



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: S. CARL HECKBERT, P.G.M., Vermilion, Alberta

"HE HATH SHOWED THEE, O MAN"

By *M.W. Bro. Rev. Thomas S. Roy*
Past Grand Master, Massachusetts.

No institution so old or widely known as Freemasonry could possibly hope to escape criticism from the uninformed. Our Fraternity has had its share down through the years; and even in this enlightened day there are those who, for reasons best known to themselves, periodically attack our gentle Craft. Silence and circumspection are time-honoured traditions in Masonry, and the dignity of a reply is seldom offered to critics. But occasionally it is expedient to restate the fundamentals of Freemasonry—primarily for the edification of the Craft, and incidentally for the enlightenment of the sceptic.

We are condemned because we say that a man may be obligated to the scripture of his own religion, and that we thus place all religions on an equality. But Freemasonry does not assert and does not teach that one religion is as good as another. We do not say that all religions are equal because we admit men of all religions. We refuse to apply a theological test to a candidate. We apply a religious test only. We ask a man if he believes in God, and that is a religious test only. If we asked him if he believed in Christ, or Buddha, or Allah, that would be a theological test involving a particular interpretation of God.

When Freemasonry accepts a Christian, or a Jew, or a Buddhist, or a Mohammedan, it does not accept him as such, but as a man, worthy to be received into the Order. We ask him to pledge himself by the highest and holiest loyalty in his life to be true to his vows. To ask him to vow on a book on which he did not believe would be the kind of hypocrisy condemned by the highest teachings of the Christian religion. To say that we reject Christ because we do not mention Him would be as reasonable as to say that we reject prophecies of Isaiah because we do not mention them.

It is the glory of Masonry that a man who believes implicitly in the deity of Christ, and a man who says he cannot go that far, can meet as Brothers in their acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the Supreme Being, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and in acknowledgment of their duty to love him with heart and mind and soul and strength.

They can unite in fulfilling the great purpose of Freemasonry, the development of human character, and the establishment of the collective life of mankind in Brotherhood. In doing this we dare to hope that we are more than neutral in helping the Church in its great task.

We are not a religion and we are not anti-religious. We are a completely tolerant organization. We stand

for the values that are supreme in the life of the Church and we are sure that he who is true to the principles he learns in Freemasonry will be a better Church member because of it. Indeed, just the other day I heard the Rector of the largest Church in another city say that he was a better Christian and a rector because of his Freemasonry.

Freemasonry rightly conceived and practiced will enhance every worthy loyalty in a man's life. It will not weaken a man's loyalty to his Church, but will strengthen it by the increased sense of responsibility to God and dependence on God taught in our ritual. It will not drain his strength from the service of the Church, but increase his strength for the service of the Church. It will not draw him away from the doctrines of his Church but stimulate his interest in the values of religion that enrich and ennoble the life of man.

As distinguished from the Church or Synagogue, Freemasonry does not claim to know all there is to know about Deity, and therefore makes no assertion of infallibility. Our quest is for light, more light, further light; for truth, more truth, further truth. Because we do not claim to have received full light, to have a monopoly of, or a corner on truth, we can claim to be a tolerant group.

We believe that there should be some place where men can meet without having to assert or defend the peculiarities of their doctrines. There should be some place where men can meet and know that their right to worship God in their own way is respected completely; a place where a man learns that the only respect he can claim for his beliefs is the respect he accords to the belief of others. There should be some place where men can face the realities of life and know that the only barriers that separate men are those of ill-will and enmity.

Freemasonry is that place, for it unites men in a unity that transcends the accidents of creed and class, a unity created by our common loyalty to the realities of religion as expressed by the prophet Micah, 2700 years ago when he wrote: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."

(M.W. Bro. Roy is a former New Brunswicker who attained prominence in the Church and in Freemasonry in the United States. The Editor was proud to have been associated with M.W. Bro. Roy in the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Miramichi Lodge at Chatham, N.B. in June of this year and proud at this time to present the foregoing fine article to readers of the Bulletin.)

EDITORIAL

Now that the District Meetings have been concluded for the current year it may well be that stock should be taken of the net result of a tremendous amount of work that involves the Grand Lodge Officers from year to year.

District Meetings are designed, quite ostensibly, to enable the membership at large to meet their Grand Master, Grand Secretary and the District Deputy Grand Masters and to permit of the Brethren receiving instruction on points of general interest.

It is learned that some of the meetings have drawn only limited support on the part of our membership and perhaps the time has come to evaluate the worth of the District Meeting, especially in view of the extremely heavy itinerary which devolved upon the Grand Master and his aides as they endeavor to fulfill the duties of their respective offices in conveying information in connection with vital ritualistic and other phases of Masonic work.

