



Grand Lodge Bulletin

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Thoughtful Impressions of a Newly Made Mason

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It is with a measure of trepidation that I have acquiesced to a request that I set down some of my impressions of Freemasonry and I have no doubt this will be readily understood when I say that I have been an Entered Apprentice Mason for four months, a Fellowcraft for two months and a Master Mason for only one month. Four months of contact with some aspects of Freemasonry and only one month of experience with the third and climactic part of what seems to be a unity of drama and morality is not really enough to enable one to form deeply worthwhile impressions, or to make truly valid observations with regard to a field as vast as that of Masonry. However I shall endeavor to make some reasonable response to the request and I will rely upon the benevolence of my readers if, in the course of what I have to say, I step beyond the bounds of Masonic decorum and good taste.

Let me prepare the ground for my remarks by telling you of how it happened that I approached a Brother a year ago with regard to my making an application to become a Mason. Then, perhaps, I will be in a position to tell you what my preconceived notions of Freemasonry were and how they have altered.

It was because of the fine character of the two or three Masons I have known with some degree of intimacy, and the high esteem that I have for them that I first sought to become a Mason. These are men whom I respect immensely, men whose lives in the communities in which they lived seemed to me to be highly exemplary. They are modest men; they are men of vision and foresight who stand out forcefully in the communities in which they serve; they are men of great and tireless energy. Most important, they are men with ideals and the courage to move forward toward the fulfillment of their ideals. Obviously I am impressed by these men and I honour them. It occurred to me some time ago that it is possible that these men might have derived a part of their energies or their abilities to direct their energies from the principles of Freemasonry. I am not sufficiently credulous to believe that they necessarily gained their drive from Freemasonry, but

the possibility that they might have done so was sufficient to start me making enquiries.

My enquiries led me to the second of my pre-impressions of Freemasonry, that Freemasons are in quest of Truth or of absolute standards in a world in which standards of all sorts are sadly lacking. This appealed to me immeasurably, for I am convinced that without standards of high quality the moral and the physical tone of our country and the world must decline. What I was not certain of, because of a lack of sufficient information, was whether or not the standards of Freemasonry are of a high enough quality. As more and more of the Masonic moral code is revealed to me, I realize that it is I who am lacking quality.

The third step in my road to Masonry was an insatiable curiosity. I was curious with regard to a number of points, but I was especially desirous of having the following images either corrected or confirmed:

- (a) That Freemasonry is anti-religious and, in particular, anti Roman Catholic.
- (b) That the ritual of Freemasonry is absurd.
- (c) That the bond of brotherhood in Freemasonry is stronger than the desire for fair play and honesty.
- (d) That the morality of Freemasonry is impractical and impossible to apply to life.

I suppose I knew, inwardly, the answers to all four of the above points and that the answers would be favourable to Masonry. The examples of the Masons I knew should have settled my qualms, but it took the three splendid ceremonies which I have experienced during the past four months to make me, not just content with Freemasonry, but happy and proud to be a part of it.

The answers to my questions of the religious encroachments of Freemasonry came quickly and easily when I discovered that the adherents of any religious group can (and, in fact, do) belong to our lodges. My pleasure was further increased when, through successive weeks, no mention whatever of religious denominations or groups was made and the utmost reverence was maintained toward the Name of God and His revelations. When I further learned that the lodge accepts members of all races I came to think of it as one of the most tolerant of organizations. This tolerance impresses me deeply.

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EDITORIAL

In addressing the members of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, at their recent general meeting, M.W. Bro. Clarence McL. Pitts, Grand Master, said in part: "We face, together, another Masonic year in a world terribly disturbed and divided. Our generation has known wars and rumours of wars, but today there are prospects of an all-out world conflagration, with all the potential of atomic warfare and nuclear weapons of such awful possibilities of total annihilation of civilization as to stagger all human imagination. Yet we look with confidence to the overruling Providence of the Great Architect of the Universe, who created all things by the word of His power and who will not permit the creatures of His creating to destroy the works of His creation until His own good time and in His way.

Masons exist to be builders in a free world under God. We have only to fulfill our destiny by doing our daily duties faithfully in the knowledge given to us of the Fatherhood of God and His purpose that all men should be Brothers. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward men."

The delightful words of St. Francis of Assisi give us, as Masons, a lead in our thinking as we bend our individual and collective efforts towards the paths of peace and understanding and love.

*"Lord, make me the channel of your peace,
Where there is sadness, let me bring love;
Where there is wrong, forgiveness,
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith;
Where there is despair, hope,
Where there is darkness, light,
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to
Comfort than to be comforted.
To understand than to be understood.
To love, than to be loved.
For it is by giving that one receives,
It is by self-forgetting, that one finds,
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven."*

It is not at all difficult for us, if we allow our minds to go back through the words of our ritual, to recognize the sentiments expressed in the words above, and it should be entirely acceptable to us, as adherents of the philosophy of Freemasonry, spurred by the dangers of our time and by the opportunities opened to us, that we join hands with all sincere men to promote peace and harmony wherever and whenever opportunity presents itself.

