasizes damage that can be done to Freemasonry even by one individual who does not live up to the conception and the teachings of our noble craft.

Just as Solomon's Temple was built without display, outward show or noise, in like manner does Freemasonry carry on its work of benevolence. It is not a service club in that it does not make known its deeds of love and mercy. It seeks to follow the command of the Inspired Book of God "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men". The Mason at his best will let the "milk of human kindness" flow in a tangible way to the brother in need, to the widows and orphans, and thus exemplify fraternity in a practical way.

Brethren, for 1951 I wish you peace and joy. In closing I shall place before you the words of Miss H. M. Haskins, a quotation used by King George VI in his Christmas message of 1939:

"I said to a man who stood at the gate of the year: 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than the known way'".

R.W. BRO. PETER DAWSON,
Grand Chaplain

WHAT MAKES YOU A MASON?

What induced you to become a Mason? If we knew the answer to these questions and would think and meditate on them, we would realize just how far we had advanced on the paths that lead into the Light of Immortality. Motive determines our advance in Freemasonry.

If we come to the portals of Light because we wish to make money, or more friends, or think we are merely joining a mutual admiration society, or because we wish to wear collars and regalia of distinction, or to be called "Master," we may, in a small way at least,

get some of these things in the Lodge, but we will never become real Freemasons.

If we come to the shrine of the Temple of Light with a sincere desire for Light, We shall not be disappointed even should we possess but little wealth or worldly honor.

If we come with unworthy motives we shall find naught but dust and ashes.

All of the so-called higher degrees in Masonry are worthy and amplify the first degrees from which they all spring, but in the true sense the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason is the highest of all degrees. It is indeed the Master's Degree, and whoever takes this degree in the genius and spirit of the ancient craft will never be in the least disappointed. He goes forth a new man, as one risen from the dead. He may not accomplish all in a short space of time, but, if the heaven has been placed in a good and honest heart, he will grow in grace and knowledge and become a pillar in the Temple of Light.

—THE NEW AGE

LONG TIME REQUIRED FOR DEGREES IN ICELAND

In these days when candidates often are rushed through the degrees at minimum time, and when there are some requests, usually refused, for shortening the time between degrees, it is of interest to learn how leisurely the candidate works his way through the degrees in Iceland. Those who picture Iceland as a place of nothing but ice may be astonished to learn that there is Freemasonry in Iceland.

A brother stationed in Iceland for a time writes the following comment: "A brother in our armed forces visited a Masonic Lodge in Iceland and witnessed the first degree ceremonies of the Danish ritual. Being anxious to see their second degree ceremonies, he asked when the candidate would be advanced. He was told it would be at least six months because it would take that long for the candidate to acquire the necessary knowledge of the meanings of the ritual to merit advancement."

—MAUI SCOTTISH CRAFTSMAN

"A thousand times better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness." So says the Chinese and, saying, throws light on the long climb man has made from the gloom of the dark ages."

—MILEPOST

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope.

—HELEN KELLER

We do not know how cheap the seeds of happiness are—or we should scatter them oftener.

—LOWELL

MEMBERSHIP

Statistics as at December, 1947, show there were 15,025 Lodges in the United States of America with 3,284,068 members, this being an increase of 181,993. All of the Grand Lodges (49) show an increase in membership ranging from the smallest, 158, Nevada, to the largest, 15,789, Texas.

In the Dominion of Canada there were 1,400 Lodges with 203,259 members, this being an increase of 9,118 members in eight of the Grand Lodges, ranging from the smallest, 39, Prince Edward Island, to the largest, 4,443, The Grand Lodge of Canada, in the Province of Ontario. The remaining Grand Lodge, New Brunswick, shows a decrease in membership of 165, leaving the net increase in membership for the Dominion of Canada, 8,953.

WANTED

An Assistant to the Grand Secretary.

Applications for the position of Assistant to the Grand Secretary are now invited. Qualifications for the position are as follows:

1. That the applications should be addressed to A. D. Cumming, Chairman of the Committee, at Grand Lodge Office.
2. That the applications be received up to the close of business on 31st March, 1951.
3. That the salary be \$2,500 per annum.
4. That the maximum age of the applicant be fifty (50) years.
5. The applicant must be a Past Master in good standing in the Grand Lodge of Alberta.

Applications must be in the applicant's own handwriting and he should have a knowledge of bookkeeping and some executive experience.

ritual and ceremonial. They play their part during the initiation of a candidate, and they are also the jewel of a Grand Master. Leaving aside for the moment, their spiritual significance, with which this paper is not immediately concerned, the Compasses are a symbol of restraint and self-control; a constant reminder that we should ever recognise the limits to which our own circle of Masonic attainments can extend without detriment to ourselves, or trespassing on the rights of others.

Their use in the initiation ceremony during the administering of the O.B., should point out that that circle of Masonic duty and attainment must ever have its centre in the heart of the individual, and while that centre remains firm, the Mason will be enabled to describe a circle from which he cannot err.

trust, he may proceed with a "firm but humble confidence", and thus another Masonic cardinal virtue is symbolized, namely, Fortitude.

Freemasonry avers that in a Lodge, a man is not esteemed on account of his worldly possessions and that therein, all are equal.

This natural equality is symbolised by the condition in which every candidate presents himself for initiation. No matter what his social standing, be he prince or peasant, rich or poor, the same procedure is followed and the same essentials are demanded. Every candidate enters in that same state of helpless indigence, aided by the help of God and the tongue of good report.

It is a fitting prelude to the Masonic teaching that we are all sprung from the same stock, partakers of the same nature and sharers in the same hope. And upon each one alike, Freemasonry bestows the same reward, the simple yet profound and all embracing title of Brother.