We must not fail to bear in mind that while we convey the highest possible honour to one of our members in electing him to the important office of Grand Master, we require of him an extremely heavy contribution through the almost exclusive utilization of his time, during his year of office and we demand that he sacrifice much of his home life and time which could well be used in the promotion of his own life work. It is true that no man is forced to accept the office unless he can see his way clear to devote his time and energies to the work of Grand Lodge, but, at the same time, when we make demands which are admittedly heavy, we must be prepared to assist our chief officer and those associated with him in securing all the benefits of the connection between the Grand Lodge and the supporting bodies throughout the vast Province which is ours.

The District Meeting has been in use for many years, not only in Alberta, but throughout the entire country and if it is not fulfilling its objective because of lack of attendance on the part of our membership, it would be well to analyze the situation and to endeavor, if at all possible, to correct whatever faults exist, or, alternatively, to devise some other plan whereby our Grand Master and his officers may become well known to the general membership and may thus bring happily together the factors of leadership and support that are so vital to a strong and virile organization.

What, if anything, is wrong with the District Meeting as a medium for the exchange of ideas? Through what avenue may a more useful contact be developed? The writer is convinced that it is desirable that the membership should know the officers and equally so that the officers should visit the members in their home Lodges so that they may be familiar with the problems which face our Lodges. There is ample ability among our members to meet and solve the problem which is posed by non-attendance at the District Meeting. Let us meet and solve this problem NOW.
S.C.H.

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY "SO MOTE IT BE"

No Lodge is ever opened or closed in due form without the phrase—"so mote it be"—being used. Yet how few know how old is the phrase, much less what deep meaning there is contained in it. Like so many old and lovely things we grant acceptance, perhaps without too much thought. As far back as we can go in the annals of the Craft, we find this old phrase; its form betrays its age. What then, is the meaning of the phrase? It has two meanings for us everywhere, in the Church or in the Lodge. First it is the assent of man to the way and will of God; assent to His commands and assent to His providence.

The other meaning of the phrase is even more wonderful; it is the assent of God to the aspiration of man. Man can bear much—anything, perhaps—if he feels that God knows, cares and feels for him and with him.

Prayer in Masonry is vital and profound. As the man enters the Lodge as an Initiate, prayer is offered on his behalf to the God in whom he places his trust. Later, in a crisis of his initiation he must pray for himself, orally or mentally, as his heart may elect. It is not just a ceremony; it is basic in the faith and spirit of Masonry.

Still later, in a scene which no Mason ever forgets, when the shadow is darkest, and the most precious thing a Mason can desire or seek, seems lost, in the perplexity and despair of a Lodge, a prayer is offered. It is truly a great prayer, placing us in the very hands of God, as all must do in the end, trusting His will and way. The response of the Lodge to prayers offered at its altar is the old and challenging phrase—"So mote it be," which is another way of saying—"The will of God be done."

Two brief prayers have come down to us from ages long since gone, both are worth remembering, one being from the depth of the experience of a great saint, the other from the thoughtful desire of two Brothers in Masonry—"Grant me Lord, ardently to desire, wisely to study, rightly to understand . . . and perfectly to fulfill—that which pleaseth Thee." And the second is after the manner: "May two Brothers enjoy and serve Thee together, and so live today, that we may be worthy to live tomorrow."

"So mote it be."

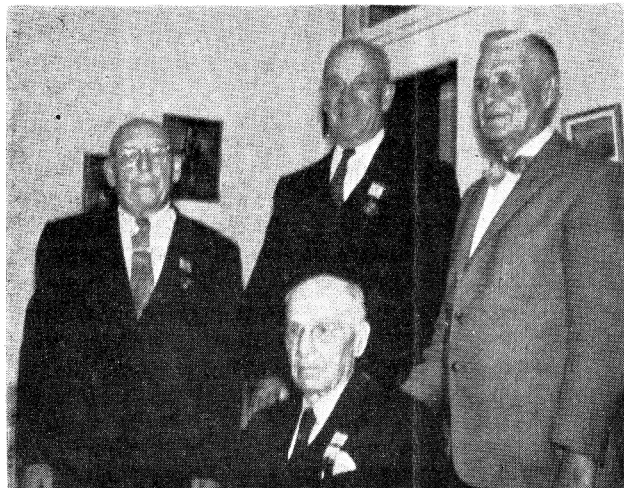
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"Great clock that never stops,
Nor runs too fast nor slow;
Hung up amid the worlds of space,
Where whirling planets glow:
Its dial place, of orbit vast
Where moves the earthly sphere,
Has pushed its hands around again,
And marked another year."

