



Wishing Everyone A Merry Christmas



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BUILDING BRIDGES

In classical mythology, there is the prophetic and human story of Icarus. King Minos had imprisoned Daedalus and his son Icarus in the labyrinth which Daedalus himself had planned, and escape seemed hopeless. However, Daedalus contrived two pairs of wings, but he warned his son to steer a middle course over the sea. If he flew too high, the sun might melt the glue; the wings would drop off and he would perish. The delight of the new and wonderful power went to the boy's head and he soared exultingly up and up, paying no heed to his father's anguished pleas. The wings melted and fell away and he perished.

That ancient story may be re-enacted today. We live in an age of turmoil and confusion, of suspicion and hatred, of sound and fury. There is distress of nations; there are wars and rumors of wars, men's hearts failing them for fear. Then as a climax, for better or for worse, to man has been given the secret of nuclear fission—the atomic bomb. A recent test H-bomb explosion had the destructive power of 4-megatons, i.e., four million tons of TNT. The "gamma" rays could sear and cripple human life unto the third and fourth generation. It is estimated that 400 C-bombs could wipe out all life on earth. Thousands of planes as carriers of death stand poised for flight as their gallant crews are alert day and night awaiting the shout "Scramble." Like Icarus of old, from our own madness we are on the border of self-destruction.

Like unto an oasis in the desert or the many colored rainbow in the arched sky of darkened clouds, comes CHRISTMAS DAY. "Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

*"Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man at war with man hears not
The words of peace they bring:—
O listen now, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing."*

Seven hundred years before the Christ-child was born, the ancient prophet in the V.S.L. proclaimed His coming and His name—"The Prince of Peace." At His birth, the Angel Voices of the Judaeon Hills sang the first Christmas carol, "Glory to God in the Highest and Peace on earth to men of goodwill." Wherever He went along the dusty roads He whispered "Peace."! Peace to the disciples in the storm-tossed boat on the waves of Galilee! Peace to the demented mind of the outcast wanderer by the rocks and caves! Peace to the sorrowing sisters at Bethany whose brother had been called to the Life Elysian! Peace to the bewildered and disconsolate followers in the closed Upper Room. On this Christmas Day, in a shaken and shattered world, He whispers "Peace."

But how can we as men of an ancient and honored craft help to bring to this disillusioned world God's Blessing of Peace? I read recently about a world salesman who was trying to sell suspension bridges, but though energetic and hopeful, he had found a lot of consumer resistance. His wife said to him: "Wouldn't it be better to select a new line, shaving soap, nylon stockings or a new carburetor?" "No," said he, "somebody must sell suspension bridges. I think it is my job."

Yes, Masons and all men of good will must build and sell suspension bridges, so that the

bells of Christmas will ring the Carols of Peace. Bridges overleap chasms; they link land to land and span great gulfs.

There is the national chasm. This is the stream of suspicion and hatred, of revenge and greed. Throughout this troubled world, there is the rising tide of nationalism. There are iron curtains and bamboo curtains which separate nation from nation. Suspension bridges must link kingdom to kingdom—bridges of trust and faith, of friendship and good will. I stood by the stone at Brussels where Nurse Cavell was shot—and I could still hear her words,—“Patriotism is not enough; I must bear no hatred in my heart.” Masons are found in every land where the flag of freedom waves—and they are building suspension bridges.

There is the racial gulf. Here is a deep swirling stream which separates men of different color. Here is a bitter clash of world forces. “But God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.” (V.S.L.)

*“Join hands then, Brothers of the Faith,
Whate’er your race may be!
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me.”*

Men of the Masonic Craft are called to build suspension bridges over religious gulfs—and they are doing it. Men who would honor and serve the Great Architect of the universe are separated by denominational differences. It is truly sad, pathetic and tragic! Men, who are seekers after God should surely be linked together by bridges of tolerance and love. If we are children of a common Father, then surely we are brothers in a common spiritual Brotherhood, the Brotherhood of Man.

