

THE MAN IN MASONRY What Is Man ?

Bro. The Rev. H.W. Reid

A current story has it that a half-demented man was seen rushing wildly from office to office in a government building in Ottawa. He was flinging open the doors of closets and steel filing cabinets, hunting in waste baskets, crawling under tables, peering under rugs. When finally seized by a detective and questioned on his frantic search he said, "I am looking for me. I am trying to discover who and what I am." A witty reporter, commenting on the story and the confusion in the national capital, said that if he should go crazy he would want it to happen in Ottawa, for there no one would know the difference. It may be that the man wasn't crazy. Perhaps that is what every one wants to know in the city of Confusion. Can anyone tell us who and what we are? The Psalmist who asked rhetorically long ago, "What is man?" would discover today that the answer is highly debatable for some have a very low opinion of man.

Arthur Kostler has written a vivid autobiographical novel called "Scum of the Earth". It describes brutalities which he experienced as the unhappy inmate of a French Concentration Camp. He said that those who survived "wear the old school tie in the shape of some scar on the body, or an ulcer in the stomach, or at least a solid anxiety neurosis" (p.85). The victims, who were drawn from many nationalities, were treated as "the scum of the earth" in the strongly contemporary phrase of the Apostle "the filth of the world and the off scourings of all things."

Kostler describes the daily indignities and sadist brutalities. Many were beaten and battered to death, so that there was a mounting daily toll of suffering and suicide. The camp cemetery, Kostler says, probably contained the most cosmopolitan collection of skulls since the mass graves of the Crusades. Peter the Great subscribed to the view that men were "dung and scum". He was reproached for the prodigal waste of human life in the construction of St. Petersburg. He made the laconic reply "We must break eggs to make an omelette". The question is whether men are simply eggs to be broken irrespective as to whether men are good or bad eggs. For Peter the Great as for the dictators of our day, men were expendable material "manure to fertilize the ground for the future."

Today we are beginning to see how important this question of man really is. Is he a little less than divine, made in the image of God, or simply an object to be used by those who control him? Says J.S. Whale, "What is the truth about the nature and the end of man?" This is the ultimate question behind the vast debate, the desperate struggle of our time. Ideologies, to use the ugly modern jargon - are really anthropologies they are answers to that question man has not ceased to ask ever since he began question at all. Namely, "What is Man?"

One thing that emerges sharply in the Bible is the belief in the dignity and infinite worth of the human soul. The Old Testament Poet summed it up, "Thou hast made him a little less than divine". We grant that this is not an easy faith to hold. how

easily, by paraphrasing the poet's own words against him, "when I consider the heavens" the new expanse of them that the telescope has opened up - what is man? When we consider the ideologies of collectivism, totalitarianism - what is man - a pawn on a chess board to be pushed around? Said Dr. Iddings Bell, "Man is about to perish because he has lost the vision of his true greatness." "O Lord," said a Scottish Diving, "Help me to have a high opinion of myself." Said the Psalmist, "Thou hast made him a little less than divine."

See man's greatness in view of the materialism of our day. He towers above matter. to be sure he has kinship with the earth, the chemical elements in him are the same as all other creatures, worth about 95 cents at the 9 o'clock special, but they are there to help him become more than dust. Edison said the chief function of the body was to carry the spirit around. Ideas leap around within his brain; emotions stir within his breast; imagination leaves the dust of the body to see into future cities and patterns that nature never dreamed. Like the ancient mariners, who do sailing over the sunken islands of Atlantis, hearing voices rising from the long buried city, so also are there ideas, hopes memories, buried in the subconscious depths, now and again sending up mysterious voices to remind man of his lineage with the invisible world of the spirit. In the words of a current observer of life "Man may wonder at the extent of the material universe, but man is still the astronomer, and the greatest wonder is still at the small end of the telescope." Says Tennyson, "Here he sits, shaping wings to fly, his heart forbades a mystery, he names the names of eternity.: Man created in the divine image has in the range of the finite similar powers to the infinite powers of the Divine. This likeness of mind and spirit can think God's thoughts after him, feel his presence, know his will and spirit with spirit can meet. What is man?> The religious (Christian) answer is that he is a restless child of earth, but a child of eternity too, with "eternal longings in him", longings that move him to seek fellowship with his fellows and be found by his Creator and his God.

