



Grand Lodge Bulletin

VOL. 44 NO. 4

Editor, M.W. Bro. W.J. COLLETT

CALGARY, DECEMBER 1978



Christmas 1978



THE GIFT AND THE GIVER

V. W. GRAND CHAPLAIN — REV. DAVID J. H. COOK

Already as I write this in mid-October the Christmas displays are going up in the stores. At least two catalogues have been delivered to our house telling of the wonderful treasury of gifts from which I can select symbols of my affection this season. But I wonder how close will I come to the true meaning of Christmas if I do not make myself a part of the gift?

The essence of the Christmas story is that in the gift of the Christ child God made Himself a part of the gift. John, in his Gospel, does not include one of the birth legends, but he does make a very important statement about the coming of Christ.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only Son . . ."

(John 3: 16)

The Wise Men, journeying from the East in response to the appearance of the star included themselves in the gift. Although they could have afforded emissaries to convey the gold, frankincense and myrrh, they felt compelled to make the presentation themselves. In doing so they made a most exciting discovery. Like most people they assumed that the birth of a child, deserving so large a star, would be within a royal palace. It is human to expect the greatest leadership to come from persons privileged to a superior upbringing which the advantages of wealth can give. Instead they were directed to the obscure village of Bethlehem and an infant born a few days earlier in a stable. Mary and Joseph were in no position to afford private tutors or professional nannies for their infant son. All they had to offer the Son of God was themselves. Nonetheless the Wise Men knew that they had found the right child in the right setting. Without hesitation they laid their gifts at His feet and worshipped Him.

What a tribute to the simple home where ordinary people are entrusted the total task of parenting!

I would hope this Christmas that we can catch again the inspiration for true giving from the birthday of Christ. A few days ago I was reading the story of Bob Pierce, who founded World Vision some twenty years ago. It began quite by chance when he was in Korea. He was upset by the plight of those children who were the products of native women and American soldiers. They were an embarrassment in their mothers' land and unwanted in their fathers'. Unable to persuade either governments to give special aid to these youngsters, he took one child into his home for he knew,

"It is better to light a candle
Than to curse the darkness."

Quickly the news spread of this thoughtful American. Other children were laid at his doorstep and he was forced by the depth of his love to respond. Today, World Vision cares for orphans around the world. One man gave of himself and in twenty years more than one and one half million children have been helped to successful maturity.

Part of the Christmas pattern of giving in Canada includes hampers to the elderly and to needy families. No one begrudges a few dollars for these projects. Alas, we also feel that anonymity is a virtue. I believe this is a "cop-out". Our anonymity does not tie us to the gift. Consider this alternative, that we give boldly - that we adopt an elderly person and make them a special "aunt or uncle, grandma or grandpa". Then we could include them on some of our little trips and special get togethers. Or consider that needy family or single parent family, why not adopt them for the year so that the children share in the loving atmosphere of our homes, our picnics and our ski-trips? Renting an extra pair of skis is no big deal. Then when we give, we give of ourselves, for we give what inspired God to give Jesus, love.

This is my prayer for the Grand Lodge of Alberta in 1978, that as we recall the Christmas story we will remember that what is most important whenever we give, is the inclusion of ourselves in the gift.



WHAT TO TELL YOUR WIFE

Editor's Note: During his term of office, M.W. Bro. K.L. Crockett, submitted this article to the Bulletin for which we could not find space. It is now reproduced by permission of the Masonic Service Association.

"By the sacrifice of money we had laid aside for a vacation, my husband was enabled to apply for the degrees of Freemasonry. I was heartily in favor, having read only good of the organization. We are, I think, a devoted couple; married twelve years, and have always shared our every thought and interest. But now there is a barrier between us; from every meeting, from all his 'instruction' engagements, he has returned to me absolutely silent. He says he can tell me nothing. And so I have developed a dislike for the organization with all its secrecy, which feeling I know must be wrong, and yet I cannot help it . . . can you give me a truer perspective?"

How many wives have such feelings? How many brethren have so enlarged on the secrecy enjoined on Freemasons regarding certain matters, that to them any word spoken of Freemasonry is a violation of the obligation? How much harm has been done the Fraternity by brethren knowing that much which is beautiful and sacred in Freemasonry, while private, is not secret?