Another bridge must be built—a bridge which will leap the gulf which separates Management and Labor. Industry presents to the world today a sorry picture. Here are violence and greed, hatred and selfishness which issue in strikes and lockouts. Men of good will must all be linked together as partners in a world of work, each necessary to the other. With the plumb-line of righteousness and the square of brotherhood, Masons must seek to build this suspension bridge which will sanctify toil and make all labor holy. The Christ-child in His home at Nazareth became the village carpenter.

On this Christmas Day as dear ones gather around the festive board, as brother grasps the hand of brother, as little children laugh and sing, we bow for a moment in prayer and praise—“Give Peace in our time, O Lord.”

“Suspension Bridges for Sale!”

*“Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.”*

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

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

OUR MOST HALLOWED HERITAGE

Christmas, with all it stands for, is our most hallowed heritage. For centuries it has united all civilized nations and peoples. It has shaped their ideals and their destiny.

The thought of Christmas is still like the brightly shining star that drew the Three Wise Men in the Gospel story as they journeyed through the night to Bethlehem and found the cradle of a Wisdom greater than the world of their time knew. The world of our time is still sadly far from knowing and feeling that Wisdom of the life and the teachings and the death of Jesus as fully as the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night knew and felt the power of the light that shone about them, when the angel of the Lord—as we read in the gospel of St. Luke—came upon them and they heard the voices from Heaven singing: “On earth peace, goodwill to men.”

We of this day and age are still in perfect accord with Charles Dickens when he wrote in his Christmas Carols “I have always thought of Christmas as a time when men and women open their hearts freely,” and this old carol is still alive with the spirit of this, the greatest day of the Christian years the spirit of sympathy and tolerance, the spirit that stands against all the things that hurt the human soul and cripple its life, the spirit of good cheer, the spirit that banishes troubles and anxieties lest they mar the festival of the home and spoil the free, trustful joyousness of the children.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE CRAFT AND
OUR MANY FRIENDS



IS IT WRONG?

I fear that we of this miracle age are falling into the same fallacious quagmire of serving mammon which has been the undoing of men and nations throughout the history of all time.

Is it wrong to compare the spectacle of Rome burning while Nero fiddled, with the present day practice of sitting at a television show while our neighbor down the street needs a helping hand?

Is it wrong to say Masons have not learned the lessons of Masonry, regardless of how much proficiency has been attained in the Ritual, unless they have secured from Masonry's teachings a desire to be of service to their fellow man?

Is it wrong to say to these men, that they have missed the import of Masonic teaching unless they have come to realize that the Christian virtues are the enduring things in this world, that material prosperity comes and goes, but that man's relation to man, and man's relation to God live on forever?

—Masonic News, Illinois.

SPONSORSHIP

The sponsoring of a candidate for the degrees of Freemasonry presupposes that the sponsor has more than a slight interest in the petitioner. It sometimes happens that a petitioner knows only one person in a Lodge or has lived in the jurisdiction for the minimum required time. More often than not however, the petitioner has known the person sponsoring him for years. It is most unfortunate that more interest is not shown after the candidate has been elected, and is receiving the degrees. Remember, he is a neophyte, his concept of the philosophy and the principles of Freemasonry is necessarily limited. His impressions are gained from the body of members at large; to neglect him at this time, thinking that one has no obligation rather than the signing of his petition, is to render him a disservice that he certainly does not merit. How much good could be accomplished if more members would approach this fine privilege with a more realistic attitude; if they could realize just how much good could be done for the new members by acting the part of a Brother in deed and in spirit. True Masonic inspiration and education finds its beginning in the willingness of the member to aid and assist those who seek the light—only in this fashion can all of us be properly enriched from the cherished precepts that have been held high for so long.

—Bro. Llewellyn S. Hughes, M.P.S.

TIMES ARE NOT DIFFERENT FOR FREEMASONRY

With "mass production" there follows a natural tendency to "cut the corners" and disregard the letter of the law. This is revealed in the type of requests received for information on how to "detour" certain legal requirements of the code. These reflect a mercenary motive which gives rise to the accusation of "Commercialism." This is just what genuine Masonry cannot be.