Years ago a story was in circulation about a Russian girl who took a Civil Service Exam and when it was over was fearful about passing. On question especially she kept worrying about: "What is the inscription on the Sarmian Wall? She had written what she thought it was - "Religion is the opiate of the people" - but to be certain she walked the seven miles from Leningrad to the Sarmian Wall. There it was, exactly as she had set it down in the paper - "Religion is the opiate of the people". Falling on her knees she crossed herself and said, "Thank God". Ah yes, as Francis Bacon remarked, "atheism is rather in the lip than in the heart of man". The reason is not far to seek, Thou hast made him a little less than divine. As Augustine summed it up a long time ago, "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, O God".

THE MAN IN MASONRY
What is he Seeking; What Should He Find in the Lodge

Bro. J.H. Laycraft

This, then is the man standing at the door of the Lodge awaiting the richer world that Masonry should offer him. He is created by God but equally he is created for God. though he can rise to the heights, so can he grovel in the depths of evil. why does he stand at the door of Masonry? What is it that he seeks?

The answer to this question at first seems so simple that only on reflection does the duty we have undertaken to him assume its true proportion. He seeks growth. It is part of man's nature as a spiritual being that he must grow in stature. As a social being, the divine in man leads him to brother hood with all men. As a thinking creature he seeks growth in the realization of his intellectual potential. but above all, as a spiritual being he seeks to realize the Fatherhood of God.

Thus it is a vital moment for he who stands at the door of the Lodge and it should be a solemn moment for we who sit within to await his coming. First, we must admit our shortcomings for we have allowed Masonry to fail some men and our venturer at the door of the Lodge is aware of it. He has seen many a good man who honours his title as a Mason; let us hope that is why he is there. But he has also seen men who do not honour the Craft. He has seen those who are only nominally Masons and can conclude that we offered them too little to keep them. He will be taught that each of us is the brother of all men but he knows that bigotry is not unknown among us.

He has come to take us on faith for he knows little about us or of the teachings of our Order. It is said that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. This is so for he who waits. The fact that he is there at all speaks of the need within himself.

The Craft appeals to him as a social being. He will join a brotherhood that is interested in him as an individual. He seeks to achieve brotherhood first, and most simply with those nearest to him. In a larger sense he seeks brotherhood with all mankind in a world bedeviled by strife and bigotry. It is the divine in man and his belief in the Fatherhood of God which must create brotherhood.

The story is told of a beggar in a time of want who cried his need to a man passing by. But the man, too, was without bread and he said to the beggar, "My Brother, I have none". Then through his distress the beggar's face brightened for he had been given a great gift. There had been bestowed on him something more than bread -- the accolade "My Brother".

So we too have much to offer in the simple title, "My Brother". He who comes to us in darkness also seeks growth in his intellectual attainments. Masonry with its use of symbols will lead him to a concept of ethics -- to the contemplation of that which is good. The good man achieves the fullest development of his faculties, but happily he finds it a receding goal for as he increases in knowledge, he increases his capacity for

knowledge. He seeks an opportunity to reflect, to study, to contemplate, to seek wisdom.

There lived a wondrous good and wise man named Socrates whose name has lighted all ages though he was executed as a criminal. When he received the news that he was to die he smiled. But they said "You should prepare for death". He answered, "I have been preparing for death through all my life for I have learned that true virtue is inseparable from wisdom. We must search for them but we will find them together".

So he seeks growth as a social being and embraces the brotherhood of man; and he seeks to grow in intellectual stature, but that which comprehends the whole is to grow in the knowledge of himself as a spiritual being. It is the inner spirit of himself, though a little less than divine, which is the great gift of God. He must learn the need to feel that above all creation is intelligence and love. Doubters do not achieve; sceptics do not contribute; cynics do not create. Faith is the driving force and that we must help him to perceive. He will not begin to climb the heights without the conviction that life is eternally important and that work well done, in whatever sphere, is part of the unending plan.

