



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

E A S T E R

One of the most impressive sights that I have ever experienced took place over the Rockies during the week before Easter a few years ago. Looking down from the plane, everything was bleak, cold, and cheerless. The great rocks were wrapped in gloom; the mountain peaks were grim and sombre, with the clouds of night still upon them.

Then, suddenly, the sun rose, and in a moment everything was transfigured. The sunshine glittered on the mountains, transforming them into gleaming blocks of gold; the clouds became a tapestry of splendor fringed with pink and yellow edging. The entire heavens became all aglow with light and color.

This to me is a parable of Easter. When on Easter morning the Sun of Righteousness arose, He scattered in a moment the gloomy shades of doubt and sorrow, putting to flight the Prince of Darkness, reanimating faith, hope, and love within the human heart.

Easter symbolizes the triumph of joy over sorrow. Easter also marks the triumph of life over death. Triumphant joy! Triumphant life! These are characteristic of the Easter Season which should be manifested amongst us as brethren, and from us to the world.

R.W. Bro. Rt. Reverend W. L. Wright,
Deputy Grand Master,
Grand Lodge of Canada, in the
Province of Ontario.

Our Jubilee Year

This year is an epochal milestone in the history of Alberta. Fifty years ago Alberta received its provincial autonomy and this year we celebrate our Golden Jubilee, marking a period of unprecedented development in our Province. Notwithstanding two world wars, the progress has been phenomenal. Our agricultural and industrial growth advances steadily and our potential wealth is beyond computation. A Kindly Providence has endowed us with an abundance of the material comforts of life, sufficient to supply the needs of all our people far into future years.

This is also a significant year for Freemasonry as we commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the formation of the Grand Lodge of Alberta. A.F. & A.M. Let us all, therefore, unite in making this year of Jubilee a tribute to the past and a pledge to the future.

This idea of the Jubilee goes back to the early practices of the Hebrew people, a practice as old in antiquity as is the origin of our beloved Fraternity. The Hebrews kept each fiftieth year as a jubilee and the high priests fulfilled the traditional ceremony by which the people were assured of the blessing of God and His Divine Guidance. The celebration was heralded by the sound of trumpets and the proclamation of a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God. At the sound of the trumpets, the slaves were set free and the land was returned to its original owners to lie fallow for the next twelve months. Thus were burdens eased and loads re-distributed. It was a time of rejoicing—a new beginning in freedom for man and beast and land—a guarantee that no man should permanently enrich himself at the expense of others and no one should exploit the soil to its permanent exhaustion. Every fifty years came this re-affirmation of freedom—and men's hearts were filled with thanksgiving and a new-found joy.

This year is the Jubilee of the forming of our Grand Lodge in Alberta. This should mean, not merely a time of rejoicing and self-congratulation, but the re-affirmation of our principles and philosophies and a re-dedication to go forward with increased zeal for the benefit of this and future generations, proclaiming anew the high ideals of our beloved Order.

Down through the centuries Freemasonry has stood the test of changing times and its great and noble teachings must survive because they are founded on truth, which is eternal.

Perhaps, for a moment, we should take a glance backward, in retrospect, over the half century we have travelled since 1905 when our Grand Lodge first came into being. We have much for which to express gratitude to the Great Architect of the Universe. Numerically, we have increased until today we have 159 lodges and over 17,000 members.

We have attracted many members to our Fraternity and our philosophies are helping to enrich the lives of many of those who are receptive and attentive to its teachings.

However, it is not enough to rely on past achievements or indulge in self-congratulation. Rather, we should direct our energies to help in ushering in a new day of spiritual and moral advancement in keeping with the progress of science during the past fifty years.

In the world today, the contest for the souls of men wages unabated. There are two evil forces which would destroy not only our beloved Fraternity, but democracy as we know it, and take from us the civil and religious toleration symbolic of our Order. Already, more than one-half the world's population is held in slavery by dictators who permit no freedom of body, mind or soul and, in many countries, religious intolerance is menacing the freedom of mankind.

If we would fulfill our ancient mission, there is still much for Freemasonry to do.

As we survey the world picture, we find many people are discouraged. They are fearful. For them, the future holds no hope. But Freemasonry stands for a way of life, which, if practised, would bring happiness to all mankind.

In this jubilee year, therefore, let us sound the trumpet of advance against evil wherever it is entrenched and continue the struggle to bring happiness to the world. Ever mindful of the sacred memories of the past and of our heritage, let us face the future with confidence.

