



The
Grand Lodge Of New Brunswick
F. & A.M.



MOSTLY MASONRY

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No. 1 Extra

Directives of M.W. Bro. Carr W. Graham

Grand Master of Masons of New Brunswick

November 16, 1994

- 1 The Master of the Lodge conferring a Degree will explain, following the Degree, that the Penalties of the Obligation are symbolic, and are left in the Obligation to impress upon the Candidate the seriousness of the Obligation he is taking. They are a reminder of penalties handed down in ancient times to individuals who had committed some crime against society or their fellows, and will never be carried out in this day.
- 2 The Third, or Master Mason Degree will always be conferred in its entirety as printed in the Ritual Book. The only deletion that may be made is that the Lectures may be omitted. However, these Lectures must be given as soon as possible following the Degree.
- 3 Masters of Lodges using the material for skits that are presented in Lodge on entertainment evenings must present such material to the District Deputy Grand Master for approval before proceeding with the entertainment.
- 4 The power of closing a Lodge in short form rests with the Grand Master alone and is not to be carried out by an Installing Officer, Past Grand Master or any other person.
- 5 All semi-public Installations must be approved by the Grand Master through the Grand Secretary. The name of the Installing Officer must be given and he is responsible to the Grand Master that the Installation will be done by memory and in a dignified manner.
- 6 Lodge Chaplains are encouraged to read from the Book of Holy Scripture when taking part in Ritualistic work.
- 7 Applications for Concordant Bodies are not to be given to new Masons until a period of six months has elapsed following their being raised to Master Mason.

These directives, of which all Masons in New Brunswick will take due notice and govern themselves accordingly, will remain in effect unless and until removed or superceded by a succeeding Grand Master.

The following two items are included with Mostly Masonry by direction of the Board of General Purposes of the Grand Lodge of New Brunswick.

Firm Foundations

An Address Given by

R.W. Bro. Rev. Eric Caldwell, Grand Chaplain

At a Service of Rededication of a Plaque in Memory of the Rev. John Beardsley at Trinity Anglican Church, Kingston, N.B. October 16, 1994

Most Worshipful The Grand Master, the officers and members of Grand Lodge, the brethren of all Lodges represented in our midst today and distinguished friends of Freemasonry; it is somewhat awe-inspiring, as my first official function as Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of New Brunswick, to be called upon to preach at such a memorable service and in such beautiful surroundings.

It is indeed gratifying to see such a goodly number in attendance. First of all, I want to thank the Rector, the Rev. John Matheson, for his advice and assistance in arranging this service and for his participation today. Like all clergy on active service, he has already performed his usual parochial duties today and we are grateful to him for taking on this extra task, for allowing us to unite for worship in this beautiful House of God and for sharing in this service with us. We are also grateful for the assistance of the organist, the choir and all who in any way assisted in making this service a success.

I am taking certain liberties, in going outside the lessons for the day completely for the text for my remarks. I would therefore ask you to think with me on these words written in St. Mark's Gospel, chapter 16 and verse 18 reading as follows: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

This is the solid foundation on which Jesus established His church. And it is the matter of foundations, and building upon them, that I would like to direct your thoughts to this afternoon. We are all aware of the importance of having a solid foundation for any structure.

We read in another passage of Scripture about two men who built houses. One built his on a strong and sure foundation and it withstood the rigors of time and the inclemencies of the

weather. The other built his on sand and it soon fell in the face of adversity because it had no sure foundation.

Today we are assembled here as members of the great Masonic Order and friends of the Masonic Order to remember one of the pioneers of our fraternity who assisted in laying the foundation on which our Order rests and which has stood the test of time, the rigors of the years and the assaults of our enemies and detractors.

Many years ago the Grand Lodge of New Brunswick saw fit to place a memorial plaque in this church in memory of the Rev. John Beardsley. This distinguished Freemason came to New Brunswick with the Loyalists shortly after the year 1783. Later he was instrumental in establishing Lodges in Maugerville, Kingston and two in the city of Fredericton. On St. John's Day, June 24th, 1803, St. John's Lodge attended Divine Service for the first time in Trinity Church. Brother Beardsley was invited to preach and his theme was: "Let Brotherly Love continue." My Brothers, we would do well to adopt this as our theme in the Order today!

A few years later Brother Beardsley passed away at the home of his daughter at Kingston. Grand Lodge erected this memorial in his honour and also a medallion was struck in his memory and many of us are proud holders of this decoration. It was fitting that this memorial be erected and it is equally appropriate that it be refurbished and rededicated today. It calls to mind our beginnings as a Grand Lodge and it reminds us how well our foundation has been laid. It also places upon us a grave responsibility to keep our Grand Lodge and our subordinate Lodges strong and healthy and thus pass them on to succeeding generations.

