



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

FREEMASONRY'S PLACE IN THE WORLD AND ITS APPEAL TO THE YOUTH OF TODAY

Two important questions members of the craft are asking themselves these days are, "What is Masonry's place in the World today," and "What appeal does it have for our Youth."

Freemasonry's Place in the World. What does this title mean to us. In order to get the real meaning or intent of it, I think we should carefully analyse the word "Place." In my dictionary, the word "place" is defined as "official status or position," "an office or employment"; also "Duties or functions." What then, brethren, is Freemasonry's official status or position in the world? What are its duties and employment and, most important of all, what are its accomplishments?

How can we answer these questions until we understand and realize the real meaning of Freemasonry. There are many definitions, and writers have written a great deal of inspiring thoughts on the subject. One writer, H. L. Haywood, says, "There is no official statement of the Masonic Creed or philosophy. Masonry's purposes and doctrines are woven into its ritual, its history and its manifold activities, often in such a way as to cause much mystification."

There need be no mystification about Freemasonry to one who has been inspired by the teachings of the three degrees of craft masonry. We have a clear definition—"Freemasonry, embracing a wide range and having a noble object in view—namely the cultivation and improvement of the human mind—may, with more propriety, be styled a science. Inasmuch as availing itself of the term of the former, it inculcates principles of the purest morality though veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."

To inculcate, or instil into the mind by repetition, to teach through the language of symbols, principles of the purest morality. To my mind, Freemasonry must be acquired by each and every one of us. We must learn for ourselves to understand and appreciate the great teachings and principles illustrated by our symbols. The more inspiration we get from the instruction we receive, the greater will be our knowledge. The more wisdom we possess, the greater is our capacity to appreciate and love Freemasonry.

Another writer says: "Freemasonry is the science of Life, taught in a society of men by signs, symbols and ceremonies, with a peculiar ritual, having as its basis a system of morality and having as its end and purpose the perfection of the individual and the race."

Our system of morality is taught by the use of signs and emblems. If we are impressed and inspired by our ritual, each one must educate his heart to feel the lessons which are there for us.

We seek perfection and strive to live up to the ideals of a Freemason.

The true Mason is he who labors strenuously to help his order affect its purposes and improve himself. He is an ardent seeker after knowledge—knowledge develops the soul.

What then, brethren, is Freemasonry's Place in the World and its appeal to the Youth of Today? What influence does it have in the lives of men and nations?

Throughout the ages, Freemasonry has taught men that the three greatest forces are Faith, Hope and Charity; Faith in God, mankind and man's self, which is the only true Wisdom and the very foundations of all governments; Hope in immortality, in the advancement of Humanity, which is strength of character; and Charity, not only of a metallic kind, but of love and tolerance and forgiveness of the faults of others, which is beauty and promotes happiness.

To be happy ourselves and to communicate that happiness to others is the chief point in Freemasonry. There can be no real happiness without the three social treasures—Liberty, Fraternity and Equality—the foundation of our democracy and way of life. Liberty or Freedom as set out in the Atlantic Charter, written by men who were inspired by our principles and which has communicated happiness to free men everywhere; Fraternity—a world wide united Brotherhood for the good of the common race; and Equality to ensure peace and harmony among men.

An association of men deeply conscious of the real teaching of Masonry and inspired by the great moral forces, united into a world wide fraternity

of Freemasonry by the cement of brotherly love and affection, sincere and humble before God, exercises an immense power in the world.

These are the men who have given us our freedom and happiness today. Men, who by their faith and high ideals, have weathered adversities, even persecution, in adhering to the fundamental principles of our order—Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

Today, we are faced with many of the same adversities and persecutions. Freedom (or Freemasonry, which are synonymous) is being attacked by vicious forces opposed to our way of life. Our brethren in other lands are being suppressed, and Masonry no longer exists in the open as we know it. Still, men do carry on in their Masonic work and belief and in God's own time, Masonry will rise again as it has in the past.

Our own responsibility is to renew our obligations and duty to Freemasonry—to regulate our lives, to maintain our ideals and to guard against anything which might tend to disturb the peaceful quietude of our pursuits. If we do this, we need never fear any sect or ism. Freemasonry takes its basic creed from the Volume of the Sacred Law, the rule and guide to our faith which guides us to all truth, directs our steps in the paths of happiness, and points out to us the whole duty of man.