In this year of Jubilee, I feel we should pause and consider the future of our Order. On the horizon are many signs that perturb the thoughtful and indicate all is not well within our ranks. The indifference of our members and the small attendance at our lodge meetings, particularly in the city lodges, clearly shows an attitude of lethargy and complacency, indicative of the indifference and lassitude of our members, which bodes ill for the future welfare of our Order. Now is an appropriate time to survey the situation carefully and plan for an advance in our mode of applying the principles and philosophies of our Fraternity, in keeping with scientific progress. I firmly believe that we must arouse new interest in our meetings and attract the attendance of our membership, which is being lured to other organizations with more glamorous appeal.

After careful consideration, I make the following suggestions and have in mind more particularly the Canadian Rite work, but some of the recommendations might also apply to those who practise the

York Rite. All those who have a genuine interest in the welfare of our Fraternity might do well to carefully weigh the following four points:

First: Consideration to limitation of the membership of our lodges.

I suggest a maximum membership of One Hundred and fifty for any one lodge. This number is far in excess of the average membership of lodges in the Grand Lodge of England. More lodges, with smaller memberships, would promote greater fellowship, closer association and more enduring friendships.

Second: Number of meetings should be limited, especially in city and town lodges.

Fewer but better-arranged meetings would attract a larger attendance of our brethren. Business meetings should be well organized. They should be short, decisive and business-like. The reading of unnecessary correspondence and other details should be eliminated entirely, or referred to committees for action.

Third: Conferring of degrees should be curtailed.

Many of our lodges have become degree-mills, turning out members, many of whom do not attend after they have received their degrees. By eliminating the multiplicity of degree meetings, the number of lodge meetings could be reduced and more time made available for social evenings, dinner meetings and general good fellowship. Possibly degrees should be conferred only once or twice a year.

Fourth: The Ritual of our degrees should be revised.

Rituals are not sacrosanct and unalterable. They are not landmarks of our Fraternity. They vary in nearly all Grand Jurisdictions. They are but vehicles which convey essential teachings and philosophies and these highly-prized treasures of truth need in no way be curtailed or diminished by revision.

The Opening and Closing Ceremonies should also be drastically reduced, eliminating duplication and many non-essential parts.

Doubtless there will be objections from some members to any change in our Ritual or in the Opening and Closing Exercises, and in the number of meetings, but I submit that all the above recommendations could be instituted without in any way affecting the Landmarks, Teachings or Philosophies of our Order and I do believe, by adopting a more modern up-to-date programme, we would attract our members, stimulate interest and greatly increase attendance at meetings.

To satisfy the wishes of those who prefer more meetings, study clubs could be set up where they could meet from time to time, and also invite new

members coming into the lodge to join with them and receive instruction on Masonic tenets and the background and philosophies of our Order.

Nor can the following excerpt from a "Study of History," the master work of Professor Arnold J. Toynbee, world-famous historian and director of studies in the Royal Institute of International Affairs, be overlooked: "Our civilization may well pass away through indifference—as other civilizations have come and gone. Is that pattern of decline and fall in store for us in our turn, as a doom from which no civilization can hope to escape?" In Toynbee's opinion the answer to this question is emphatically in the negative. "The riddles of life may be hard to read but they do tell us plainly what we must need to know. They tell us that our future depends largely upon ourselves; we are not just at the mercy of an inexorable fate." Toynbee then asks: "What shall we do to be saved?" and answers, "As human beings we are endowed with the freedom of choice and we cannot shuffle off our responsibility upon the shoulders of God or nature. We must shoulder it ourselves. It is up to us. Our fate rests on our own shoulders. We must adapt ourselves to modern, scientific progress."

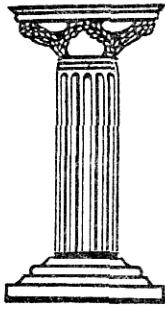
In support of change and revision, I could quote many more prominent Masons, philosophers and historians but, in the light of the above affirmations of faith and man's ability to meet the changes of the times, we should go forward, confident that our beloved Fraternity will continue—as it has done down through the ages—to exert a tremendous influence for good on the lives and souls of men who are inspired thereby.

In this Jubilee year the forming of our Grand Lodge in Alberta, we should sound the trumpets and go forward, with renewed zeal and with a more modern approach, to inculcate our members with the teachings of our Order and send them forth into the world, inspired by our philosophies, to usher in a new day of Brotherhood and Peace, and thus dispel the night of darkness and fear that today enshrouds mankind. Let us celebrate this year of Jubilee with grateful hearts and with courage for the future.

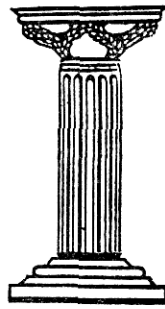
M.W. Bro. H. B. Macdonald,
Past Grand Master, Alberta.