The moment before admission to the world of Masonry is a solemn moment for him. How much more is it for each of us lest we bear the burden that we blocked his path. His search will be barren if we make light of the ceremony or do not use the symbols of the Craft, in all their beauty, to instruct and inspire. Unthinking men may use the ritual as though only its form was important and to be letter perfect merely in its words a goal in itself. Unthinking men may have made the whole search more difficult by misleading him about the nature of the experience which is before him. Above all, each of us may fail him because we fail ourselves.

We await him on a foundation built by centuries of tradition and service, and so we will wait in confidence. That should not deter us from a constant and troubled re-examination of that for which we stand so that our Order will ever be a living force in a changing world. The lessons of our Order may be shouted to the world; it is the symbols by which we are taught that are secret.

It is fitting then, that almost the first words he will hear in Lodge will be a prayer -- a petition for assistance. Let each of us there present echo that prayer that we fail him not and that we will meet our responsibility to him as he does to himself.

Man is an eternal being. This let us help him to know. There is divine in man "though Thou hast made him a little less than divine". This let us help him to know. He is made by God; he is made for God. This let us help him to know.

He is as old as his doubt. He is as young as his faith. By his faith he will surmount the doubts which besiege him on his journey. By faith he will make the search for that which endures in time and eternity. This is what he seeks. Let us not fail him.

THE MAN IN MASONRY

How Does Masonry Assist Man In His Search

Bro. Arthur Price

The short prayer to which Brother Herb laycraft alluded at the entrance of the candidate into the Lodge, invokes the aid of God "to grant that this candidate may dedicate and devote his life to the service of God as to become a true and faithful Brother among us. To be endued with Divine Wisdom, and assisted by the secrets of our Masonic Art he may be the better enabled to display the beauties of true Godliness." One of Websters' Definitions of the word "secret" is, a "mystery" or a "governing principle known only to the initiated". Therefore from this point on, as a Mason, he will be helped by the governing principles of Masonry. Above all he must be dedicated in this as he must be in any other venture. We first invoke the aid of God to assist man in his search, and attempt to augment this with the governing principles of Freemasonry.

From this beginning he is conducted physically around the Lodge to the various stations, where he is given spiritual guidance in the form of lectures in the ritual, by symbols, signs and tokens. His first physical contact after the prayer is at the altar where he takes his solemn O.B. on the V.O.S.L. this significantly enough, he will always be reminded of whenever he gives the Heling Sign of an E.A. The bible is always open at a page appropriate to the particular degree and referring in part to the actual wording and significance of the degree with the S. & C. displayed according to his advancement. These instruments are explained and later used as symbols. In the first degree he is in darkness and seeks the light of Truth, Masonry assists man in his search from the very beginning assuming his knowledge to be the bare minimum. He is informed of the three Greater and three Lesser Lights and given the signs and tokens. He is invested with an apron, the badge of innocence and the bond of friendship. A foundation is laid at the N.E. corner of the Lodge for his spiritual guidance, after which the working tools are presented, which if given in a spirit of sincerity and conviction by the person presenting the tools, is perhaps the most impressive of all the lessons, with the possible exception of the Raising Ceremony. Especially the Working Tools in the Second Degree.

The Square teaches us to regulate our lives and actions by the Masonic Rule and Line and to correct and harmonize our conduct by the principles of Morality and Virtue. This is his first lesson in Morality symbolized by the Square. To be square with each other as well as with the Almighty. This makes us acceptable in His sight. The Level demonstrates that we are all patterned after one another, that we are brothers regardless of our station in life. The common expression "to level" with each other clearly defines truth in its broadest sense, and only goodness and virtue will be our means of elevation in life hereafter. The Plumb teaches us to walk uprightly and with humility before God in the strict path of virtue. To respect our fellow man and avoid those inclinations which may tend to hurt him or cause embarrassment.

The Junior Warden's lecture reveals the ancient history of the foundation of our Order and introduces him to the symbolic ornaments of the Lodge. The three great pillars"

Wisdom to conduct us, Strength to support us, and Beauty to adorn the inner man. We must make that wisdom available to the candidate. Our lectures and ritual will give him that strength if given with feeling and conviction and only then will the beauty of Freemasonry begin to adorn the inner man.