Let us never be guilty of glossing over the violations of the established principles of Masonry. The excuse "times are different," applies to many phases of life today, but truth is eternal.

The winking at violations becomes a boomerang that will invariably hit, and hit hard. Indulging in practices that are in direct violation of the Code is sure to lessen the respect and regard for the Institution.

The candidate comes to Masonry with little or no background of its rules, regulations, legends, or customs. He surrenders his own action during the conferring of the degrees to the pattern suggested to him by those in whom he has confidence. Meditate, then, and reflect what his actions will be when he later discovers that a jurisdiction has one set of rules and the Lodges follow another set, even under the guise of "times are different."

Consider how any man would react to discover that a Fraternity based on the highest type of morality, deliberately violated its own regulations. Nothing but a lowering pride in the institution could or would result. Look well to fraternal consistency.

—Western Australian Freemason.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

In Switzerland there is a church among the Alps up on the mountainside and in it there are no lights or lamps. When the time comes for evening service one can see the villagers coming from their homes, each one bearing his own light. At first there is only a glimmer in the darkness, but when they have all arrived for the service the little church is aglow with the combined light of many lamps and candles.

Many of us have only a small light, perhaps; others have a large light. But the world has no light at all, save as we all bring our lights together. The world is waiting for the Masonic lights of human love, friendliness, cheer, kindness, courage, faith, hope and prayer as exemplified in the individual life of every Mason. Are you bringing your light to help brighten a dark world?

—The Mansfield Mason.

MASONRY PAST AND FUTURE

Masonry has a great tradition, but it is not enough to sit complacently in contemplation of that fact. Whatever is meritorious in the past and can be made applicable to present-day conditions is, of course, desirable to be preserved and utilized.

However, if Masonry of the present is to keep abreast of the best in its past, then its membership must be selected with due regard to having the type of members who will be a credit to the fraternity. This means that petitioners must be carefully scrutinized.

Furthermore, this means that quality of membership must be regarded as of far more importance than mere quantity of members.

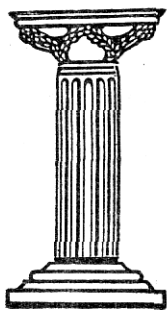
Masonry's doors are open to the good and true, but no one is ever asked to join. Each one who desires to become a member must seek membership of his own volition. But once admitted to membership, it rests upon each of the older members to make the new members feel what Masonry stands for and to make him feel that he is among friends and not merely one more stone in a vast building. Masonry is vibrant with all that is fine and uplifting in life, and each new member must be made to feel that the atmosphere of Masonry and of the lodge to which he has recently been admitted contains the ozone of health and moral uplift.

—Courtesy of The New Age.

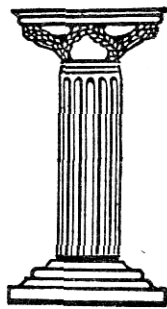
THE POWER OF LOVE

"Love is the only bow on life's dark cloud. It is the morning and the evening star. It shines upon the cradle of the babe, and sheds its radiance upon the silent tomb. It is the mother of art; the inspirer of poet, patriot, and philosopher. It is the air and light of every heart, the builder of every home, kindler of every fire on every hearth. It was the first to dream of immortality. It fills the world with music, for music is the voice of love. Love is a magician, an enchanter that changes worthless things into joy, and makes right royal kings and queens of common clay. It is the perfume of the wondrous flower, the heart. And without that sacred passion, that divine swoon, we are less than beasts, but with it each is heaven, and we are gods."

—Exchange



Between the Pillars



THE THREE GREAT PILLARS

Our institution is said to be supported by three great pillars, denominating wisdom, strength and beauty. In imitation of our ancient brethren, let us examine them and see if perhaps our own temples may not be likewise supported.

Men, in history, in philosophy, in science, in art, and in religion, have ever asked themselves: "What am I?" "Where did I come from?" "Where am I going?" Answers are given by teachers, cults, fraternities and other groups, who are living today, or who lived yesterday, or in the dim, distant past. Some of us follow one teaching or belief, some another, while many are indifferent. If questioned upon these momentous speculations most men will state their opinions, their beliefs. Some of these opinions sound reasonable, some not so good, while others may sound absurd to us. Why?