At the same time, the Craft realises the necessity of distinctions among men in the community at large, in order to preserve the peace and good order of society, and to this end, every candidate is enjoined to be exemplary in the discharge of his civil duties.

Hence, as Masons, we meet on the level of natural equality and part on the square of moral rectitude and good citizenship.

When the Candidate observes the first rays of Masonic light, his attention is immediately directed to the three Great Lights, the V.S.L., the Square and the Compasses. At this stage, they are only summarily referred to, but as the Masonic structure takes shape, their symbolic significance becomes increasingly more apparent.

The V.S.L. is a symbol of universal brotherhood.

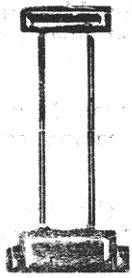
Freemasonry is not a religion, but in all English speaking Lodges, it does require that its members shall hold a belief in a Supreme Being whose law is acknowledged as the rule and guide of both faith and actions.

Thus, the V.S.L. stands as a symbol of the common Fatherhood of God and the only foundation upon which can be erected a Brotherhood of Men; for there can be no common brotherhood unless there is a common fatherhood.

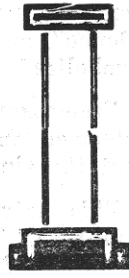
By reason of this simple faith, Freemasonry has been enabled to accept as members of the Craft adherents of almost every religious faith throughout the world; and upon this simple faith, it builds its super-structure and hopes to attain its ideals.

In the Masonic structure, the Square has many appellations; it is one of the 3 Great Lights, a working tool of the Second Degree and the jewel of an Installed Master, but in each case, its teachings are the same, it remains the symbol of morality or right living according to the Masonic line and rule.

The Compasses also cover a wide field of Masonic



Between the Pillars



MASONIC MEDITATIONS

An Address of Welcome to an Initiate

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE FIRST DEGREE

V.W. BRO. A. BRIGHT, P.G.L., P.M.
NEW ZEALAND

Freemasonry conveys its teachings, almost exclusively, by the use of symbols; and since the sum and substance of all Freemasonry is to be found in the first three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, it is these degrees which are known as the symbolic degrees, and which will be found to be richest in symbolism.

An examination of these three early or primitive degrees will show that while the First and Second Degrees are predominantly symbolical in character, the Third Degree contains a good deal that is legendary and traditional.

It will not be denied, that much of the legendary and traditional in Freemasonry, could be, and is, symbolised, but it must be remembered that Freemasonry is not builded on symbolism alone; its traditions and legends also have an important and necessary place in its structure. One good reason being that they enable Freemasonry to preserve its peculiar identity.

Much of the Masonic structure is based on, and fashioned around, events which befel the Children of Israel after their release from Egyptian bondage.

Their journeyings in the desert, their entry into the Promised Land, the erection of their tabernacles and temples, their conquests and defeats in war, and particularly their associations with the God of their Fathers, are referred to, in the various Masonic degrees.

Some of the so-called "higher degrees" are concerned with some particular event in Masonic or contemporary history, and while it is possible to find some beautiful symbolism in these degrees, their primary object seems to be, to relate these events with a view to perpetuating their memory, rather than to convey any moral teaching by the use of symbols.

The Royal Arch Degree, must of course be excepted, as it appears that this degree was, in earlier times, a part of the Master Mason Degree, and can still be said

to be the completion and consummation of that degree.

The First Degree contains but passing reference to anything of an historical or legendary nature. Its cardinal purpose is to declare the tenets and principles of Freemasonry, by the presentation of its symbols, in such a manner that its teachings will be concealed from the profane and unworthy, but capable of being readily understood by the initiate.

Freemasonry, as we know it today, is a progressive speculative science.

In what measure it was wholly or in part derived from the Operative Art, is a question upon which opinions differ and much argument has been waged, but there can be no doubt that many of the customs, tools of trade and the materials of the operatives have been symbolised and used as a foundation and framework upon which to build and adorn the speculative science. The Square is no longer merely an instrument used to "try and adjust rectangular corners", but becomes the symbol of moral rectitude and the Compasses are no longer used exclusively by the architect, but find a wider application as a symbol of restraint, by pointing out the limits of good and evil.

As a Speculative Science, Freemasonry is a mode of living, based on certain fundamental principles which serve to inculcate the Masonic conception of a man's duty to God, his neighbour and himself. It is a life which embraces these three great duties in their proper proportions; each interpreted, not as a separate unit, but rather as a part of a whole system, with a recognition of a relative dependency of its several parts.

Of this life, the First Degree represents that period covered by birth, infant nurture and apprenticeship.

It is a time of instruction; for it is in this degree that Freemasonry seeks to establish the value of the moral and social virtues and to show their worth, not only in the promoting of the welfare of oneself and one's fellow creatures, but also as a means of spiritual development; a progress towards those paths of heavenly science which will ultimately lead to the Throne of God Himself.

It is this progression towards spiritual things which is the essence of all Masonic teaching, and which is in evidence throughout its entire structure.

Freemasonry enumerates several cardinal virtues, as basic principles of good living, for the guidance of its initiates. Prudence is symbolised by the restraint which is imposed on the candidate when he first enters the Lodge. One must not rashly rush forward with a disregard of laws and regulations and the rules of propriety, or trespass on the rights of others. Nor, on the other hand, should there be any retreating from, or shirking of, one's responsibilities, but rather, a prudent and well regulated course of conduct, so disciplined as to make the best use of those talents one possesses.

After the invocation and the Candidate's avowal of his trust in God, he is told that as a result of that