



Grand Lodge Bulletin

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

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WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

"The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it". (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

These words are often repeated in a Masonic Lodge and the implication of them, as far as a belief in immortality is concerned, goes unnoticed. There was a time when most people felt rather confident about immortality. Now, in this modern age, many have been shaken out of this comfortable feeling. Once this world seemed so much bigger than it is now and man seemed to be far more important. It is generally accepted knowledge, in this age, that our world is but a grain of sand in the midst of a well nigh limitless universe. Ours is a disillusioned world and man lives in the constant threat of annihilation either by a nuclear holocaust or by chemical warfare. Many individuals have reached the place where their hopes seem to be only fantasies and their longings only childish dreams.

In his book, *Magnificent Obsession*, Lloyd Douglas has one of his characters say, "I've always shied off from the subject. But, of late, it has been much on my mind. I'm quite disturbed these days. I'm in a mental revolt against death. It's sneaking up on me, and there's nothing I can do about it. Death holds all the trump cards. It takes me a little longer to get out of bed in the morning than a month ago. It is a bit harder to climb the stairs than it was last week. The old machine is running down. I don't want to die. I understand that when a man actually faces up to it, nature compounds some sort of anesthesia which numbs his dread and makes it seem right enough; but that thought brings me small comfort. I have been accustomed to meeting all my emergencies with my eyes open, and I don't get much consolation out of the thought that I'm to be doped into a dull apathy, like a convict on the way to execution, as I face this last one. I wouldn't mind so much if there was anything after that. Bobby, do you believe in immortality?"

What do we answer? We are here now. We have tasted life and we have participated in it. Life has been given to us. Then why stop living? Why should there be any point where the whole thing ends. Read Ecclesiastes again and you will find that one scene blends naturally into another. There are rich hours that have meant so much to us that we want them to go on, even beyond this incident that we call death. Sir Wilfred Grenfell, who lived a full and rich life wrote, "I am much in love with life. I want to get all I can out of it. I want more of it after the incident called death, if there is any more to be had.

Even in this age of disillusionment and in a time of moral and ethical collapse, there are examples of genuine love and abiding devotion. Why should they be lost forever? Why should people whose lives have been characterized by noble deeds lose something which is of such great value? The reasonableness of a belief in immortality does not rest on the depressing disillusionment of this time nor upon the confused state of affairs in our world. Rather it does rest upon the sense of the worth of the human personality and the capability that personality has for reaching beyond itself for finer means of self expression.

Beethoven wrote music far beyond the capacity both of the instruments and technique available in his day. He wrote music that could not adequately be rendered on the instruments of his time, music which compelled the creation of new instruments and new technique. His biographer wrote, "Born into a day of small things, he helped the day to expand by giving it creations beyond the scope of its available means of expression. So it was literally forced to improve these means and thus to grow with them — a method much used by the emancipators of humanity".

It is possible, and this is our hope renewed each spring, so to live that our very personalities will reach out for newer and finer means of expression. If we grow like that we are justified in anticipation that we can reach to something beyond this finite world. As Robert Freeman has written,

"When souls go down to the sea by ship,
And the dark ship's name is Death,
Why mourn and wail at the vanishing sail?
Though outward bound, God's world is round,
And only a ship is Death."

FIRST PRINCIPLES

by William Stemper, MPS

(Reprinted from the December 1981 issue of *The Philalethes*)

Freemasonry is an empathetic and compassionate science. When we finally see through all of the richness which surrounds our Order, the question arises, for what was it founded, and for what does it exist? Such questions penetrate our ritual, symbolism, and philosophy and raise the issue of "first principles": the end and purpose of the Craft.

The purpose of this brief paper is to suggest an answer to this question, and to guide the minds and thoughts of the intellectual and political leadership of the Craft to a sharper conceptual clarity on the subject of *first principles*. Such a sharpness may serve as well in the years ahead, when the Craft will be, unless dramatic trends reverse, smaller.

Let me continue with a personal reflection: in the recent past, I have been preoccupied with two aspects of the Fraternity, (1) its organizational decline, and how it might be reversed; and (2) the *phenomenological* nature of the structure of Masonic ritual. In the former sense, as an organizational leader, I have become aware that the Craft is, in a deep sense, its own worst enemy, and that — in the main — many Masonic leaders do not come to Masonic activity with a sense of altruism or selfless giving. Rather, they bring the same expectations, and frustrations to Masonic involvement they bring to every other aspect of their lives. Indeed, many men, and women in appendant orders, seek *careers* in Freemasonry because they do not have them in the world.

In other words, I have found that many Masons do *not want the Order to grow*, at some conscious or subconscious level, because such growth presents them with potential opponents and competition. Indeed, a fascinating aspect of the contemporary state of affairs in the Craft is that there are a host of younger Freemasons who are prominent in the Craft just because there are so few of their contemporaries extant. We have, as one curmudgeonly friend puts it, "young fogies," as well as old ones!

