



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

THE JOYS OF A FREEMASON

A true Freemason attends the meeting of the lodge with feelings of joy and anticipation. He recalls with joy and pleasure the many meetings he has attended and rejoices in the great satisfaction he has received from such meetings; the friendly greetings, and the genial spirit of sociability of the brethren, together with the good men of like ideals that kindle in our hearts the flame of brotherly love that can only exist in a Freemason's lodge.

The quiet dignity of the brethren in the lodge room, with its familiar furnishings and symbols, promotes contentment and pleasure among the brethren. There is a feeling of pride and well being aroused in everyone. Business and vocational difficulties, worries and disappointments are pushed into the background, while the beautiful work of Freemasonry takes over the spirit and body of the individual Freemason. In the words of a poet, "We are a part of all we've met."

How and where does a Freemason acquire the knowledge of his craft that gives the joy and tranquility of spirit that characterizes the true Brother? It is said in our ritual that the duty of the Master is to set the craft to work and give them instructions for their labors, but there are no rules and regulations by which he gives such instruction. The lectures of the various degrees and the ritual of the degrees are intended to cultivate and enlighten the mind, to teach the fundamentals of our order, which are: brotherly love, relief and truth. These are the timbers that make the framework. The finishing and polishing of the true Masonic spirit is done by the individual. Each must interpret, develop and practice the tenets of our order, in the light of his knowledge and according to his understanding of the ancient landmarks.

This principle was firmly established in the early days of our craft by our founders, when we were given the Great Light as our rule and guide, but without dogma or catechism.

The first charge in Anderson's Constitution, Regulations and Charges reads: "A Mason is obligated by his tenure to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine—

leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is, to be good men and true, or men of honor and honesty, by whatever denomination or persuasion they may be distinguished, whereby Masonry becomes the centre of union and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must have remained at a perpetual distance." Here we have the original charges as laid down by the early Grand Lodge, more than 235 years ago.

This charge has to do with God and Religion. There are, of course, many other charges in much the same language and spirit. The great responsibility for development is placed on the individual.

There had been too much persecution in the name of religion; too much rebellion and strife in civil affairs; no toleration among men to allow our founders to accept rules, religion and politics in a Freemason's lodge. The unpleasant experiences were too recent to allow a definite set of instructions to hamstring the true and unlimited spirit of Masonic brotherly love and friendship. It is a great joy to us that no one group made any attempt to regiment Freemasonry.

The open Bible, on the altar, in the centre of the lodge room, with the privilege of individual honest interpretation and application, without the restriction of compulsive or coercive directions, is the great joy of all Freemasons.

The glorious history and progress of our craft signifies the wisdom of its internal organization, and the system of instruction by legend and symbols. Each and everyone is free to study as much as he wishes and according to his ability. This increases the appeal of Freemasonry to men of various religious and intellectual training. While Freemasonry is not for the masses, it is not limited to any particular class, but is free to those who seek happiness in the service of mankind.

Regardless as to the historical proof of origin or actuality, legend and symbol have unlimited powers to present truths in a manner that is easily understood, as well as having a great appeal to the heart. It was a very happy and fortunate occasion for us when the Speculative brethren adopted the language and working tools of the

old Operative Masons, to further the teachings of Free and Accepted Masonry.

It is not difficult to understand that each Freemason is a part; or a rough ashlar, which must be fitted for a place in the temple; and that fitting must be done by the Freemason himself. The place he occupies in the temple of Freemasonry depends on how well he works to prepare and apply himself to the service of mankind. It therefore behooves each and every member to see that he makes the most of himself, so that when the cement of brotherly love and affection is spread, we have no ill fitting or useless members.

For nearly 250 years Freemasons have labored on the temple—the development of character, with much progress, and this is its one and only great claim for future prosperity.

If a dozen worthy brethren in the first part of the 18th century could surmount so many obstacles and accomplish so much, how happy should we be in this day and age to continue the great work of inculcating the fundamental principles they formulated for our craft. The problem of the citizens of the world today are no greater than those of other days. There have been in all ages great dictators, world conquerors, famine and pestilence, to harass mankind, but mankind has overcome the evil things in his pathway and developed the better things more acceptable to the greater number for the most good. It is true there is much that he would like to see improve. We would like to see nations living in friendship and understanding; food distributed to those in want, and harmony between labor and capital. We, of course, must keep democracy alive and aid in the preservation of its freedoms. It is a great joy to the Freemason that they have contributed much towards the solving of these problems and shall do much more in the future.

Freemasonry endeavors to take like minded men good and true, and by means of instruction, by lectures, ritual and precept, through symbols, so inculcate the tenets of our order that they become the principle, not the rule, which shapes and molds the character. Thus we give to mankind the great joy of freedom of thought, speech and action.

M.W. Bro. W. A. Henry, M.D.
Past Grand Master, Alberta.