Now let us look again at the matter of foundations. Much of our Masonic teaching is connected with the Temple of Solomon. We may be very sure that a building of this magnitude and magnificence would be well based. We

know that it withstood many trials and it was only the ruthless hand of the invaders that brought about its destruction. And then in the New Testament we read of Christ asking his disciples this question: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man am?" And they replied: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias and others Jeremias or one of the prophets." And then Jesus brings it down to a very personal level: "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." And Jesus then went on to say: "Flesh and Blood has not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." And then He adds: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Surely there could be no surer or stronger foundation than that on which Christ founded His Church.

Now what lesson can we learn from this—whether Freemasons or non-Masons? Our Order teaches us in many, perhaps all of the various degrees, that we are building within ourselves, a "Spiritual Temple." St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are."

We are building within ourselves, that which we call character. Character is different from reputation. Reputation is what people think we are. Character is what we really are. It is deep within our hearts and minds where it really counts. And the Freemason is taught to build his character or spiritual temple on the foundation stones of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. These are the only kind of assets that we can take with us when we are called upon to leave this earthly sphere.

The truly devout Freemason is one who practices these virtues and upholds and supports the Church of his choice. He is not told which one to join but it is expected of him that he will be an active supporter of the Church he chooses. And I find it interesting and encouraging that on many a church Vestry. Session or whatever name they are known by, you will almost certainly find dedicated Freemasons involved in positions of trust, responsibility and leadership. Their foundations, Masonically and Spiritually are strong and well laid. This tears to shreds the contention of so many ill-informed people who accuse the Masonic Order of being anti-Christian and a cult. I have to be careful not to launch into a tirade against such accusations be-

cause I might then go on for hours. I would only say this kind of criticism pains me deeply and it is especially disconcerting to hear this kind of comment from members of the clergy. One has to wonder at their motives. On the other side of the coin, I was recently privileged to attend the Supreme Council Sessions of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Halifax, Nova Scotia where I received the 33rd. degree. The next morning I received congratulations from a Brother wearing the purple of an Anglican Bishop. It proved to be the Rt. Rev. C. Robert Townshend from London, Ontario. He had no problem identifying with the Order and it was quite a lift to my spirits.

We know from Scripture that Jesus probably spent his early years working in the carpenter shop. He knew the value of a strong foundation and building well. And all of us are builders and are building whether we realize it or not. And the building we are erecting is one that is to last for eternity. Some are building wisely and some are building foolishly. Whether we listen and heed the good news of the Sacred Law or not, the building goes on, whether wisely or foolishly. Every thought in our minds, every word we speak, every dream we dream; these are the materials that go into our spiritual building.

When anyone sets out to erect a building they would have a long-range plan in mind. Accordingly they would try to find the best possible material. And yet it is a tragic fact that many are building temples for eternity out of the poorest, most shoddy material: the times we take His Name in vain, the off-colour stories we tell, the shady deals we carry out, the times we closed our hearts and our purse strings in the face of glaring need, the times we tried to remain neutral when the Great Architect needed dedicated soldiers.

We in Freemasonry like to think we are building well and in keeping with the foundations laid by our forbears such as the Rev. John Beardsley. I'm not suggesting we boast about our efforts but surely there is no harm in letting the world know. Let us think of the Shrine Hospitals and Burn Institutes where handicapped and burned children are given the best possible care, free of charge and without regard for color or creed. Let us think of Camp Goodtime not far from here where children stricken with cancer are given a chance to enjoy camp life. Let us think of the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation. Let us think of the Grand Lodge Scholarships. All of these are sound materials building

on the foundations laid by our Masonic pioneers. One writer has estimated that the cost of our Masonic charities runs to approximately \$1.5 million per day, or well over \$500 million per year. Jesus said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

And the Bible tells us our spiritual buildings are going to be tested, therefore we must build for times of storm as well as for fair weather. Not everything in life is going to be pleasant. The wise as well as the foolish are going to be tested. God doesn't coddle His saints. Jesus prayed thus for the apostles: "I do not ask that thou shouldest take them out of the world but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one." He means for us not to flee the tempest but to face it, defy it and overcome it. Therefore our buildings must be constructed from material strong enough to face life's storms, not something frail enough to break in the face of adversity. It must be built not just for the present but for eternity.

Our testing may come in various ways, the loss of a loved one, a lingering illness, a great personal loss or even an over-abundance of wealth which to some can be equally devastating. Many of us have already been tested and probably will be again. Is our foundation strong and secure? Have we built wisely and well?

