

# A Merry Christmas to Everyone

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## Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

### THE GLORY OF THE COMMONPLACE

*"Hush, all ye sounds of war,  
Ye nations all be still,  
A voice of heav'nly joy steals over vale and hill,  
O hear the angels sing the captive world's release,  
This day is born in Bethlehem the Prince of Peace."*

*"No more divided be,  
Ye families of men,  
Old enmity forget, old friendship knit again,  
In this New Year of God, let Brothers' love increase,  
This day is born in Bethlehem the Prince of Peace."*

— WILLIAM H. DRAPER.

In an age in which men stress the importance of that which is gigantic, stupendous and extraordinary, Christmas comes to remind mankind of the glory and significance of the usual and the ordinary. In a strange and foreboding day when man boasts of all his mechanical achievements of supersonic speed in the uncharted realms of the firmament above, of atomic force which could wipe out a city and its citizens, of ships which are navigated in the dark waters which are under the firmament, Christmas calls us to behold a Child. Pliny of the Roman Empire wrote in the long ago: "Let not things, because they are common, enjoy for that the less share of our consideration." In the V.S.L. we read that when God would speak to His servant, He came not in the convulsive earthquake, nor the rushing wind, nor the consuming fire, but in the still small voice of calm.

The immortal panorama of the first Christmas opens with no triumphant march of conquerors in chariots along an

Appian Way, but with the picture of a humble man named Joseph, in fact he was a carpenter, and a Galilean maiden, his wife, who had come on a long slow journey from an unimportant town in the north called Nazareth. And they came to a village called Bethlehem (the word means "the House of Bread") and asked for a room at the local inn. But the inn was full of more favoured guests, for this was the time of the taking of the census in the days of Caesar Augustus — "and there was no room in the inn". They were allowed to rest in a nearby cave which had been used as a stable. And here — not in a Roman palace nor in a Grecian mansion — the Child was born. This was the Light of the World, the Prince of Peace. The first visitors were some shepherds from the hills above the town — not proconsuls, nor governors, nor viceroys, nor emperors — just humble shepherds. I have often pondered on this great fact and then wondered at the eternal truth therein enshrined. There is a message and a music in the ordinary, in lowly homes and humble folk.

There is a grandeur in the crashing waters of the cataract but there is a subtle beauty in the quiet and calm of the little lake with its sky-blue waters. The Roman warrior-emperors consulted the weird oracles which sought for guiding clues of action in the chatterings and ravings of the maniac but were blind to the manifestations of the Divine in the common life of the everyday — and because of this attitude of mind, Rome fell, and great was the fall thereof. Our newspapers today

lay an exaggerated stress on the startling, the exceptional, the fantastic — but they forget and neglect the ordinary and the seeming commonplace. Some young fool gambles away a million dollars at Monte Carlo and at once the press headlines the front page with block letters, but there is no reference to the myriads of young men who work honestly at humble occupations, who sustain an aged mother or who proudly pay for a humble home for a dear wife and children.

This is the peculiar charm and magnetic philosophy of Masonry.

In Masonry, all members are equal. In one of the Lodge Rooms of the magnificent Masonic Temple in Old London by the Thames, the walls are literally covered with stately paintings of many English Kings and lordly nobles — but the carpenter and the carpenter's son, the fishmonger and the bus conductor, the tube engineer and the accountant, the peasant and the innkeeper are all one — are all equal — as they together step to the main floor in fidelity and fellowship. In a world of mass movements and mass dictation, we must hold aloft the fundamental fact of the sanctity of the individual whether he be of high or low estate. States, nations, institutions, unions and lodges are only abstractions. They have no consciousness of themselves. It is only through the spiritual faculties of each individual that mankind can ever attain or achieve that grandeur and nobility of soul which is his birthright. A transformed world can only come to pass through transformed individuals. Lincoln is reported to have said that God must love the common people for He has created so many of them.

Then I see the Entered Apprentice and the Master Mason standing before the Officer of the Lodge to receive the Working Tools — simple, common implements used by the builder in his daily trade, but they are touched with golden truths and eternal principles by which brave men live and play their part in building the Temple of God. He may not see the place which his work will occupy when all is complete but still he labours. While building Liverpool Cathedral, a stone mason was asked where the marble which he was carving would be placed. He answered: "I do not know, but the Architect knows." Thus our work in the trivial round and the common task will find its true and permanent place in the growing Temple, for the Great Architect knows and understands. Those Working Tools still speak to the Mason as he silently builds for time and for eternity.