Because we base our beliefs upon acquired knowledge and the confidence we have in our teachers or those who state new trusts to us, our beliefs are different and our answers to these questions differ from each other. Sometimes we are compelled, reluctantly, to change our beliefs, for we find that we have formed a conclusion upon a wrong or false premise.

Belief is the acceptance, by the mind, of evidence not of a personal nature. Most of us believe that blood circulates. For others it may be knowledge. They have seen it through a microscope in the web of a captive frog's foot. Most of us believe there is a country called Australia. Others know it; they have been there and tell us about it. We have confidence in these teachers and their tales of anatomy and geography, so we believe them because their teachings sound reasonable.

Let us call belief a mental support, corresponding to the pillars of beauty. Beauties of nature are many hued and changeable; so are men's beliefs. As we acquire more knowledge, and listen to new teachers, we may change our beliefs as individuals, groups and nations. Sometimes great thinkers like Galileo, Newton, Franklin, Marconi, Wright, Curtis and Einstein work amongst us and cause us to drop old beliefs for new.

"Knowledge is power," therefore, knowledge may represent the pillar of strength. Knowledge may be acquired by experience or observation. Knowledge is acceptance, by the mind, of indisputable evidence, of observed sequences, of invaluable successions, facts, laws, truths.

We accept as knowledge the rules of mathematics. Four and three are seven—today, yes-

terday, tomorrow, here, in Egypt, in a submarine or on a mountain top. We know and use the laws of natural philosophy; water runs downhill; fire burns; man can fly. Chemists tell us of the elements of nature and show us ways we can prove these facts for ourselves. Scientists imagine certain things to be true, then set about to prove them, using their acquired knowledge to establish new beliefs or change old ones; thereby adding to man's store of knowledge, which is consistently being augmented. Speculation starts them off on the quest for new laws, new truths, new facts.

Masons are speculative searchers for knowledge—seekers after the truth. Knowledge gives us strength and we should be a fraternity of strong-minded thinkers.

Knowledge, however, should be acquired and used for alleviation, not for domination.

Reason or logic is that faculty of mind which permits of conceiving, judging and disposing of evidence in our pursuit of the truth; in our deduction of other men's thoughts, acts and experiences. We should "accept nothing that is unreasonable, yet discard nothing as unreasonable without proper examination."

But we have another human faculty which "begins where reason sinks exhausted." Exhausted in trying to explain to ourselves why a just Deity permits evil, sorrow, accidents and pain. We must have faith in a Divine plan for human life, and that "we reap only as we sow." Faith that the pattern of life slowly being woven from above shows us below only the under side, which seems complex and confusing. We must have faith that the fabric when finished will be a perfect work of art; we must have faith to do the best we can in whatever environment we find ourselves, not through compulsion nor fear, but of our own free will and accord. Yes, faith is surely one of the greatest pillars; a mental support; a strong one.

"Faith is belief based upon knowledge.

"Faith is but reason satisfied with evidences other than that of senses.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the essence of things unseen.

"Faith is based upon sentiment and knowledge.

"Faith is a great engine, an enormous power, which can in fact accomplish all things, for it is the covenant in man and his Divine Principle.

"Oh, ye of little faith! If ye had the faith of a mustard seed ye could move mountains."

Your belief is your belief—mine is mine. Your store of knowledge is the accumulated facts, truths and laws you have acquired and used thus far in your life. My fund of knowledge may be greater or less. Your faith in the Supreme Architect, the Divine Plan of life, and the Celestial Lodge is your belief based upon your knowledge.

Not blind faith, for that is unwise. He is wise whose faith is well founded upon reasonable beliefs. Faith is the pillar of wisdom.

Our speculative temple—our mind—is supported by these pillars denominated as belief, knowledge and faith. Be careful lest they crumble and the structure fall.

—Square and Compasses