S. C. H.

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With the ritual I was often bewildered, never disappointed, always impressed by its seriousness and sometimes positively elated. We Canadians are not generally looked upon as people who are easily "elated," so perhaps the use of so strong a word might be questioned, but I do confess to having been elated; at times I was positively,

exhilaratingly elated! As I would compare the ritual of Freemasonry with two other great experiences I have had: that of seeing a play by Shakespeare well done and that of attending the ceremony of Holy Communion in a great cathedral. But the ritual in which I have taken part is personal beyond the range of witnessing a play, because we are all vital, participating parts of the Masonic ceremony and because at all points of the Masonic ritual we are being taught and reminded of moral principles. But Lodge ritual and Shakespeare are strikingly similar when viewed through the eyes of a playgoer. Dramatically the ritual of becoming a Master Mason is divided into three acts; each act is a unity; the three acts consecutively combine as a unity; each act has a carefully developed climax; and the major climax comes late in the third or last act. So it is with all great drama.

The Service of Holy Communion is fine drama and, beautifully performed in a medieval cathedral, it is intensely moving. I wish that the ritual of the lodge could always be performed in a building comparable to the cathedrals of Chartres or York, for this ritual impresses me deeply.

Before being raised to the degree of Master Mason I was troubled that the lodge might promote the principles of brotherhood to the exclusion of the principles of justice; that a situation could arise in which a person of inferior ability or training might be advanced by fellow Masons in authoritative positions, purely because of links with Masonry. This would be unjust and would work to the detriment of the nation and the world, but also of the lodge itself. I was relieved and pleased to discover that such is not the case. One is not obliged to support those who have lesser abilities merely because of fraternal connection. One supports that man whom he believes to be of finer principles and of superior efficiency. That the bond of brotherhood does not act to the exclusion of justice as a whole impresses me deeply.

The question of the practical application of Masonic principles is one that I have not resolved. But to maintain that principles of such excellent goodness could not be applied to day-to-day life would be unthinkable and would be to value man as a very degraded animal beyond all hope of redemption. How these principles are to be applied is, I suppose, a personal problem belonging to each Mason individually, but the belief they can be effectively applied I entertain fully.

Finally, I would like to mention two singular acts that took place during the ceremonies of initiation, passing and raising. One was when I was asked for a contribution of valuables and had none and the other was when I was so forcefully made to think about death. No one who has experienced them could possibly fail to be impressed by these two startling events.

Time fades some impressions; some it alters completely. But I am sure it can only strengthen my thought that Freemasonry is, indeed, a system of morality of the highest order and that the allegory that veils it is sublimely beautiful.

A TONGUE OF GOOD REPORT

Robert W. Tarbell
in
The Wisconsin Freemason

The Great Light declares the wonder and glory of guileless speech. All the world admires the man whose words are kind and true. We delight to hear comely phrases, but the language of a perjured soul fills us with apprehension and revulsion.

An honest confession is always in order. We may as well admit at the start that an unbridled tongue sometimes gets the better of us; out come the words that we wish might be re-captured, and in remorse we take stock of our failures. Perhaps habit has made us insensible to our faults and we become careless about the little jibes that hurt our fellow men. Speech is a great force; great in its power to accomplish, great in its power to hurt, and in its efficacy to heal. The tongue may be sharper than a two-edged sword, or its tones may be pure and melodious like the ripple of a mountain stream.

Nothing is gained by brooding over our mistakes. Words speak the inner man, and we know enough to choose the high road to correct deportment. Sarcasm is a spice to be used most sparingly and not for personal comfort. Careless statements can well be tabooed. All men err in matters of judgement, but falsehood is a rank imposter, unworthy of standing room along the avenues of civilization. There is a better and brighter side. The human race is gradually clipping off its false notions and is turning toward the light of Truth. Bombast will some day totter before discretion, vicious remarks will give way to words of worth, and the language of mortals will flow freely for beneficent purposes.

Somewhere between these two extremes we find the human race and, mingling with the crowd stand you and I. We may condemn the one side and praise the other, forgetting that we, ourselves, partake of the elements of both. Therein lie the tragedy and the hope, for recognition of danger is the first step towards escape. If we would grow in grace and noble thought, there must first be a frank admission that we are known by the words we speak.

There is a goal of worthwhile achievement, and all may strive to reach it. No heights may be scaled without a struggle, for every hill has its crags and pitfalls. The dizzy heights look forbidding, while the valleys below are of verdant green; and so with our speech. It is easy to continue in the careless habits, and we often slip back into the old ways, but the cloud-topped hills remain for all who would dare to climb; and out there in the mists, when we have arrived at the plateau of understanding and strength, the spires of Truth will beckon to yet greater accomplishment. We then will learn to condemn bad practices instead of people, speaking boldly for the

finer principles of correct living, giving praise where due, but refusing to sear a fellow human by the power of a vicious tongue.

It is well to have our ideals, for they are the guide posts along the way. Every Mason understands that he is to keep a tongue of good report. No one can quite attain perfection, but the high mark is always there when we are ready to take aim.

And when do we start? Today! In the silence of one's study the vision of a better path may appear. In the Lodge we may recapture the ideals of the Craft, the picture of untarnished integrity and the greatness of Truth. A vision captured may become our shibboleth in the days to come.