WITHIN THE CRAFT IN ALBERTA

ZETLAND HONOURS A PIONEER

Members of Zetland Lodge No. 83 recently called on Bro. J. D. McAra, one of the earliest printers to establish a business in Calgary, to present him with a Sixty Year Bar to his Fifty Year Jewel. Bro. McAra was Initiated in Evening



Bro. J. D. McAra

Star Lodge No. 57, Grenfell, Saskatchewan, August 17th, 1897. He affiliated with Bow River No. 1 January 13th, 1902, and was a Charter member of Zetland December 18th, 1913. The actual presentation was made by R.W. Bro. E. S. Tharp, who was initiated September 3rd, 1917, and was therefore too young to get into the picture. Bro. McAra is seated and those standing, from left to right, are Bro. H. H. Fletcher, initiated March 15th, 1909, Bro. S. G. Coultis, December 28th, 1908, and R.W. Bro. O. C. Smith, December 17th, 1907. Together they represent a total of over 215 years of service to the Craft. Bro.'s Fletcher and Coultis were recently presented with their Fifty Year Jewels and R.W. Bro. Smith received his a year ago.

TUSCAN LODGE MARKS HALF CENTURY

During the month of November the members of Tuscan Lodge at Killam with an impressive number of visitors gathered to celebrate the attainment of Fifty Years of Masonic Service. Tribute was paid to departed members and Bro. W. G. Gair read an interesting history of the Lodge dating from pioneer days in the district to the present time. R.W. Bro. H. R. Lackey, P.D.D.G.M., proposed a toast to the numerous visitors and acknowledgment was suitably made by R.W. Bro. H. V. Phipps. The Worshipful Master of the Lodge, W. Bro. V. R. York addressed a toast to senior members with Bro. J. Shennan responding. Bro. R. H. Smith proposed a toast to Grand Lodge which was responded to by R.W. Bro. D. T. Walmsley, D.D.G.M. of District No. 5.

M.W. Bro. David Little was unable to attend the meeting, due to a previous commitment elsewhere and the Grand Lodge of Alberta was represented by the Senior Grand Warden, R.W. Bro.

Morley Merner of Wetaskiwin, who addressed the gathering on Leadership; his address was enthusiastically received and contributed much to the success of the evening.

IONIC LODGE AT ALIX CELEBRATES 50th ANNIVERSARY

Unusually cold weather did not prevent the members of Ionic Lodge No. 45 at Alix from celebrating their 50th Anniversary, for on Nov. 12th a large assembly of Masons gathered to mark the event. The meeting was honored by the presence of M.W. Bro. David Little, Grand Master and a number of distinguished visitors, prominent among them being the venerable Bro. W. J. Kirby of Rocky Mountain House, long a member of Lochearn Lodge and fortunately still hale and hearty at 93 years of age.

The special speaker for the occasion, M.W. Bro. Dr. W. A. Henry was in his usual good form and his address was par excellence.

W. Bro. Hrynyk presided over what proved to be a most enjoyable meeting. Despite difficulties which have been faced by this Lodge at times in the past half century this link in the chain of Freemasonry in Alberta has survived to render effective service in the community and is today a virile Lodge, capable of and determined to continue its excellent work.

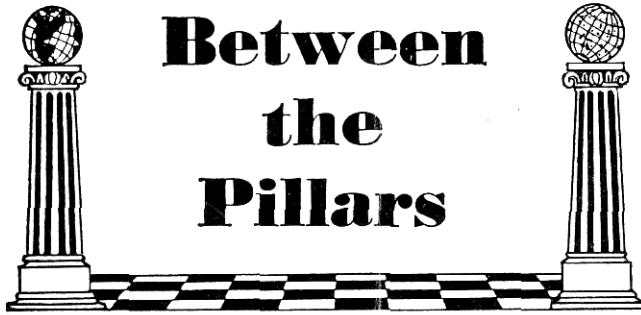
R.W. Bro. J. D. Murdoch, who was initiated in Ionic Lodge in 1910 gave an interesting resume of the history of the Lodge and a Service of Thanksgiving was conducted by R.W. Bro. W. J. Collett, Grand Chaplain, assisted by Bro. Rev. R. Guillard, and the Grand Master presented a Fifty-Year Jewel to Bro. M. Graham, first candidate of the Lodge and now practicing medicine at Ponoka. The Lodge presented a fine desk set clock to V.W. Bro. C. A. Thorp in recognition of long and distinguished service to the Lodge. R.W. Bro. David Penman of Edmonton presented the Lodge with a set of gavels, the work of his own hands and made from wood from the old Hudson Bay store.

Reminiscences of R.W. Bro. J. D. Murdoch and Bro. M. Graham brought back memories of the early days, while the address of the M.W. the Grand Master brought to a close a most enjoyable occasion.

