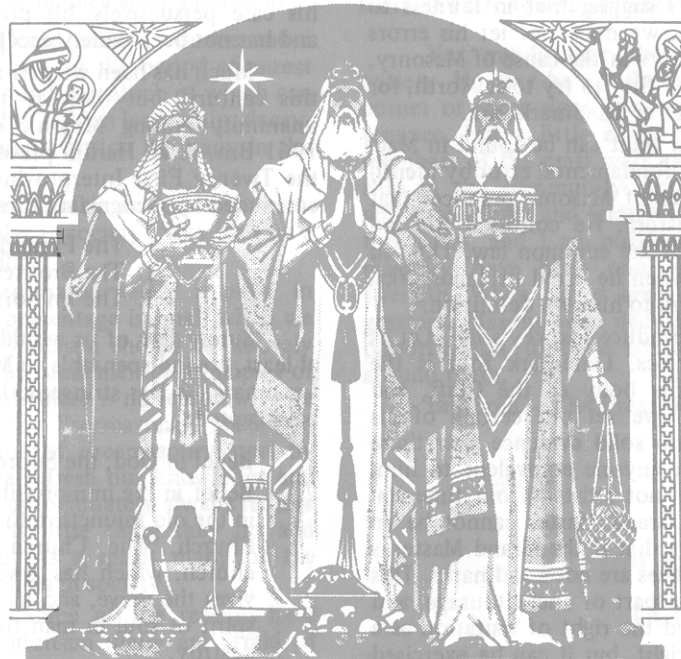




Grand Lodge Bulletin

The Significance of Christmas



How do we prepare for Christmas? What should we be thinking as we dwell upon the birth of Our Lord? And I must say at the beginning that I shall not make references to Christmas from an unbiased or unprejudiced point of view. It never has been told from such a point of view and you must not be surprised if the point of view of the teller is obvious throughout.

Many people ask why the church does not lead the way in getting us ready for Christmas. Why leave it to the world of business and entertainment to celebrate Christmas all through December, while the church which is most concerned remains silent?

I think the explanation is very important and significant. The mad whirl of excitement which accompanies the preparation for Christmas tends to hide some things which should not be hid. The church is realistic about unpleasant facts and prefers to face them without hiding them under tinsel. So during those few short weeks prior to Christmas, we think of the world as it really is with all its misery and wickedness. A world that tries to keep the peace by the use of force, atomic warheads and bombs. A world very similar in many ways to that which moved God to send His Son to express His concern.

You can only realize the greatness of what God has done when you see it against the need of the world. You do not magnify the importance of the coming of Jesus by shouting, "Merry Christmas" unless you realize that men need a Saviour who will take away the burden of sin; unless you see greedy men who need to be told of God who gave to the uttermost; unless you see sick persons who need to feel the healing touch of our Lord; unless you see men frustrated and troubled who need the Prince of Peace.

It is this contrast of dark and light, of despair and hope, of hatred and love which makes Christmas stand forth in its true glory and significance. This is the reason behind the contrast between Advent and Christmas. This is why I think the church is more realistic than the world.

And now I would like to turn to Christmas and suggest one or two thoughts on this great festival. The fascinating story of the birth of Jesus Christ is one of the most human and appealing parts of our religion. No other religion would dare to risk the ridicule of the world by such a birth for its founder. No pretense is made to make Him out to be a prince. He is humbled to such an extent

(Continued on Page 4)

THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS

PART II

(This is the second of two articles written by M.W. Bro. F. G. Fox, P.G.M. on the Ancient Landmarks. The previous installment was printed in the October Issue of the Bulletin. The scholarship of our Past Grand Master is greatly appreciated as comments from our readers have indicated.)

In 1856 Bro. Albert Mackey published his "Text-book of Masonic Jurisprudence", in which he set forth 25 Ancient Landmarks. This work was widely distributed in the Masonic world, and widely accepted as a major contribution to Masonic literature. However, it did not escape criticism. Mackey's definition of a Landmark seems to have found broad, though not universal, acceptance, but the list that he set forth has been subjected to severe criticism by several writers. I suggest that in fairness to Bro. Mackey, a great Mason, we must not let his errors blind us to his prodigious labors in the cause of Masonry, or to the fact that he was the first to try to set forth, for the benefit of the Craft, what our Landmarks are.