"The work of science is to substitute facts for appearances and demonstrations for impressions."

—John Ruskin.

"It is not only because of their endless variety that men are baffling. Each individual is baffling."

—Max Otto.

You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.

—Gibran.

The man who trims himself to suit everybody will soon whittle himself away.

—Hugh Murr.

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 can not 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.

EARLIEST KNOWN ACCOUNT OF A MASONIC FUNERAL

The earliest known account of a Masonic funeral appeared in the London Daily Post of June 2, 1739, giving details of the funeral of Dr. James Anderson, D.D., compiler of the Masonic Constitutions of 1723 and 1738. Dr. Anderson died on the 28th of May, 1739, and the newspaper account reads:

"Last night we interred in Bunhill-Fields the corpse of Dr. Anderson, a Dissenting Teacher, in a very remarkable deep grave. His Pall was supported by five Dissenting Teachers and the Rev. Dr. Disaguliers. It was followed by a Dozen of Freemasons, who encircled the grave; and after Dr. Earle had harranged on the uncertainty of life, etc., without one word of the deceased, the Brethren, in a most solemn, dismal Posture, lifted up their hands, sigh'd, and struck their aprons three times in Honor of the Deceased."

Courtesy, Oregon Mason.

A good man will find that there is goodness in the world; an honest man will find that there is honesty in the world; and a man of principle will find principle and integrity in the minds of others.

—Albert Pike.

No man is a success for more than a minute—the minute in which he completes a successful job.

WHY COMPASSES ARE OPENED AT SIXTY DEGREE ANGLE?

But few of our offices (officers) have any definite idea as to why the compasses are opened upon the Volume of the Sacred Law at an angle of 60 degrees.

The explanation may be found in the fact that the equilateral triangle has always been sacred.

The sum of all angles of any triangle is equal to two right angles or 180 (degrees). Each of the equal angles of any equilateral triangle is equal to one-third of two right angles (180 divided by 3 equals 60) which is 60 (degrees). The compasses thus set at 60 allude to the equilateral triangle and, if the two points were united by a straight line, would form one. Our ancient Brethren placed the equilateral triangle itself on the altar. The compasses opened at 60 (degrees) have been substituted.

Furthermore, if a circle of any size be drawn, a chord of 60 (degrees) of that circle will be equal to its radius and the compasses so set will divide the circle into six equal parts. The points thus made, with the one in the center, constitute the mystic number 7.

The six external points, if joined by six straight lines, will form the hexagon within the circle, one of the perfect figures. Or, if we unite these six points in another way, we have union with the point within the circle. This was the most sacred emblem of Pythagoras, known in all ages as the Seal of Solomon by which he bound fast the genii that rebelled against God. If the whole seven points be pointed by straight lines, we get a perfect sphere. The cube was sacred in all ages.

The hardest thing of all is left—the conquest not of time and space, but of ourselves, of our stupidity and inertia, of our greediness and touchiness, of our fear and intolerant dogmatism.—Emily Green Balch.

Courtesy Masonic News.

Each of us has in his heart a little try square, called a conscience, by which to test each thought and word and deed, and determine whether it is true or false. By as much as a man honestly applies that test to his own heart, and his relations with his fellows, by so much will his life be happy, stable and true.

Masonic Historiology.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is of so great value that it cannot be estimated. In fact, the moment an attempt is made to estimate what it means it suffers from the thought. It is peculiarly sensitive to any form of selfishness and cannot thrive under affliction of much of it. Once lost, friendship is the most difficult thing in the world to regain. It is truly one of the great prizes of life.

Exchange.

TRESTLE BOARD SKETCH TRUTH

We are told that Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. Elsewhere we learn something of its permanence in nature.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Always Truth has existed, from the beginning, long before man first stated it. Long before man knew anything about the mysterious faculties of electricity or of radio waves, they were there—there from the beginning. The Great Architect placed them there, waiting for man to find them. Genius only discovers, it does not invent.

Just as true in matters of ethical understanding. There are eternal laws and principles governing human associations, framed by God himself, and the discords (depressions, civil conflicts, wars) which we experience arise from the failure to understand and obey those laws and principles. Only when we do discover them and obey them will there be that which we so hope for, so pray for, and do so little to bring about—peace permanent.

Great minds are at work, as they have been throughout history, seeking to unfathom those laws and principles. Occasionally some flash of genius unveils a tiny aspect of one of them and then the world moves forward, ever so little. Indeed "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

M.W. Bro. Harry A. Palmer,
Past Grand Master, Iowa.

Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed.
—Francis Bacon.

If you are too busy to laugh, you are too busy.
—Walter Winchell.

"Let no feeling of discouragement prey upon you, and in the end you are sure to succeed."

Masons are not perfect, nor do we make such a preposterous claim. Every man has a weak side. A wise man, however, knows where that weakness lies, and will be sure to keep a double guard there.