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Probably the reason we do not have more enthusiastic Masons is due to the fact that such a small percentage of Lodge members know just what kind of an institution it is to which they belong. The ritualist work, well done, delights the mind; floor work, properly executed, appeals to the eye; and both are necessary in conferring the degrees. But that is not enough. The Brethren also need to know just what kind of an institution Masonry is; where it came from; and what it stands for. With knowledge of these phases of the work of the Craft, we believe there would be fewer suspensions, and dimits.—Bulletin, G. L. British Columbia.



Between the Pillars



THE HOUR GLASS

It is said that all creatures have a sense of the flight of time. The birds and beasts observe the days and nights, the change of seasons affects their lives and actions, and old age comes with its shortened travel and hours of pain. Man follows the same cycle in his journey of life. Impetuous youth may care little for the rush of days and weeks, but age in its maturity begins to look more soberly as the sands of Time go drifting by. We cannot think of life and its procession of events without a watchful eye on the time-piece.

Although all life is affected by the race of the seasons, it is only man who has learned to measure. Sun dials of crude design have been erected by savage tribes about their tropical homes. Less ingenious people count the passing days by marks in the earth, or sticks laid in a row, and the Indian reads his calendar by the accumulation of many moons. Civilization has produced the clock, the wrist watch and the chimes. Some generations ago the hour glass was invented. Its name indicates its use. Built to mark the brief space of an hour, it was placed under the scrutinizing eye of an attendant. As the myriad grains sifted slowly through the instrument, the contemplative watcher often mused upon it as an emblem of human life. Surely, continuously, the tiny crystals filtered through, and humans likened the process to the wasting away of life itself. What a fruitful experience to sit in silence and meditation as the hour glass marks the passing moments!

It is different in our busy world. In this twentieth century of rush and roar, in the air and under the sea, we cannot sit idly by to turn the glass when it runs empty. The needs of the world about remind us that we are created for active service in supplying the wants of our fellow men. In ages past the hermit could retire to his forest hut, his mountain cave, or an island retreat, pluck a simple living from the generosity of nature, and muse the while about the destinies of man. He drank deep of the homely philosophy of the race. Hurry was unknown, noise and turmoil never troubled him, and life was one long existence, filled with awe and wonder. Today we bicker over details, make issues of insignificant things, and too often fix our gaze upon the inconsequential affairs of the world to the exclusion of fundamental verities. We rush in breathless

fashion through our several occupations, measure success by selfish standards, and worship an artificial program.

But the sands in the hour glass stream steadily through. Ambitious mortals may mock nature for awhile, may laugh at prudence, justice, and the like, and may fail to take due time for contemplation, but the grains in the little time piece continue to make note of the fleeting moments. Our sin, if such we may call it, lies partly in the failure to discern the important things of life as they rise before us, to apportion our time to the best advantage, and to follow the humble admonitions of our forefathers. We err, almost universally, in our lack of contemplation. As Masons we are taught that a portion of the day should be taken for this purpose. To sit in thoughtful solitude with the hour glass for a companion may have the effect of a mighty sermon, may strengthen the moral purpose within us, and clarify our vision for the duties that lie before. Perhaps we should each buy one and spend an hour a week in silent contemplation.

Bro. R. W. Tarbell,
Grand Lodge of Wisconsin.

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A SPONSOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

For every petitioner for the degrees there are two Masons of whom rests a responsibility for the proper training of that petitioner. The two Masons who sign the petition have a responsibility that does not end with their signatures on the petition. If you invite a guest to a gathering at your home, you make sure that he meets all your other guests and is made welcome and comfortable. Isn't the man whom you recommend to Freemasonry entitled to the same courtesy? As his sponsor, is it not your duty to assist him with his work and take an interest in his progress? It seems to me that it is, and will also help those who are active in conferring the degree and in coaching. If you recommend a man to Freemasonry, satisfy yourself that he is receiving that for which you recommend him. To do so is but a Masonic courtesy and is also a Masonic duty.—Masonic News.

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To be glad of life, because it gives you the chance to work and to play and look up at the stars; to be contented with your possessions, but not satisfied with yourself until you have made the best of them; to despise nothing in the world except falsehood and meanness, and to fear nothing except cowardice; to be governed by your admirations rather than by your disgusts; to covet nothing that is your neighbor's except his kindness of heart and gentleness of manners; to think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends, and every day of Christ; and to spend as much time as you can, with body and with spirit, in God's out-of-doors—these are little guideposts on the footpath to peace.—Van Dyke.