Yet, it is the second aspect of the Fraternity, i.e., the phenomenological structure of its ritual, and what that structure means which — I am convinced — is *the key* to the issue — the *question* of — first principles: the end and purpose of the Craft. "Fogies" of whatever age, have a way of 'outdistancing' themselves, of stumbling as it were, in the cords of purple aprons. They deserve our understanding.

The answer to this question is, in essence, simple: Freemasonry was devised as a means for men to lead lives of heightened perception and awareness of phenomena *in the world*, which might, in time, lead them toward lives of cooperation, compassion and empathy with their fellows, Masons and non-Masons. It was, and is, a vast memory system, recalling the moral and existential meaning of symbols, devices which point toward hidden insights, turns, and crevices in the human journey: nuggets of time-tried human wisdom. I strongly suspect that a study of the broader cultural, social, and philosophical roots of the Craft will yield the evidence for such an observation. I am personally persuaded that the origin of the craft chronicles the "loss" of a specific perception, or sensibility, which went out of common usage and perception sometime after the end of the Elizabethan era (ca. 1603). One might recall words of theologian Richard Hooker writing in this period:

"Posterity may know that we have not loosely through silence permitted things to pass away as in a dream".

Hooker was convinced that his times were changing, and that the task of the theologian — as indeed the *believer* — was to preserve a broader access to the Truth than popular orthodoxy was to allow in a Puritan age.

To grasp the significance of this point for practical Masonic leadership and management, let us understand the function of ritual and symbol. This is, in brief, to present man with certain distilled — codified — representations of reality, his and his ancestors' past experience — which he is not, in waking moments aware. Symbols, and the rituals which bind them together, are efforts to present man with

the landmarks which have guided him along the path to the present, and might guide him to the future. Thus the understanding of Masonic symbolism — notably the realization that to see *through* Masonic symbols is to see the world in a unique pattern which has been lost in the history of our culture, yet which individual men — through the study and practice of the Craft — might repossess in their personal lives. Deep within its own structure Freemasonry is "aware" that most men lead lives of functional sleep — H.D. Thoreau's "quiet desperation".

They are unaware 'whence they came' and 'whither they travel'. As a result, men are sometimes "drawn to" Freemasonry because it chronicles "ancient paths" to human self-awareness, "the light", without really knowing why. The human subconscious — like all human organisms — seeks its own health, and draws toward sources from which that health might be drawn.

One does not, in other words, have to be a mystic or a follower of the Masonic occult to make the following observation: Masonic writers and leaders, at every level, would do well to understand the potency of the internal symbolism of Masonic ritual to sustain the Craft — *if* it is taken seriously, talked about, reflected upon, and used by individual Freemasons in their daily, working lives. There is an immense irony in the fact that our treasure lies in our own back yard.

Two obstacles impede such a realization, and the greater task of orienting our Masonic "program" in terms of the interior teachings of the Craft: (1) the tendency of Freemasonry to take on the cultural aspects of the Society in which it is found; and (2) the nature of present-day Masonic scholarship.

In the first instance, we can begin to understand the naturalness of the problem because the Southern Baptist or Methodist Brother in the Carolinas or Georgia insists that the Craft is really a "Christian" organization (Andersons Constitutions, 1738, aside), just as the French follower of the Grand Orient insists that Freemasonry is inherently political and deistic. Similarly, the English Masonic Churchman, is bound to see major aspects of Anglicanism in his Fraternity, as is the Scot to view the Order as a bulwark of the Reformed Religion of Calvin and Knox. We all live as fish in water, *not* aware of the water.

Secondly, Masonic scholarship has tended to elevate factuality to an end in itself, partly as a healthy antidote to excesses in Masonic historical writing prior to the time of R.F. Gould and the founding of *Quatuor Coronatum* — the premier Lodge of Masonic Research (1886). We are midgets standing on the shoulders of giants to make such an observation. Without the like of Gould, Hughan, and others, we simply would not have the same reliable "raw material" for Masonic life. Yet, are they enough? Is there not more for the inquiring brother besides and beyond historical monographs, narrative events, and statistical research? How does Masonic scholarship *illuminate* the subject matter of the Craft, as well as record and explain it? The absence of festive boards and table lodges — the traditional place for informed, humane Masonic discourse — underscores our privation and loss as the Fraternity nears its third century of organized existence.