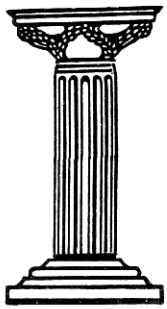
"He who desires to understand the harmonies and beautiful proportions of Freemasonry must read, study, reflect, digest and discriminate. The true Freemason is an ardent seeker of knowledge."

Whatever is unjust is contrary to the divine will; and from this it follows that no true and abiding happiness can be gained by those who are unjust.

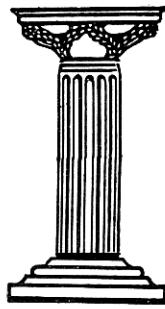
—Dr. John Watson.

Rare indeed is the person who never has committed the folly of talking before thinking.

—Anonymous.



Between the Pillars



YARDSTICK FOR BENEVOLENCE

When we are first clothed in the lambskin or white leather apron we are taught to aid and assist our fellow men—not only our brethren in the Fraternity but all men. We are told that relief is a duty incumbent on all Masons. Throughout our ritual is the thought that charity is important in Masonry—that it extends to the boundless realms of eternity.

Charity (relief) is one of the tenets of a Mason's profession. The dictionary defines tenet as "a principle advocated" or "a body of teaching on a particular subject." How well we adhere to these teachings is a matter worth considering. The effectiveness of our teachings concerning charity must of course be measured by the extent to which we as individual Masons and as lodges practice this virtue. What we do as individual Masons is a matter to be decided by each of us in our own way. What we do as a Grand Lodge or as a constituent lodge must be decided on a collective basis. Our charitable giving of a material nature must be influenced by two factors—need, and our ability to give.

Need is ever present. All men have needed help or assistance in one form or another at some time in their lives. It may have been the need for spiritual guidance, for fellowship, for a kind word of encouragement or for material assistance, but we have all experienced need. It has pleased the Great Creator in his infinite wisdom to make men dependent on each other, thereby providing opportunity for reciprocal brotherly love and charitable deeds. Masonry not only encourages but provides a means for all of us to help meet the needs of our brethren whatever their nature. While Masonry is not a religion, we do help to undergird a brother spiritually by constantly reminding him of the fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man and by calling to his mind the immortality of the soul and the life beyond the grave.

The opportunity for fellowship is recognized without as well as within the Order, and is a keynote in our fraternal associations. We enjoy pleasant relationships not only in our lodges but in our homes, at our work, and in our social life. We are taught, and do practice, brotherly love.

Offering good counsel to our brethren is in keeping with our teachings. To give encouragement and assistance to your contemporaries in all

of their laudable endeavors is an important facet of our duties as Masons. We often assist a brother by just listening sympathetically and sharing in confidence the burdens he bears. All things taken into consideration we as a group do a good job of meeting the non-materialistic needs of our co-workers in the Craft and families. How good a job we do in a material sense is a matter of conjecture and will bear some consideration.

In order to discover whether we are meeting our responsibility in the realm of material giving let us examine and see if we are using a proper yardstick by which to measure our benevolence.

It has been suggested that we should budget our finances so that there is some reasonable ratio between what we give to our less fortunate brethren and their families and what we spend for our own entertainment and pleasures. Certainly that kind of planning would be in keeping with the idea of a Mason being of service to mankind.

A survey of lodge records for any year picked at random will disclose that the average lodge spends much more for refreshments and entertainment than it spends for charity. This does not indicate a lack of interest in the welfare of others, but rather a lack of planning or of guidance. In order to correct this situation every lodge should have a committee appointed whose duty it is to counsel with the Master, officers, and brethren on such matters as budgeting for benevolence; the needs of those related to the lodge through membership or family ties or by fraternal relationship; and the extent to which the several Masonic charitable programs should be supported. A committee of this nature is just as essential to the proper Masonic lodge structure as are committees on grievances, program, hospitality, etc.

Some lodges are prone to take great pride in their antiquity, pointing to the many years the lodge has been in existence. Longevity of a lodge is not unlike long life in an individual; it really means little if some worthy service has not been rendered throughout the years. To be "Masonic" a lodge must practice Masonry in all its fullness, not just confer degrees, conduct funerals, and have officers elected and installed.

With these things in mind let us as individual Masons and as a Fraternity take inventory of our charitable works and measure them, using as a criterion or yardstick what we spend for satisfying our personal desires. Let us in the light of our profession as Masons, and after earnest and prayerful consideration, apply that yardstick to determine whether we are meeting our Masonic responsibility. Then let our consciences guide us in the future, ever bearing in mind the admonition, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35).

R.W. Bro. Fred T. Millword, D.D.G.M.,
In The Illinois Enlightener.

It is better to meet some dangers half way than to keep too long a watch on their approach.
—Bacon.