Freemasonry has played an important part in world affairs in the past two or three centuries, and its influence is ever increasing with the growth of the Fraternity. Many men in high places in the government of free people are devoted and sincere craftsmen. With such men, our way of life which we cherish and protect is safe.

What appeal does Freemasonry have for the Youth of Today. I think that the appeal is the same today as it has been during the past. When we come to analyze the youth of today, and recall our own youth, you will find that basically we are the same. I well remember my own ideas of Masonic Lodge and opinions of Masons generally. It was an honour and an achievement to be a Mason. Everyone knew that a Masonic Lodge was a very important organization. Men whom we knew were Masons were the respected men of the district.

I suppose you might say that Masonry has a certain glamour for some men, inside as well as outside of the lodge. If we were to examine all of our thought prior to admission into the lodge, I think you would find that the lodge appeals to men in different ways. Some join because they think that they should belong to a lodge and their idea is that they believe a Mason's lodge is a pretty good lodge. Others seek the social activities which appeal to them. Others seek admission in the hope that to wear a Masonic emblem might help them in their work or business.

The youth of today is a pretty well educated young man, educated not only in the academic sense, but in the sense of experience in facing life's

grim reality by the great conflict just ended. They seem to have grown up overnight and are taking their rightful places in our midst. As a rule, they are intelligent and eager in their approach to the consideration of the great principles of life.

Masonry's appeal to these young people, after as well as before initiation, is just what we as individuals make it. Each one of us has a very grave and serious duty to our youth. We must set an example which will be an inspiration and guide.

We must guard against any incident or condition which might reflect any unfavorable impression of the craft. Sometimes we forget—or do not remember—that charity and love toward one another, tolerance and forgiveness are the greatest virtues.

The brotherly love and affection we show to all mankind and the practice of the well known admonition—"To let the world see how Masons love one another"—to my mind is the great appeal of Freemasonry.

R.W. Bro. D. D. McQUEEN,
Senior Grand Warden, Alberta.

LET'S FORGET THE "FUNNY STUFF"

How unfortunate it is for Freemasonry that there may still be found a few members in our lodges who think it is their bounden duty to be funny when an initiation is going on. They seem to delight in approaching a candidate, making remarks which they consider excruciatingly humorous. We need not repeat here their catch-phrases. They are pretty well known to all of us. None are new or original, but all are definitely un-Masonic.

Such procedure has a tendency to destroy in advance the beautiful lessons later to be conveyed to the candidate. Our ancient brethren compiled the lectures of Freemasonry with an earnest desire to impress wise and important truths. To have their serious contemplations burlesqued by thoughtless silly remarks is embarrassing to the candidate and highly distasteful to the Craft in general.

There is much comfort in the thought that the brethren indulging in such foolishness are decreasing in number with each passing year, and we eagerly look forward to the time when their kind shall have entirely disappeared from among the ranks of our ancient and honorable Craft.

—Selected

SIX V.S.L. ON ALTAR OF INDIAN LODGE

Brother W. J. Coates (P.G.D.C., England) and Secretary of Hope Lodge No. 413 (Eng. Reg.) at Beerut, India, commenting on the presence of a V.S.L. on the altar of all lodges on the English Register as well as all lodges who have roots in British Freemasonry, states that in his lodge, because of the diversity of religions represented on its membership, there are no less than six Vs.S.L. on the altar.

—Masonic Light, (Canada).

THE TREE OF MYSTERY

Many years ago there stood on a hilltop an unusual tree which was called by many "The Tree of Mystery." When the burning summer sun dried the leaves of neighboring trees, the leaves of this tree remained fresh and green. It grew larger and larger and looked healthier than other trees of its kind in the neighborhood.

One day surveyors decided that a new road must run over the hill and that the trees there must be cut down to make way for the road. Then the secret of the mystery tree was disclosed. Deep down in the hill, workmen discovered a spring of clear, cool water. The tree had sent its roots into the soil moistened continually by that spring. The tree was not affected by surface conditions that left their mark upon the others.