In sum, one should say that Masonic first principles are the principles of Freemasonry themselves; that our language of ritual and symbolism is "alive". We have eyes and see not, ears, and we hear not — *neither do we understand*. Yet, *our tendency, further, is to treat this special Masonic talent, faculty, and ability as a private resource, a talent to be buried, a light under a bushel, forgetting that the presence of a Masonic Fraternity in the world should — and in fact does — make a difference in the way that world lives and moves at a human and social level*. Our "special" understanding, hearing, and perception, leads us to compassion and empathy for all of mankind because Freemasonry is a metaphor for the world, and all the people in it. It is *not our private possession*. We are *stewards of its understandings* on behalf of humanity — we are, as it were, "monks" in a dark age.

Freemasonry is a science of compassion and empathy. Those who have chosen to cast lot with her in the last years of this century, regardless of motive, are citizens of a noble city.

SOLICITATION OF CANDIDATES FOR FREEMASONRY

The United Grand Lodge of England has issued a statement on the Solicitation of Candidates for Freemasonry. It says that there is no objection to a neutrally worded approach being made to a man considered to be a suitable candidate for the Craft. There can be no objection to him being reminded, once, that the approach was made. The potential candidate should then be left to make his own decision, without further solicitation.

THE GRAND LODGE OF ALASKA

The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Alaska was constituted in February 1981 by twelve lodges formerly under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Washington. This new Grand Lodge applied to the United Grand Lodge of England for recognition. It was found that the new Grand Lodge conformed to the basic principles for recognition laid down by the United Grand Lodge of England and that the Grand Lodge of Washington had consented to its constitution. The United Grand Lodge of England agreed to recognize the new Grand Lodge at its Quarterly Communication last September.



THE RELATIONSHIP OF FREEMASONRY AND RELIGION

(This statement was issued by the United Grand Lodge of England on September 12, 1962 and recently reaffirmed for the guidance of the Craft.)

It cannot be too strongly asserted that Masonry is neither a religion nor a substitute for religion. Masonry seeks to inculcate in its members a standard of conduct and behaviour which it believes to be acceptable to all creeds, but studiously refrains from intervening in the field of dogma or theology. Masonry, therefore, is not a competitor with religion though in the sphere of human conduct it may be hoped that its teaching will be complementary to that of religion. On the other hand its basic requirement that every member of the Order shall believe in a Supreme Being and the stress laid upon his duty towards Him should be sufficient evidence to all but the wilfully prejudiced that Masonry is an upholder of religion since it both requires a man to have some form of religious belief before he can be admitted as a Mason and expects him when admitted to go on practising his religion.

The Board hopes that Grand Lodge will agree that this is a valid statement of the Masonic position, and in the practical application of these principles will lay down:

- (i) that Masonic rites, prayers and ceremonies be confined to the Lodge room, and that dispensation to wear regalia (which term includes white gloves) in public be granted only in exceptional cases;
- *(ii) [withdrawn by leave of Grand Lodge] re. vocal music;
- (iii) that there be no active participation by Masons, as such, in any part of the burial ser-

vice or cremation of a Brother and that there be no Masonic prayers, reading or exhortations either then or at the graveside subsequent to the interment, since the final obsequies of any human being, Mason or not, are complete in themselves and do not call in the case of a Freemason for any additional ministrations. That if it is wished to recall and allude to his Masonic life and actions, this can appropriately be done at the next Lodge Meeting in the presence of his Brethren, or at a specifically arranged Memorial Service;

- (iv) but that while no obstacle should be put in the way of Masons wishing to take part in an act of corporate worship, only in rare and exceptional cases should they be granted dispensation to do so wearing regalia; moreover that the order of service should in all cases be such as the officiating minister or his superior consider to be appropriate for the occasion.

MASONIC HIGHER EDUCATION BURSARY FUND

APPLICATIONS MUST BE IN THE OFFICE OF THE GRAND SECRETARY BY APRIL 30th
330 - 12th Avenue S.W., Calgary T2R 0H2

All brethren are urged to encourage young people to apply for the Masonic Bursaries. Put a comment in the Lodge Notice and speak to the Counsellor in your High School. Young people wishing to apply should write to the Grand Secretary requesting an application form. The bursaries are available to any person admitted to a post secondary institution in Alberta. The awards are made on the basis of financial need and will be available to students who do not qualify for the maximum amount of the Heritage Fund Rutherford awards. Last year each bursary was worth \$800.00.

The Masons in Alberta give generous support each year to the Higher Education Bursary Fund, now the committee needs cooperation in receiving applications that will help it spend the money wisely.

THE MR. AND MRS. FRANK MILLING SCHOLARSHIPS

The Grand Lodge was left a bequest to be used for scholarships and to be called the Mr. and Mrs. Frank Milling Scholarships. Because of the nature of the bequest it was impossible to consolidate it with the Higher Education Bursary Fund. The Board of General Purposes asked the Higher Education Bursary Committee to administer the fund. The Committee decided to use the fund to help students in their undergraduate years since the H.E.B. Fund was used for matriculating students. The Milling Fund is available to second, third and fourth year students. They must make application on the same form that the H.E.B. Committee uses. It may be obtained from the Grand Secretary. If the brethren will look up last year's Proceedings of Grand Lodge they will see that there were six awards made from that fund.