These pages cannot answer such questions. But they can suggest that there is much that may be told to wife or mother or father or friend - - told to the glory and the help of the Ancient Craft with no violation of the solemn pledge sacredly to keep secret that which is secret.

It is no secret that he who becomes a Freemason joins an order which reverences womanhood, which upholds law and constitutional government, which cares for the widow and the fatherless, which inculcates the highest moral and religious principles, which fosters patriotism, which instructs in toleration and obliges conscientiousness in human relations.

The most careful brother may tell his wife that in his Lodge the Holy Bible lies open upon an Altar. The fact is written in a thousand volumes, and is proclaimed in Masonic books of the law.

The manuals and monitors of many Grand Lodges set forth the prayers which are uttered in the degrees - - what is printed by a Grand Lodge cannot in its very nature be a secret from any one. That all Lodges are opened and closed with prayer - - that every Lodge has a Chaplain - - is a secret from no one.

It has been well said that Freemasonry is not a secret society, but a society with secrets. A secret society is one of which only its members know; a society with secrets may be one of which the world knows much.

Grand Lodges publish "Proceedings" in which the actions of the Grand Lodge at annual and special communications are set forth. Many of these contain the names of every man who is a Freemason. To be found in Libraries the world over, these are no more secret documents than is a telephone or a city directory.

There is nothing secret about a man being a Freemason - - he is proud of the fact and the Fraternity

is proud of him.

Freemasonry appears at times in public - - usually to lay a cornerstone, or to conduct a Masonic funeral. Such ceremonies are performed by Masons who have met and opened a Lodge; the members wear Masonic aprons and gloves; the open Bible and the square and compasses upon it are publically carried and displayed. Yet some men are so over-cautious they do not dare tell such simple facts as these.

Freemasonry is a charitable, benevolent, educational and religious society. Its principles are proclaimed as widely as men will hear. Its only secrets are in its methods of recognition and of symbolic instruction.

"But my wife wants to know what we do in Lodge!"

Tell her what you do in Lodge! What do you do in your Lodge? You meet and open. The opening is a ritualistic ceremony in which brethren are reminded of that which is high and holy in Freemasonry. The chaplain invokes the blessing of God. Minutes are read, visitors welcomed, matters of business and charity are discussed, action is taken. The ill are heard from, through the Committee on the Sick; letters from absent brethren are read. Is there anything here, except the words and the form of ritualistic ceremony, that the world may not know?

A degree is conferred. Here, indeed, is secrecy! But the degree is but a manner of teaching, and if Freemasons desire to keep it to themselves, it is because those not Masons cannot understand. The instructor of mathematics would gladly teach the binomial theorem to a kindergarten child - - but the child would not know even the meaning of the words. He must have knowledge before he can comprehend. So it is with a degree - - it can only be understood by those who have been taught - - and it is itself that teaching.

The degree over, there follows a social hour, a fraternizing and fellowship. Then the Lodge is closed, again with a ceremony which is uplifting and inspiring. Again the blessing of the Most High is asked and the brethren return to their homes. He is poor of spirit indeed who takes not with him something of inspiration from this that he has heard - - as simple as it is profound.

If there be anywhere a member of the Order who is not a loving husband and father; who does not give loyalty to his friends and government; who is not honored of men and reverent before God; who is not charitable and compassionate in act as well as thought; who is not honorable before all men; such a one has not abided by that which Masonry teaches, nor lived up to the obligations he has most solemnly assumed. And of this there is no secrecy - - Masonry proclaims these teachings as her own, and any Freemason may tell them to whom he will.

Finally, Oh troubled brother, who knows not what to answer wife of thy heart, or friend of thy bosom, who is not yet a Mason, when they question you as to what is Masonry, read to her and to him the great and beautiful prayer at opening of Lodge offered by Brother Joseph Fort Newton, gentle Minister of God

and beloved brother of the Ancient Craft . . . for here, in words not of the ritual but of the Holy Spirit, is the heart of Freemasonry for all to see . . .

ETERNAL FATHER, as the sons of men and thy children we gather in a House of Light, erected to Thee and dedicated to Thy Holy Name, humbly invoking Thy Blessing. Hallow the Lodge with Thy holiness; overcome our evil with Thy goodness; help up to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before Thee. Unite our minds to know Thee, our hearts to love Thee and our hands to serve Thy Holy Will, that we may be worthy workmen on Thy Temple.