There is no doubt that fault can be found in Mackey's work. He committed a fundamental error by identifying as Landmarks a number of Masonic practices that are, in fact, usage and custom. He confused the immutable law of Masonry with the common law. This led him to an illogical position when he listed his landmarks, for 18 of them do not conform to his own definition.

It is unnecessary to reproduce Mackey's list. Let us simply consider some examples. Landmark four is the Grand Master, elected by the body of the Craft, and numbers five to eight inclusive set out certain of his prerogatives. Now, there is no solid evidence that there ever was a Grand Master, or anyone equivalent to him, before 1717. The office has not existed from time immemorial and therefore the Grand Master cannot be an Ancient Landmark. It follows that if the Grand Master is not a Landmark, his prerogatives are not Landmarks. This office and its prerogatives are part of ancient usage and custom. Mackey also regarded the right of visitation as a Landmark. It is an ancient right, but it can be exercised only with the consent of a Wor. Master to receive the visitor. It is a right hedged with qualifications and is not irrevocable. Therefore, it is not a Landmark in the strict sense. Consider also the modes of recognition — Mackey's Landmark one. These are very old but clearly are not immune to change. The Grand Lodge of England in the late seventeen thirties, for example, switched the words used in the degrees — part of the modes of recognition — for good reasons. The modes of recognition are part of ancient usage and custom, and can be changed.

I could go on, but the point is made. Most of Mackey's Landmarks are simply usage and custom.

In 1863 Oliver (Freemasonry's Treasury) again wrote of the Landmarks. He listed some forty, and described others as obsolete or spurious. He remained uncertain in his own mind, however, about what is a Landmark and what is not.

There was no uncertainty in the mind of Bro. Hextall, who wrote on the subject in 1912 (Quatuor Coronati, 1912). In an excellent paper marred, unfortunately, by regrettable discourtesy to the long dead Mackey, he pointed out that the old manuscripts all require the Mason to be true to God and the Holy Church and all contain the traditional history. Most important, they enjoin the members to strict secrecy concerning the special knowledge

possessed by the Craft. However, they contain no moral teaching, no philosophical reflections, no educational instruction. They were regulations designed to control the public and private behavior of the members, to ensure proper training of apprentices, to maintain high standards of workmanship, and to protect the reputation of the profession.

In all that Hextall was correct. It is his conclusion that is open to criticism. He advanced the thesis that the Ancient Landmarks are nothing more than the building secrets of the old Operative Craft. These were of vital importance to operative Masons for hundreds of years, were most closely guarded, and were handed down from generation to generation. On the protection of those secrets depended the prosperity and even the continued existence of the Operative Craft. Although Hextall argued his case persuasively his proposition was not proveable and has not been widely accepted.

Much has been written and said of the Landmarks in this century, but there is not, even yet, anything like unanimity among Masonic scholars on the subject. In 1961 Bro. S. H. Hardin presented an exhaustive survey to the Twenty First Interprovincial Conference at Banff. He concluded by recognizing three Landmarks:

1. The Fatherhood of God
2. The Brotherhood of Man
3. The Immortality of the soul

Surely few of us would deny that these Landmarks, at least, are indispensable to Masonry. My own view of the Landmarks is less stringent. I think that the following can be accepted:

1. Belief in God, the Supreme Being.
2. Belief in the immortality of the soul. This is implicit in the old injunction to be true to God and the Holy Church. The Church was the Roman Catholic church, which has always taught that the soul survives the grave, and all faiths teach us that there is a spirit or soul in man that death of the body cannot destroy.
3. The Holy Bible or some other book of the law of God — the Koran, the Torah, the Shastras, or some other.
4. The legend of the third degree, or Hiram legend. It is set forth in almost all of the old manuscript Constitutions, and its lack of historical authenticity is not relevant.
5. Secrecy. This applies to the symbolic teaching of the Craft and to all that is done or said in a lodge.
6. The symbolism of the operative art.
7. A Mason must be a man, freeborn, and of lawful age.

Those who have studied the work of Pound will realize that these Landmarks are identical to the ones he recognized. They also are the only ones of Mackey's list that meet all the criteria of Landmarks as set out in Part I of this paper.

Some will argue that there are more (or fewer) than seven Landmarks. However, I believe that most of the widely accepted ones are more truly statements of usage and custom. If we recognize the distinction between our common law and our immutable law, and strictly apply the criteria for Landmarks, we cannot expand the above list. That is all to the good. The Landmarks cannot be

changed, and the fewer unchangeable laws we have the better.