How simple and plain is the Lambskin of the M.M.! Yet it is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or the Roman Eagle. It is an emblem of honour and of virtue and when worthily worn, marks its wearer as a man of true and upright character, brave and courageous in facing life's vicissitudes, loyal to his God and a servant to his brother.

"The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
The friend of age, the guide of youth."

— Burns.

How ordinary and common is the sprig of acacia! But tread softly; think deeply. It is the emblem of the immortality of the soul.

"Dust thou art to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul."

It reminds us of our high and glorious destiny beyond the world of shadows, and of that imperishable and immortal spirit within us which the tomb shall never receive and over which death can have no power.

Thus at this Christmastide, we meditate on the real significance of the commonplace and the intrinsic grandeur of the usual. The Christ-child of that first Christmas Day grew and "increased in wisdom and stature and in favour of God and man." Today, millions would die for Him. He is the Hope of the World. He is the World's Saviour.

*Thus may I reach  
That purest heaven; be to other souls  
The cup of strength in some great agony;  
Enkindle generous ardor; feed pure love;  
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty;  
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,  
And in diffusion even more intense:  
So shall I join the Choir Invisible  
Whose music is the gladness of the world.*

— GEORGE ELLIOTT.

Bro. Rt. Rev. A. H. Sovereign, D.D.,  
Peace River Lodge No. 89, Alberta.

### CHRISTMAS — EVERGREEN

How beautiful is Christmas . . . how everlastingly beautiful! Each year for two thousand years the star comes up in the same soft Eastern sky and trails its radiance through troublous times and smooth. Each year the same glad message of goodwill echoes over the earth and each year, in every heart, joy is reborn. As childhood is so fresh, as Spring is evergreen . . . as sudden and as sweet . . . it's Christmas again!

### THE SPIRIT OF MASONRY

The Spirit of Masonry! He who would describe that spirit must be a poet, a musician, and a seer — a master of melodies, echoes, and long, far-sounding cadences. Now, as always, it toils to make man better, to refine his thought and purify his sympathy, to broaden his outlook, to lift his altitude, to establish in amplitude and resoluteness his life in all its relations. All its great history, its vast accumulations of tradition, its simple faith and its solemn rites, its freedom and its friendship are dedicated to a high moral ideal, seeking to tame the tiger in man, and bring his wild passions into obedience to the will of God. It has no other mission than to exalt and ennoble humanity, to bring light out of darkness, beauty out of angularity; to make every hard-won inheritance more secure, every sanctuary more sacred, every hope more radiant!

— Joseph Fort Newton

## 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 journeymen. 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 of our everyday life.

The world today is greatly in need of a practical force that will inspire men to high

We regret to announce the passing of M.W. Brother Peter T. Pilkey, D. D. who passed away in Hamiota, Manitoba, on October 9th last after suffering a lengthy and painful illness.

Brother Pilkey was a Past Grand Master and Past Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, he was also an honored Honorary Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, he was loved and respected by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

We extend to his family and to all of his friends in the Grand Lodge of Manitoba our sincerest sympathies in the great loss they have suffered.

*"He has finished his allotted time and his Brethren mourn —*

*He loved Masonry and served it faithfully and true."*  
S. H.

## IMPROVEMENT IN MASONRY

Freemasonry is the wisdom of the centuries. It was discovered, tried and perpetuated by the Masters of Wisdom of all times.

Freemasonry embodies the condensed wisdom of many ages and is the noblest achievement of the intellectual and moral leaders of all times. It has a mission that is the noblest and most beneficent that can be thought of by men. That mission is education and enlightenment.

No Master of a Lodge has discharged the duty incumbent upon him until he has at least endeavoured to make every member a 'worthy and well qualified' one.

Suppose that each one of our hundreds of thousands were to devote a few minutes of each day to extending his influence as a man by "improving himself in Masonry".

— Bro. Charles A. Long, in "Masonic Historiology"

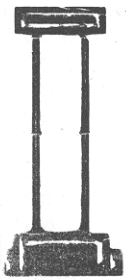
## MASONIC PRINCIPLES

Masonic principles and teachings are plain and simple. They are words of truth as applied to man's conduct here on earth. They admonish us to avoid evil speaking and babbling criticisms because such always lead to iniquity and are wholly incompatible with the spirit of fraternity. It will be well for all Masons to fasten that blueprint securely in mind and heart. If we try always to speak only words that will be profitable to our fellow men; if we seek diligently to know the words of truth that have been given us and to divide (understand) them correctly, if we consistently shun profane and vain talk among ourselves and before the public, we cannot help but set a good example along with still greater opportunities for service.