GRAND MASTER ILL

The M.W. the Grand Master, M.W. Bro. M.N. MacIver was hospitalized in the holiday season and was forced to cancel a number of engagements. The Senior Grand Lodge Officers acted as substitutes on several occasions. We are happy to report that he has recovered his health and has been able to resume his heavy round of engagements.

CURLING

Six rinks from York Rite Lodges and six rinks from Canadian Rite Lodges competed in a Bonspeil in Forestburg in February. The competition was for the Stan Harbin Trophy. Following the bonspeil a banquet was enjoyed.

WINNING PAPER

In February for its Research and Education Program York Lodge No. 119 has as its guest speaker W. Bro. W. Nicoll. He presented a paper which won the Bob Matson Trophy. This trophy is awarded for the best paper given in District No. 7 in the 1980-81 year.

A LONG WINTER

Several Lodges were forced to cancel or reschedule meetings because of the severe and stormy weather the Province experienced during January. In days gone by many Lodges did not meet in January and February and, because of that, had no summer recess but met in July and August.

SASKATCHEWAN LODGE NO. 92

In February, Saskatchewan Lodge No. 92 conferred the Fellowcraft Degree on Bro. Harry Rinneberg as a courtesy to Port Arthur Lodge No. 499, Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario. Bro. L.A. Scharfenberg, of Saskatchewan Lodge, was also passed at the same meeting.



STRONG MEN, PICKED MEN

The whole principle of Freemasonry is that the Brotherhood of Man begins with the Manhood of the Brother. It seeks to build men and then to make them Brothers and builders. Any other kind of Brotherhood is weak, if not futile, either a flabby sentimentalism or a calculating selfishness. Masonry is made up of strong men, picked men — they cannot be picked too carefully — sworn and trained to make righteousness and good will prevail. By that very fact a great responsibility rests upon us, which we cannot escape even if we desired to do so. Whatever needs to be done in any community, the Masons ought to be leaders in doing it, because they are builders. Every Masonic Lodge ought to be a social and civic centre, where designs are drawn upon the Trestleboard for the common good, regardless of sect or party.

Joseph Fort Newton
from Eastgate Lodge No. 192

WHAT MASONRY MEANS TO ME

For the past number of months The Bulletin has been printing articles from brethren initiated during the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Year. These expressions were invited by M.W. Bro. W.E. Foster, P.G.M. who was the Grand Master during the year. The response to the request was so enthusiastic and gratifying that we have been unable to publish them all. The thanks of all of us go out to those whose papers have been published and to Bro. Einar W. Huse, Eureka Lodge No. 10; Bro. Ken Gregg, Bro. R.C. West, Strathcona Lodge No. 77; Bro. R.S. Lynch, Jasper Lodge No. 14; Bro. Randy Stotz, Medicine Hat Lodge No. 2; Bro. Robert Minchin, Astra Lodge No. 179, Cold Lake; Bro. F.T. Pringle, Exemplar Lodge No. 175; Bro. Peter Heridge, Yellowknife Lodge No. 162 and to Bro. D.W. Jacques who wrote on behalf of both Jordan Lodge No. 177 and Elbow River Lodge No. 180. We regret that space will not permit us to continue with this series. The papers were not published in order of merit. All expressed deep feelings about the Craft and many readers have commented that the future of Masonry is in good hands when men of such stature are being initiated into the Craft.



THE TYLER

During the early middle ages operative Masons were highly respected and jealous of their craft, and guarded their secrets by discussing their plans in a closed lodge room.

In order to avoid interruption they placed one of their brethren on the roof to warn of approaching danger. If a worthy brother wished to give information to the Master he gave the message to the brother on the roof, who lifted the lower end of a tile and relayed the message to the Master. After the message was given and the answer received by the visitor, the brother lowered the tile on the roof, which closed the gap.

The system continued for a number of years but was changed by allowing the brother to take up a position in a small porch near the door from where he was able to convey his message by a system of knocks.

Although he was no longer on the roof, the Brethren continued to refer to him as "The Tyler", hence was derived the term "Tyler", (by Wor. Bro. E.L. Botel, Manitou Lodge).

From Redwood Lodge No. 193
"Trestle Board"

MORE CURLING

Grand Prairie Lodge No. 105 held its annual Knights of Columbus-Masonic Curling event in January. From reports it was a time of excellent fun and fellowship and a very well organized event.

EUREKA LODGE NO. 10

At the January meeting of Eureka Lodge No. 10, Bro. T. Lembicz and Bro. K. Wigmore gave a slide presentation of Masonic Jewels. The presentation was interesting and informative.