The reader must understand that I have attempted only an overview of the place the Landmarks have held in Craft Masonry of the post-operative era. Perhaps I have helped you to a clearer understanding of what constitutes a Landmark. If I have dispelled the common idea that a Landmark is anything that the older members of the Craft do not want to change, I count that as some progress.

THE FREEMASON — A PILLAR IN SOCIETY

(This paper was delivered by R.W. Bro. L. E. Dickson, D.D.G.M. of District No. 12. The M.W. the Grand Master, M.W. Bro. G. R. Sterling commends it to his brethren for their study and action)

This statement is the Grand Master's theme and a most appropriate and timely one for the period of unrest and instability that now surrounds us. Much of which can be attributed to poor leadership, selfish leadership, decaying morality and decreasing participation by many in the community at large.

I am approaching the subject by posing three questions: Is the Freemason a pillar in society? Why isn't he a pillar? Why should he be a pillar?

Is the present day Freemason really a pillar in society? I regret to say the percentage is small when we consider that each and every Mason should be actively involved. When we review our fundamental principles of brotherly love, relief and truth there is no reason why we shouldn't be actively promoting Freemasonry. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Freemasonry start by not attending lodge where we refresh our knowledge and find new knowledge. Others, unfortunately always require a pat on the back for each little thing they do and grumble when not rewarded. As a result many of the present day Masons are not pillars in society.

Why isn't he a pillar? Some of the reasons have already been stated but in addition many are afraid of ridicule and scorn if they voice an opinion, and therefore drift into the background and out of sight. This, unfortunately, gets started right in our lodge rooms and we, you and I, should make every effort to stop it. Our aim is to take a good man and make him better, and in order to achieve this we must learn, and part of that learning is being able to overcome our shortcomings and mistakes and passing that experience on to others in a positive manner. What better place than right in our lodge rooms. Then, there are those who want everything handed to them on a silver platter. They do not understand that rewards earned without labor often are meaningless — thus he is not a pillar in society.

Why should he be a pillar in society? For the simple reason that if the tenets of Freemasonry are practised as they should be then he automatically becomes that pillar in society. Let me repeat the main principles that have withstood the test of time:

Brotherly love—in its truest and deepest form.

- Relief — providing it without question when the need is there.
- Truth — being at all times truthful in what we say and do.
- Temperance — by practising moderation and not over-indulgence.

- Fortitude — being prepared to stand up to our convictions and principles.
- Prudence — by being careful and not reckless in our actions.
- Justice — judge with candor, admonish with firmness and reprehend with mercy.

Now to put this into practise you don't just stand on the outside and criticize like so many groups do today. You get involved in your lodge, your community and the world around you so that work can be done from the inside. As a member of the craft you will either impress them or turn them off. If you impress them, and the ingredients are there to do this, then you will become a pillar. A word of caution, a pillar need not be a great marble column but just an ordinary hitching post — it's there, it's strong and just asking to be used.

Yes, my Brother, the real Freemason is a pillar in society. He may be a little dusty from sitting in the back corner or show signs of deterioration from lack of maintenance, but a little effort will correct that. There are members of the craft who have attained respected leadership in the community, and who on close examination will show dents and scratch marks as they have weathered the storm, and I am positive that the principles of Freemasonry have been one of their greatest sources of strength. When things are blackest, possibilities are the greatest. Masons who dedicate themselves find or make opportunities to have some part in what is going on around them.

Brethren — The Freemason is a Pillar in Society!

EXEMPLAR No. 175

SUCCESS

Success is in the way you walk the paths of life each day,
It's in the little things you do and in the things you say,
Success is not in getting rich or rising high to fame,
It's not alone in winning goals which all men hope to claim,
Success is being big of heart and clean and broad of mind,
It's being faithful to your friends, and to the stranger,
kind,
It's in the children whom you love, and all they learn from you,
Success depends on character, and everything you do.