Surely our lives need some deep, unfailing source if they are not to be stunted by surface conditions of every day. We rightly talk much of the love of God, but we speak perhaps too little of the judgments of the Lord. We continually talk about the Great Light—yet very few among us know what the book actually contains.

The Great Light plays an important part in all of our meetings, rituals, ceremonies, and instructions. Indeed, it is regarded as one of the three great lights of Masonry, and it is. Without it there could be no Masonry. Without it there could be no hope whatever in the world. The Bible, which is an exposition of the Creator's will and word, becomes the rule and guide of faith of all who accept it as God's purpose with reference to mankind.

We, all of us, are mortal. No matter what dreams we may have or what hopes or ambitions may be born within us, the time comes when we grow old, when strength fails, when we can no longer go on with the plans we made and the dreams we dreamed. It is then we realize our mortality. It is then we remember how weak we are and how little we are in eternity of which we are so small a part.

No living, sentient being can bear the thought of being blotted out eternally. We have lived. We are part of the world. We have done things, planned things and none of us can accept the thought that all this dies with us—that we are only as the grass of the fields and the leaves of the trees.

So, where is our hope? Where is there surcease and comfort? Where may we find relief from these pressing burdens?

There is only one place and that is the World of the Lord God Almighty who created not only us but all the universe besides. The Holy Bible is His message to us. It is our rule and guide to faith. Without it there is no hope, no faith—nothing but to live as do the animals in the field, to do as they do and die as they do.

In our initiation as Masons we accepted this Great Light as a rule and guide to faith. Not any particular creed, but as a rule which contained

the directions by which we could attain an upright, honorable and worthy way of life. How many of us have searched therein for the light and directions we need? The Bible, resting on the Altar in the Lodge room is only a symbol. It is there to teach us that we should use this book to find the help and light we need to guide our way along the dark pathway of life. If we regard it merely as an adjunct to the ceremony of becoming a Mason we miss much of the value of that privilege and honor. The Holy Bible is not there as an ornament or an implement or a tool to be used in making a man a Mason. It is there for the express purpose mentioned in the ritual—as a rule and guide to faith.

The Bible in the Lodge and the one in your home, are important to you. Whatever may be your religious affiliation or creed, you need it. Nobody charting his way and living his life by the Great Light ever went far wrong. Basically and fundamentally its teachings are the root, stem and branch of Masonry. To neglect it is but to extinguish one of the Three Great Lights.

In all of the literature of time there is nothing to equal the Sermon on the Mount. Nothing was ever said on earth that equals the scope and grandeur of the Master's commandment to love one another as we love ourselves. If we could and would do that, wars and trouble, conflicts and hates would disappear. And this Great Light is filled to overflowing with counsel, instruction and help directed toward this magnificent ideal.

When we approach the Altar and see the Book open there before us, let us reflect upon these things. And at times, when we can, take our own Bible and seek in it the help that is so abundant there. When we knelt before the Altar in due form and made our sacred vows that Book meant something. Let us not forget it. Use it—read it. Go to it often for comfort and help. It will never fail us because it is the Word of the Supreme Architect of the Universe.

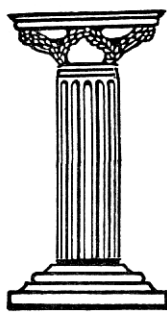
Without this faith we are nothing. But faith must have a foundation. This Great Light is that foundation. Like the "Tree of Mystery," it nurtures our soul with a growing of strength and power making us better men and more understanding of what is ours to enjoy.

Bro. M. A. STILLWAUGH,
Editor, Masonic Chronicler.

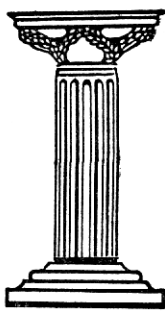
THE GREAT PROBLEM

The problems in our present day social life are largely due to individual attitudes, and, in spite of our advancements in this twentieth century, the actions of the majority of people are controlled by ignorance, fear, bias, distrust, bigotry, envy and pride. Such forces within the individual naturally produce class consciousness, sectarianism, narrowness, racial prejudice and national snobbery. Thus the great problem confronting humanity is the mastery of these conflicting elements, which, if uncontrolled, lead to conflict and ruin.