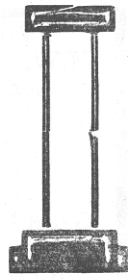
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thinking, better living and nobler efforts. Such a force is to be found in Freemasonry.

Masonic Tristleboard



## Between the Pillars



### THE CORNERSTONE

The cornerstone is the stone which lies at the corner of two walls and forms the corner of the foundation of an edifice. In Masonic buildings it is now always placed in the northeast. As the foundation of which the entire structure is supposed to rest, it is considered by operative Masons as the most important stone in the edifice. It is laid with impressive ceremonies; the assistance of speculative Masons is often invited to give dignity to the occasion.

The symbolism of the cornerstone, when duly laid with Masonic rites, is full of significance, which refers to its form, to its situation, to its permanence, and to its consecration.

As to its form, it must be perfectly square on its surfaces, and in its solid contents a cube. The square is a symbol of morality, the cube of firmness and stability. In its situation it lies between the north, the place of darkness, and the east, the place of light, hence this position symbolizes the Masonic progress from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge. The permanence and durability of the cornerstone which lasts long after the building, in whose foundation it was placed, has fallen into decay, reminds the Mason that when he shall have passed away he has within him a sure foundation of eternal life . . . a cornerstone of immortality which must rise triumphant and eternal above death and the gravel.

The stone, when deposited in its appropriate place, is carefully examined with the necessary implements of Operative Masonry . . . the square, level and plumb rule — themselves all symbolic in meaning — and is then declared to be “well formed, true and trusty.” Thus the Mason is taught that his virtues are to be tested by temptation and trial, suffering and adversity, before they can be pronounced by the Master Builder of Souls to be materials “Fitted as living stones, for that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

The symbolic reference of the cornerstone of a material edifice to a Mason, when at his first initiation he commences the moral and intellectual task of erecting a spiritual temple in his heart, is beautifully sustained when we look at all the qualities that are required to constitute a “well tried, true and trusty” cornerstone. The squareness of its surface, emblematic of morality . . . its cubical form, emblematic of stability and firmness of character . . . and the peculiar finish and firm-

ness of the material, emblematic of virtue and holiness, show that the ceremony of the northeast corner of the Lodge was undoubtedly intended to portray, in the consecrated language of symbolism, the necessity of integrity and stability of conduct, of truthfulness and uprightness of character, and of purity and holiness of life, which just at that time and in that place, the candidate is most impressively charged to maintain.

The virtue of charity, so beautifully portrayed in the northeast corner, should be regarded as the ultimate goal of every Mason. Charity, in the full meaning of that word, is the greatest of all virtues, and the Mason who is in possession of that virtue may be deemed to have arrived at the summit of Masonry, but the road is a long and hard one. The real lesson of the northeast corner is that the candidate is the representative of a spiritual cornerstone on which he is to erect his future moral and Masonic edifice, “perfect in its parts, and honourable to the Builder.”

— R.W. Bro. E. Morrell, Saskatchewan

### It Ain't the Gift

It ain't the gift a feller gits, it ain't the shape nor size, that sets the heart to beatin' an' puts sunshine in yet eyes. It ain't the value of the thing, nor how it's wrapped nor tied; it's something else aside from this that makes you glad inside. It's knowin' that it represents a love both deep and true, that someone carries in his heart and wants to slip to you. It's knowin' that some folks love you, and tell you in this way . . . yes, sorter actin' out the things they really long to say. So 'tain't the gift a feller gits, nor how it's wrapped nor tied; it's knowin' that yer folks like you that makes you glad inside.

— Selected

### THE MISSION

The mission of Freemasonry is to teach and inculcate those landmarks which have to do with the relationships between man and his fellowmen.

— Iowa Grand Lodge Bulletin

### PERSONALITY

Personality is not something assumed or put on, like your best clothes or your company smile, when you are going into company. It is an expression of what you are and a hint of what you wish to be. All of your desires, all of your interests, all of your responses to life, all of the reactions you permit yourself to accept, are helping decide whether you shall be spineless and spiritless and beaten, or will live gloriously in the face of life's everlasting challenge.

— The Educator