Author Unknown

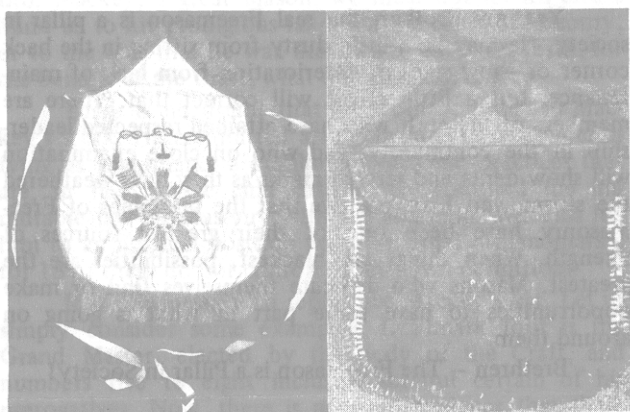
LODGE DUES

The Lodge Notices from all over the jurisdiction express concern over the need for the prompt payment of Lodge Dues. These are needed for the good financing of the Lodges. There is a concern, too, that there may be many who are to be suspended for the non-payment of dues, a situation which should be avoided at all costs. Brethren should encourage brethren to keep themselves in good standing. Certainly no membership should be allowed to lapse without some effort at personal contact being made.

HERITAGE PARK SUMMER 1974

The Masonic Lodge Hall at Heritage Park, Calgary was a very busy place during the Summer of 1974. As has been the case ever since the Lodge Room was opened it has attracted visitors from all over the world. One visitor this summer was Bro. Ellis H. Burch of Alexandria, Virginia, U.S.A. Alexandria is the home town of George Washington the first President of the United States who was also a Mason. This city houses the Masonic National Museum and Bro. Burch sent to V.W. Bro. Jack Mirtle a very colourful brochure from the Museum. In it there are pictured two of George Washington's Masonic aprons. They are pictured below.

The one on the left is called Washington's Masonic Apron or the Watson and Cassoul Apron because it was given to Washington on March 23, 1872 by the English



THANKS,
FRIENDS—
AND MERRY
CHRISTMAS!

(Continued from Page 1)

that His birth is lower than the rudest peasant. Christianity certainly reveals the truth of the assertion that you cannot judge by appearances. Who would think of claiming divinity and equality with the Creator of the universe for this newborn babe?

It still seems to be beyond our power to judge people and things by their inner worth, rather than by their showy appearance. Think of the babe in the manger and remember that He is the one who is highly exalted to the very throne of God. As we think of this babe, we allow our mind to run forward to the great things He did and said during His lifetime. Who would have thought that out of His mouth would one day come words which form the basis of living for the greatest civilization the world has known? Who would have imagined him to ever convey the healing power of God to the lame, the diseased and the blind? Who could ever guess that he would command such respect that soldiers would stand in awe before Him and be frightened to lay hands on Him. We never know the potentialities in a human being. Too often the world has failed to appreciate the latent possibilities in some of its gifted children and they have lived their whole life with-

Firm of Watson and Cassoul who were delivering bricks to America. The apron was designed by the firm and made by French Nuns at Natives France. The flags of France and the United States are crossed to indicate friendship. Above them suspended by a golden ribbon is the gavel of authority. In the centre are five golden stars, seven angels and three lights. It is quite likely that Washington wore this apron at the laying of the cornerstone of the Capitol of the United States.

The apron on the right is known as the Lafayette Masonic Apron and was given to him by General Lafayette in 1784. Tradition says that the apron was embroidered by Madame Lafayette, a member of one of the oldest and noblest families in France.

Washington's letter of thanks for the Watson and Cassoul Apron says in part —

"If my endeavours to avert the evil with which the country was threatened by a deliberate plan of tyranny, should be crowned with the success that is wished, the praise is due to the Great Architect of the Universe, who did not see fit to suffer His superstructure of justice to be subjected to the ambition of the princes of this world, or to the rod of oppression in the hands of any power upon this earth"

Another letter comes from Bro. Herbert Card of Devon, England who used some of the artifacts in the Lodge room for some research he was doing for the Fortescue Lodge of Instruction. He was to deliver a paper in October and we hope to receive a copy of it soon.

Thus the Heritage Park Lodge Room is winning a place of importance in Masonic History and Research and is not just an interesting spot for tourists to visit.

out an opportunity of making the contribution of which they are capable. As you contemplate the babe in the manger, think of all those other children of God who need our help if they are ever to do their best for God and their fellow men.

I suppose the most important thought of all that drifts into our minds as we meditate on the babe in the manger is that He is the outward evidence of God's love for man. Just as any new born babe is the manifestation of the love of his parents for one another. So Jesus is the most certain proof of God's love for man.

Christmas is the festival of God's love. In a world of hate and suspicion, we stand before the babe in the manger and know that though man may hate and deceive and kill his fellow man, nevertheless at the heart of the universe there is one who cares — "who so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son".

I know you will think of these things when you celebrate in this year of our Lord, 1974.

Douglas G. Jackson
Grand Chaplain