FRATERNAL COMMUNITY

Freemasonry 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 would be reposed in no one.

L. HAROLD ANDERSON.

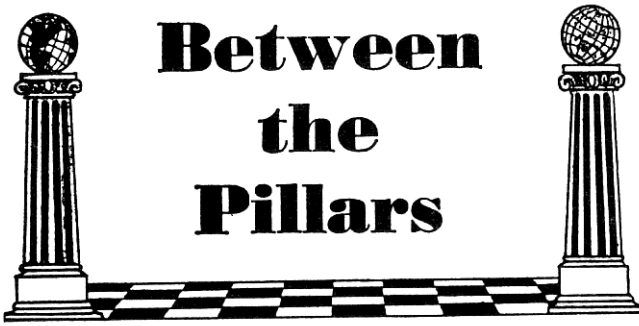
GETTING AHEAD OF OURSELVES

Our business in life is not to get ahead of others, but to get ahead of ourselves. To break our own record, to outstrip our yesterdays by todays, to bear our trials more beautifully than we ever dreamed we could, to whip the temper inside and out as we never whipped it before, to give as we have never given, to do our work with more force and a finer finish than ever—this is the true idea—to get ahead of ourselves.

Author Unknown.

CHINOOK 47, COWLEY

On June 20, 1960 Chinook Lodge No. 47 at Cowley celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of its Constitution and many members who have resided in the area just east of the beautiful Rocky Mountains attended to recall the days when attendance at Lodge was achieved by a long trip on saddle horse and meetings were held "on or before the full moon" so that they could travel more easily. M. W. Bro. W. H. Harper, attended by a number of his officers, addressed the Lodge and congratulated them on their work and progress in spite of many hardships.



Between the Pillars

THE VALUE OF FREEMASONRY

M.W. Bro. A. E. Roberts
in
The Ashlar

The value and superiority of Freemasonry must have entered into the minds of many brethren, that this mighty fraternity is no plaything, that it is a reality, a training ground of life which every brother should aspire to attain, and then be prepared to take his stand as a man and a Freemason.

With such backing every Craftsman should be deeply concerned with regard to the path he must pursue as a Freemason in the every day life in which he lives.

The many aspects of Freemasonry guiding the outlook of life bring before the thoughtful brother the conditions under which he must direct his activities. It should be the concern of every brother, that unseen and yet ever present in every Masonic ideal, there is a truth, a symbol, which undoubtedly portrays the value that Freemasonry can bestow for the betterment of its members and mankind.

Every Masonic Lodge is fully furnished with Masonic Light, which, to the willing and observant brother, must develop in him a rightful urge to carry out and live its moral principles, if he will in himself contribute to that end.

Worldliness in all generations has been a hard nut to crack, and, unfortunately, worldliness has little time for the individual Freemason or his philosophy, so that Freemasonry, from that angle, differs in no way from other schools of moral principles.

A true picture of life is well symbolized in that telling sermon-on-the-mount: "The sower went forth sowing."

"Some seeds fell by the way side and the birds came and devoured them, others fell upon a rocky place and straightway they sprang up, but when the sun came upon them, having no root they withered away; others fell among thorns, which choked them, and some fell on good ground and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty and some fifty."

How true to life and how true to Freemasons. Some wholehearted (those who see the value of Freemasonry), some half hearted (those who see

only the social value) and some from interested motives only.

In the market place at Rippon, in England, written across the front of the Town Hall in large block letters one reads: "Except the Lord build the city, the workmen worketh in vain."

This can be passed on to members of the Craft. Unless Freemasons build their superstructure (their life) true to Masonic principles, they build in vain; thus the value of Freemasonry must suffer in the eyes of the world.

It is said that precept and example should ever advance with equal pace. Precept is one thing, and example is another, for while the former directs, the latter is a fulfillment of one's Masonic duty, and an achievement to a useful and worthy life in well-doing.

The pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty are by no means fancy expressions, they being of deep import, symbolizing great value to him who has grown up a Freemason, appreciating the solid foundation on which Freemasonry is built.

Visualize if you will, a Lodge listening to the Senior Warden stepping from symbolism to the charge after initiation, which when delivered with striking and quiet forcefulness should draw the attention not only of the candidate, but of all present.

Here in this plain spoken charge, dignified and to the point, is a value, leaving nothing unsaid, in the making of a Freemason. On such occasions one wonders how many of the listeners feel the prick of conscience when some part of the charge finds its way home. No brother, from the candidate to the exalted, can escape its value.

What a wonderful finale.

Such stimulating forces must be the aim of every Lodge, awakening the Freemason to the real meaning of Freemasonry, that with confidence, a life can be built, the value of which will be favourable to God and man.

Every man I meet is some way my superior;
and in that I can learn from him.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Where all have the right to speak, some foolish speaking is done. But where, as in dictatorship, all speak alike, little thinking is done.

Frank L. Weil

Talents are best nurtured in solitude; character is best formed in the stormy billows of the world.

Goethe

The fellow who makes the most noise about his rights often is the fellow who pays the least attention to the rights of others.