Jacob's Ladder, which forms a line of union between Heaven and Charity. The significance of Jacob's ladder on the V.O.S.L. connects the two inasmuch as the teaching of the Bible clarifies our belief in the dispensation of Divine Providence and strengthens our faith enabling us to ascend to the first round. This faith fosters the Hope of sharing some of the promises of these doctrines and enables us to ascend the second round of the Ladder. Charity the third round; "And the greatest of these is Charity". the one virtue which every Mason must possess and practice as far as may fairly be done without injury to himself or family.

The mosaic pavement of the Lodge reminding us of the uncertainty of life on earth and an exhortation to cultivate harmony among our fellow beings, to practice Charity and live in peace with all men. Constant reminding of these qualities and attributes over a long period of time will help man in his search. He is told that the Movable Jewels are to moralize on. But they are not there for his benefit alone and for the short duration of his three degrees, they are for all of us to moralize on, all the time; that is why they lay open in the Lodge. The four tassels, representing the four Cardinal Virtues: Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice are exemplified and we should contemplate these symbols. They are part of our lives if we are to live as Masons, just as are Virtue, Honour and Mercy, which were practised in an eminent degree by our ancient brethren. The Junior Warden's lecture sums up to say that the tenets of Freemasonry are: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. These are the basic principles of the Order --- not mere words in a lecture of the ritual.

Man is seeking a way of life that he sees others are following because his only guide into Freemasonry is, how his friends (who are Masons) behave, and act toward each other. Perhaps the most common reason for his wishing to belong to the Order, is that he has friends who are Masons, and that they are Masons has something to do with this way of life. Here is a different approach to the goodness of life, to the rich rewards of unselfishness, the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped, and the conviction of a life hereafter.

Each time a candidate is introduced, Passed and Raised is an opportunity for us to re-examine ourselves and re-dedicate ourselves in the light of Freemasonry, to the service of God and Man. Freemasonry can and does help man in his search, but man must search his inner self. In the Reader's Digest of August 1966, a well-known psychiatrist, Dr. Smiley Blanton, M.D. wrote an article on the "Bible's Timeless and Timely Insights". He says that if he were asked to choose one Bible passage above all others, it would be this; "And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free." And if I may be allowed to add to that, it would also make us accepted in every sense of the word.

THE MAN IN MASONRY **The Character of the Mature Mason**

Bro. J.S. Woods

It is my task to review, or examine, with you the character of the mature mason. To do so we must first ask ourselves: What is maturity? No definition can better that of the dictionary - "the state of being, complete, perfect or ready." Let us consider the aspect of completion. In this context we see the Brother who has completed his progression to the Sublime Degree. No other formal step in craft masonry remains to be taken. He stands before us, and the world, to all intents and purposes a "completed" mason. But is he? Does the end of the ritualistic road produce the "complete" mason. We all know that it does not. We must turn again and again to the yardsticks expressed in the ritual until we can say of him that, by study and contemplation, observation and example and an acceptance of his fraternal responsibilities, he has met the challenge of his own human frailty and learned the real lesson of masonry.

Of all the yardsticks contained in the ritual there is the one which encompasses the whole and that is - Charity. As the lodge room and the jewels are the physical and as the ritual is the mental so is Charity the spiritual aspect of Freemasonry. In the Junior Warden's lecture in the Canadian Rite first degree the new mason is told that Charity is the greatest of all the virtues and it is said:

"... and the mason who is possessed of this virtue, in its most ample sense, may justly be said to have arrived at the pinnacle of Freemasonry..."

What, actually, is this great virtue?

We are all familiar with Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians wherein he speaks of charity (and I here crave your indulgence for a certain Masonic license in interpretation) and he says:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tingling cymbal.

Eloquence does not make a charitable mason.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not charity; I am nothing."

Knowledge of ritual and blind adherence to the craft do not make a charitable mason.

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Alms and self-sacrifice do not make a charitable mason.