Lord, by Thy faithfulness keep us faithful to the vows of chastity and charity we have taken upon the Holy Law at the Altar of Obligation - - let us not fail or forget. Make us men of Brotherly Love in an unbrotherly world; give us gentle and skillful hands in the practice of Relief; lead our minds in the quest of Truth - - even the truth of Eternal Life in the midst of our fleeting days. Here youth may find Thy consecration, and age Thy consolation.

Merciful God, to all weakness which our Brethren bear as a burden from the past, make us merciful; to their faults make us forgiving, as we would be forgiven. Teach us to be gentle in our thoughts, just in your dealings, and generous in our judgement. May the Spirit of Masonry dwell in us, casting out all envy, all uncleanness, all unkindness. At the end of the day when our labor is done, admit us into the Great White Lodge, in the House not made with hands. Amen.

INFLATION AND THE MASON

by R. W. Bro. W. F. Newman

King Solomon was upward of seven years in building the Temple at Jerusalem to God's Holy Service. Mackey writes that tradition informs us that he spent four thousand million dollars in the erection of that Holy Place, an amount of money which staggers the mind.

In the days of Solomon, and for centuries after, the craft of an operative Mason was passed from father to son and it was an honorable profession. The ancient Cathedrals of the old world were not created by speculative masons but were the dreams and final creative emblems of the operative mason. It was a lifetime of endeavour and not many, if any, of the men who worked on the foundations of these Temples ever saw the light of that glorious luminary of nature shed its rays on the pinnacle of the Temple.

Our Temples stand on Holy Ground, in these Temples, within these hallowed walls, we conduct our business. Why, then, are so many crying about the cost of Masonry? Why are Masons deserting their Temples for less costly living quarters of minor habitation?

It is time that we reconsidered our priorities, it is time that we decided, you and I, what Masonry really means to us. From the minutes of the Lodge of

Felicity No. 58, Bond Street London, "16 May, 1739 - This was election night and Bro. Wright was elected Master, Bro. White Senr. Warden, Bro. Wise Junr. Warden, and Bro. Kitchin Secr. and paid their two shillings each for the honour done them." What is Masonry worth to you?

The recent increases that are becoming prevalent in dues, the increase in rent and the general increases in all costs have created a lot of discussion, some within these hallowed walls and some without. There is a feeling, quite a predominant feeling, that it is a burden placed on our heads at a very inopportune time. We are having enough trouble with the increase in the cost of postage and the inherent rise in all costs of living. But is this affluent society of ours not keeping pace with all these items. Most lodges have, at the present time, a membership fee of \$30.00 or less. Thirty dollars for ten months of activity, for ten months of fraternal friendship. Too many, perhaps, are not taking advantage of the fraternal advantages of this membership. But where else can you get such a bargain? Would you consider that too much for your membership in the golf club, too much for a season ticket in your favourite seat at the coliseum or hockey arena, or if a supporter of the arts, too much for your favorite seat in the theatre?

Certainly, our senior members are necessarily concerned with increases that may affect their fixed incomes, but each lodge can individually concern itself with the problems which may arise in this area. Many lodges have stagnant benevolent accounts which could be used to eliminate any problems in this area. Many of them are the original members that through the years contributed to the present solid foundation of the lodge. It was upon their efforts the present buildings were erected. They laid many of the foundation stones of the Temples in which we now labour and are entitled to receive their just rewards. But you, the affluent Mason of today, must not use their inability to keep pace with the inflation rate of today as an excuse to cry about the high cost of Masonry, what high cost? Brethren, it is all a matter of comparison, just what do you value most?