GRAND MASTER VISITS LETHBRIDGE

On Nov. 5th, 1959, Lethbridge Lodge No. 39 convened the first "Grand Master's Night" to be held in that city and in spite of rather short notice there was a good attendance. M.W. Bro. Little was accompanied by R.W. Bro. Rivers, Grand Secretary and R.W. Bro. Roy Towns of Edmonton. The evening was spent in a fruitful discussion of the work of Grand Lodge and its relation to the Constituent Lodge and was featured by an address by the Grand Master.

It is felt that such meetings have a most useful purpose to serve and it is hoped that a similar meeting may be held each year in future with each of the four city Lodges accepting responsibility for the organization of the meeting in turn.



Between the Pillars

A CONTRIBUTION TO MASONIC STUDY

By *W. Bro. A. E. Manz, King George Lodge No. 59*

(We are pleased to reproduce herewith some of the thoughts as expressed in an unusually well received paper delivered by W. Bro. Manz at the meeting of District No. 18, Nov. 6th, 1959.)

THE LETTER "G"

A non Mason, entering a Masonic Lodge room, as he may do on a public occasion, is likely to ponder the mysterious letter which is suspended from the ceiling or otherwise prominently displayed. Probably no one need tell him its meaning, it is a letter of light and tells its own story, but I am sure that very few Masons are aware of all that it implies, either as symbol or history. It is a focus of faith and fellowship, the emblem of the Divine Presence in the Lodge and the heart of each Brother composing it. The letter 'G' shines in the centre of the ceiling of the room and the Lodge is grouped around it, rather than assembled beneath it. It is the light of Divine Guidance and blessing, so much needed in our mortal journey.

In the Degrees its use is more impressive. In the First and Second Degrees, the symbol is visible in the ceiling, or sky, of the Lodge, like benediction. In the Third Degree it is hidden, but its presence is still manifest—as every Mason knows—since the light of God is inextinguishable, even in the darkest hours.

Masonry does not seek to hide the fact that it rests on God, lives in God and seeks to lead men to God. Everything in Masonry has reference to God, every lesson and every lecture, from the first step to the last charge. Without God it has no meaning and no mission among men. Yet, as a fact a Mason rarely uses the name of God, but uses instead, the phrase, the Great Architect of the Universe. It is because Masons believe in God so deeply that they do not repeat His name frequently and I am sure we all prefer the Masonic way in the matter.

A deep, fine feeling keeps us from using the name of the Deity too often, lest it lose some of its awe in our minds. For in Masonry, God is the first truth and the final reality.

THE COMMON GAVEL

The Common Gavel is an emblem of power; the Lodge is ruled not by the Square, still less by the Scepter, but by the sound of the Common Gavel. The Common Gavel is an emblem of power for good or ill and is one of the most generally used tools; in the Masonic Lodge, wielded by the strong hand of the Worshipful Master it speaks of serene power; if wielded roughly it means ruin; if wielded weakly, it means failure; if wielded wisely and in the spirit of brotherly love, it is a wand of magic and a scepter of good will. Man is tempted and tested by power as by nothing else. Few are the men able to use it with discretion and with an absence of abuse. No man is qualified to be Master of a Lodge until he has learned to use the gavel with dignity, self control and gentle skill.

It has been estimated that less than half of our people ever attend, support or are in any way associated with any church; not less amazing is the belief that hardly 20 per cent of the Craft attend Lodge, or pay heed to the sound of the gavel in the East; if this be true, it is appalling and indicates sheer neglect by indifference and carelessness, of matters that are vital to personal and national well-being.

The remedy, so far as Masonry is concerned, is not far to seek. It lies, not far away, but nearby, asking each of us to take a new vow in his soul to make Masonry more real, more active, more earnest, both in his Lodge and in his life. There is no other way; it must begin with you and with me. It is not Masonry that is at fault, but Masons who forget and who fail in their duty. It is for each of us to take up the Common Gavel, the first tool of a Mason and to divest ourselves of apathy, ignorance, lack of zest and zeal.

I have mentioned that Masons, possibly 75 or 80 per cent of them pay little heed to the sound of the Gavel in the East; is it not possible that we might re-ignite the interest of these "never to be seen in Lodge Brethren" by suggesting through the medium of our Lodge notices that we would like this year for them to personally take their dues to the Lodge, instead of using the mail to meet this obligation. If this were done on a meeting night and they were to attend the meeting, which I am sure they would do once they were in the building, then they could be sure of attending one meeting which was closed in harmony and this association might well lead to future attendance. If even a reasonable percentage of the usually non-attending members could be influenced in this way there may well be, over a period of several years, a marked increase in attendance generally.

To those who attend Lodge and make Masonry meaningful, I would say that at the end of the day, when the Lodge of our life is closed and the sound of the Gavel is heard no more, the one thing no man will regret is that he lived in the fellowship of our gentle Craft and labored in its services.

(Continued on Page 2, Column 2)