—C. H. Plummer, Australia.



Between the Pillars



BEYOND THE CLOUDS THE SUN STILL SHINES

Much of the joy and sorrows of life depend entirely upon our viewpoint. To the man living in the valley, a cloud-burst with its attendant flood means not only a disagreeable experience, but oftimes means the loss of growing crops, livestock, and perhaps even home itself. To the mountain climber seated above the clouds, it is merely a picture, a passing incident, affecting him only as a matter of entertainment. It is sometimes hard for the valley-dweller to realize in such times of trouble, when he has been driven from his home and has lost his possessions, that the sun still is shining on the mountain tops, and that when the clouds have rolled away, it will smile again in the valley and that he will really feel encouraged by its warmth, and by the singing of the birds, to return and restore his wrecked home, rebuild his barn and fences, replant his orchards and sow his fields again. Yet, the sun itself has never ceased to pour out its beneficence, oblivious to the fact that showers ever occur.

It would be well if the dweller in the valley would occasionally climb the mountain and watch the shower from the heights above in order that he might really understand how little it means in comparison with other happenings and other things in the great world beyond his valley. And if on one of these trips he should happen to come where an astronomical observatory was located, no doubt the observer would tell him that not only does the sun of this little planet shine eternally, no matter what clouds surround the earth, but millions of suns out in the vast reaches of never-ending space shine and will continue to shine throughout eternity beyond the power of human imagination to conceive.

After such an experience, the valley dweller would go back a changed man and with a new mental outlook on life. The incidents of his valley would cease to be the whole of his life. Uplifted in spirit by his altered view, he would more easily overcome the obstacles of his surroundings, and sudden disaster would cease to make him down-cast. He would think not only of the sun which is light and life to him, but also of the other suns, the great Betelguese and the giant suns in the illimitable realm of space, each one shining, each one moving in perfect harmony, all maintaining equal balance which makes possible a universe where otherwise there would be chaos.

We are, all of us, valley-dwellers in the realm of mind and spirit. When disasters come and we become downcast, we cannot seem to realize that the sun of human kindness is like our sun in the solar system and is the light and life of our mental and spiritual environment. At such times, we need to get away from our narrow mental valley and travel the heights.

It is from these same hills of human experience that we can look abroad upon the vast realm of spirit and discover God, that great source of all human kindness, like a giant central sun, the source of all light and life, and then we will continue with the Psalmist, "My help cometh from the Lord Who made Heaven and earth."

Our joys and sorrows are so largely a matter of viewpoint, and viewpoint is a matter of properly directed effort. Therefore, would it not be worthwhile to achieve that viewpoint of the universe which turns sorrow into joy, and assures us an eternal security from the uncertainty of a fitful existence?

If our mental and spiritual vision is clouded so that we are inclined to doubt the existence of God or have lost faith in humanity, let us travel out of the valley. Let us view the everlasting sun. Let our souls travel through the invisible. Let them explore the realm of the eternal spirit to find the great central force of the visible and invisible universe, the great central sun of all existence, which shines from everlasting to everlasting, and of those realms it has been said, "There is no night there."

Bro. Dr. J. L. BULLARD,
The Texas Grand Lodge Magazine

A SACRED TRUST

Masonry had its origin in response to a demand of human nature for a community of fraternity wherein the welfare of a brother was to be a moving cause. Everyone who has come into this community has done so of his own free will and accord, and his avowed purpose only was advancement of the welfare of his fellowman. In coming thus freely into the Fraternity he has yielded his individual will, in certain respects to the government of the majority, or to the government of the Craft, in such manner as its laws and usages prescribe. In doing this he has trusted to the good faith and the combined wisdom of his Brethren. He has placed in their hands in certain instances his honor and reputation. A trust more sacred could be reposed in no one.

—The Freemason (Eng.)

The distinguishing marks of a Mason are not found in the fiber of his garments nor his social or financial standing, but are spiritual. Namely, a chivalric head, a compassionate heart, a prudent tongue and a courageous will; all devoted to our country, our lodge, our homes and each other. These are the distinguishing marks of a Mason.