What then is this "charity" of which the Apostle speaks; which is the essence of masonic maturity? If it is not to be found in eloquence, knowledge, faith, alms or self-sacrifice what is it? Let us again turn to the dictionary. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary gives five definitions of charity in the following order:

1. Christian love; especially the Christian love of our fellow-men.
2. Love, natural affection, spontaneous goodness.
3. A disposition to judge hopefully of men and their actions and to make allowances for their shortcomings.
4. Benevolence, especially to the poor.
5. Alms.

We will discard the last two definitions out of hand as we are concerned with values other than the material. In the first three definitions we come closer to the "charity" of which St. Paul spoke. It is a human relationship - call it affection or love if you wish - but its object is not another person or persons as an individual or as individuals, it is the humanity in such person or persons and is therefore a relationship at large as it were. The third definition gives us the clue - it is a "disposition". A disposition to view one's fellow-men tolerantly, or, "to judge hopefully" of them. Why? Because the mature mason has learned through the craft that man is, without any doubt whatever, and Eternal Being; an Eternal Being burdened with mortality, wending a tortuous path through that mortality to a reward beyond his comprehension - a union with God. And the mature mason knows that what every man requires on that long and arduous journey is not calumny and obstruction but encouragement and assistance. He recognizes a brother of the dust and with him he shares, in humility, whatever experience, knowledge or wisdom he has garnered, through the grace of God, on his own journey.

This then is the basis of masonic maturity - an understanding of charity as an intrinsic part of character and not an act of volition; a recognition that masonic charity is a matter of tolerance in human relationships which can best be acquired through constant application to that greatest of all masonic studies - the knowledge of oneself. For it is in ourselves we ought to recognize the errors we condemn in others and from our own experience we ought to find how others can best amend themselves and encourage them to that end. And it is only in ourselves that we can find the immortal principle which makes us children of God and through His grace the inheritors of Eternity.

Tolerance, however, is easier in the word than in the deed. Even as we condemn the masonic bigot and the barren ritualist we deny the very tolerance we preach. In the presentation of the Second Degree Working Tools to the Master on his installation we are instructed "to hold the scales of justice with an equal poise" and "to bend neither to the right hand nor the left from the strict path of duty" and "to observe a due medium between avarice and profusion." The whole lecture demonstrates the difficulty of striking that middle line between tolerance and indifference on the one hand and tolerance and repression on the other. The mature mason is one who has come as close as is possible to striking that line - to hew to it is the very perfection

we all seek. The mature mason does not condemn but corrects; does not decry but encourages; does not expose but enlightens. As he is adjured to do in the charge delivered to him as a Fellowcraft: he judges with candor, admonishes with firmness and reprehends with mercy - or should we say "charity"?

He does so because he has the disposition to judge hopefully of men and makes due allowance for their shortcomings knowing full well how far he himself is from perfection.

The answer to the whole question of maturity and charity in the mason is to be found exactly where we should expect it to be found - in the Volume of the Sacred Law. There it is summed up and clearly set forth in those two great commandments of the Old Testament which Christ declared in the New to contain all of the Law and the Prophets:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

THE MAN IN MASONRY

Bro. the Rev Dr. W.J. Collett

The four papers that were presented by the panel looked at "The Man In Masonry" and asked –

- What is man?
- What is he seeking?
- How does Masonry Help?
- What is a mature Mason?

The papers attempt to concentrate on the basic philosophical conception of Freemasonry and it is to this basis that we must return if we are to build a sound Masonic system of life.

If the papers and the subsequent discussions are to be of value those who attended the Workshop will ask themselves what they can do in their own lodges to develop further the theme. To synopsise the papers and to give a short report of them to the lodge will be of some value but far more help will accrue if the lodges build a series of programs around the information. Further discussions on man and his mission in life, on growth towards maturity in Masonry will be very helpful. A re-examination of the symbolism and allegory of Masonry offers a great opportunity for many programs. To investigate the real meaning of the symbols offers a wide area of study.

The panel has demonstrated that we have within our own lodges brethren who have the ability and the desire to discuss the basic philosophy of the order intelligently and with practical profit. Each lodge should make use of its leadership potential and the panel has provided material from which to start.

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