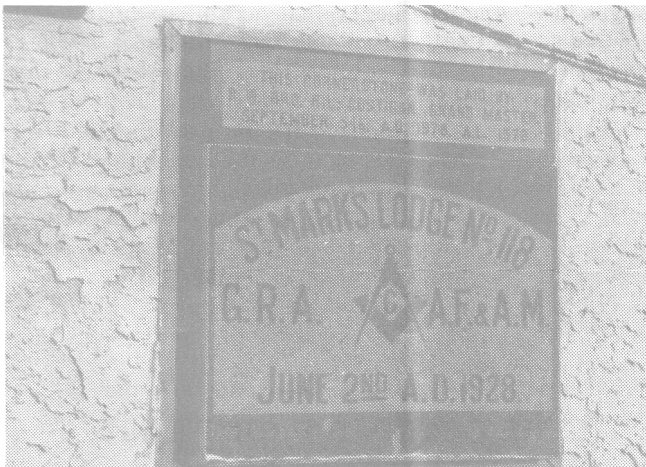
THE OCTOBER FRONT PAGE

Our readers will remember that the front page of the October Issue of the Bulletin carried a picture of a Lodge Hall and we requested an identification of it. R.W. Bro. Ross Mouser of Claresholm came up with the required information. It is the old Masonic Hall at Stavely, Alberta. The hall was constructed in 1909. The Lodge room was on the second floor, and the Lodge rented the lower floor to A.D. Irvine for his men's clothing store. A disastrous fire in Stavely in 1941 destroyed two elevators across the street from the hall and was so intense that the hall was extensively damaged. However the brethren got together and removed the peak roof and the balcony and made the lodge hall habitable once more. It was used by the Masonic Lodge until 1967 when it was turned over to the Town of Stavely and subsequently demolished.

The owner of the men's clothing store was A.D. Irvine who was a member of the craft. He was initiated in Bow River No. 1, later affiliated with Ashlar No. 28 and then with Stavely No. 33. He was secretary in 1912, Worshipful Master in 1920 and D.D.G.M. of District No. 6 in 1922. Unfortunately he was suspended in 1928.

Your editor must confess a lapse of memory about this building for in June 1946 he was installed as Master of Cairo Lodge No. 32 in this Stavely Lodge Hall. It was a stifling evening and the occasion of a joint installation of Cairo, Stavely and Joppa. For some reason, probably not a unique experience with newly Installed Masters, he remembers very little of what went on that night.

CORNERSTONES



The pictures above show M.W. Bro. R.L. Costigan, Grand Master preparing to declare that the Cornerstone of the new St. Mark's Lodge Hall has been well and truly laid. Behind him may be seen the Deputy Grand Master, the Senior Grand Warden and the Junior Grand Warden. The other picture shows the cornerstone which was originally laid for the former hall by M.W. Bro. G.E. Cruickshank, Grand Master on June 2, 1928. The stone is of polished Finland Granite and was originally donated by a Master Stone Cutter, Bro. James McDonald who was an uncle of a present Past Master of St. Mark's. When the old Lodge Hall was demolished the corner stone was carefully preserved and was relaid by our present Grand Master. The building now consists of a Senior Citizen's Residence and the Lodge Hall. It was built through the cooper-

ation of the Alberta Housing Authority and donations from the Lodge. Thus the building will serve a significant double function. The Calgary Herald carried a detailed account of the laying of the cornerstone indicating the importance of the event.

The Grand Master, M.W. Bro. R.L. Costigan, was invited to lay the Cornerstone of the new Al Azhar Shrine Building which is being constructed on the outskirts of Calgary. He was anxious to accede to this request since the laying of cornerstones is an art which in the past was frequently a function of the Masonic Lodge. The first Public School in Edmonton had its cornerstone laid in a Masonic Ceremony. Many churches asked the Masonic Order to officiate at such functions. Recently the school in Claresholm was demolished and the Cornerstone, masonically laid, was opened to reveal a number of historic documents. The laying of a cornerstone requires an especial Communication of Grand Lodge of which the Grand Secretary is required to give the Constituent Lodge at least sixty days notice. It is regrettable that, in accordance with the constitution, the Grand Master was unable to meet the deadline of the Shrine. He did however attend the ceremony.

On Thursday, February 23rd at 8:00 P.M. in the Misericordia Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta, W. Bro. A. P. Limrick was presented with his 60 year bar. The presentation was made by the officers and members of Ivanhoe Lodge No. 142 on behalf of "The Assiniboine" Lodge No. 114, Oakbank, Manitoba. It was also W. Bro. Limrick's 98th birthday. To celebrate a nice birthday cake was served.

There were 21 masons in attendance, including The Most Worshipful the Grand Master Kenneth Lord Crockett, and Past Grand Master M. W. Bro. W. A. Milligan. Bro. A. H. Mohr was also in attendance representing "The Assiniboine" Lodge No. 114. The 60 year bar was presented by R. W. Bro. B. L. Robinson.

W. Bro. Paul Limrick also received his 60 year bar from the Grand Lodge of Alberta at a later meeting of Ivanhoe Lodge.