And the last test we will face is the Judgment. It comes to one and all, whether we have built wisely or foolishly. We know this is true because Scripture tells us it is. "Every man must

give an account of himself to God." "For we must all stand before the judgment seat." "For it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment." How vitally important it is to build well!

And the last point I would try to make that our spiritual buildings must be kept under constant scrutiny. Any structure will deteriorate with age and must be repaired. Likewise our spiritual buildings must be constantly strengthened, improved, renewed and even enlarged if necessary. We can do this by prayer meditation, the sacraments and the study of the Volume of the Sacred Law. Those of us who are members of the Masonic Order will realize that our gentle Craft, just like our churches, admonishes us to do these very things.

And so Brethren and Friends, as we come together today to rededicate this memorial to the Rev. John Beardsley, let us resolve to rededicate ourselves to greater effort both within our religious Community and within our Great Fraternity. We need at times to take stock of ourselves and decide if we are on the right course. Remember that if our spiritual house is not founded on The Great Architect of the Universe, it cannot stand and likewise if our Masonic house is not founded in the same manner and on the tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, it too will not stand. The Rev. John Beardsley and other pioneers of Freemasonry laid a firm foundation. It is our responsibility to build on it wisely and well.

A Response to Critics of Freemasonry

Published by The Masonic Information Center

A Division of the Masonic Service Association

From Northern Ireland to Iran, from the Middle East to the United States, religious extremism is a growing force throughout the world. Jarred by the rapid pace of social and cultural change, especially the apparent disintegration of moral values and the breakup of the family, some people within this movement have sought refuge from the complexity of modern life by embracing absolute views and rejecting tolerance of other beliefs.

Simple, easy, seemingly stable answers bring comfort in a rapidly changing world. For example, some churches have responded to the personal anguish of their members by circling the wagons, that is, by strictly defining theological concepts

and insisting their members "purify" their fellowship by renouncing any other beliefs.

The next step, already taken by various churches, is to yield degrees of control within their ranks to vocal factions espousing extremist views. These splinter groups focus the congregation's generalized anxieties on specific targets. The proffered cure-all is to destroy the supposed enemy. Freemasonry has become one of these targets precisely because it encourages members to form their own opinion on many important topics, including religion.

Thus some churches have expressed concerns, even condemnations, of Freemasonry. Generally, these actions are based on misunder-

standings. A case in point is the June 1993 report to the Southern Baptist Convention by the Convention's Home Mission Board. This report defined eight alleged conflicts between the tenets and teachings of the Masonic Fraternity and Southern Baptist theology.

Let's briefly look at those areas as representative of the thinking of some well-meaning but misinformed church members today, and see if the concerns are real or simply a matter of misinformation or misunderstanding.

Most of the issues really deal with language in one way or another. Almost every organization has a special vocabulary of words which are understood by the group. It's hardly appropriate for someone outside a group, and without the special knowledge of the group, to object to the terms unless he or she fully understands them and why they are used. If someone wants to read the Journal of the American Medical Association, for example, that is his right—but he doesn't have a right to complain the articles use medical terms. A person reading a cookbook had better know terms like fold, cream the butter, or soft ball have special meanings—or he'll make a mess instead of a cake. The same is true of a non-Mason reading Masonic materials. As to the critique of Freemasonry by the Southern Baptist Convention (which, incidentally, had several positive things to say about Masonry), here is a brief explanatory discussion of each point.

"Offensive Titles"

Some don't understand the historic source of the terms used in Freemasonry. They complain of "offensive" titles such as Worshipful Master for leader of a Lodge. This is simply a matter of misunderstanding. The leader of the Lodge is called the Master of the Lodge for the same reason the leader of an orchestra is called the Concert Master, or a highly skilled electrician is called a Master Electrician, or the leader of a Scout troop is called a Scoutmaster. Masonic use of the term Master originated in the guilds of the Middle Ages when the person most skillful was called the Master. Much Masonic vocabulary dates from that period. For instance, "Worshipful" is a term still used in England and Canada today to refer to such officials as mayors of cities. Worshipful John Doe means exactly the same thing as The Honorable John Doe. Also, in the John Wycliffe translation of the Bible, "Honor thy father and thy Mother" is translated "Worchyp thy fadir and thy modir." Some persons seem not to distinguish between "worshipful" and "worshipable." There is certainly nothing irreligious in the title as used in Masonry.

"Archaic, Offensive Rituals"

Some object to the use of "archaic, offensive

rituals" and what they term "bloody oaths." There is nothing offensive in Masonic rituals, at least not to anyone who understands them. They are ancient, many of them so old their origins are long lost in history. But there is nothing bad in that. Many creeds and statements of faith are far older than the Masonic rituals. The Lord's Prayer is 2,000 years old, but no one suggests it be updated just because it was set down long ago. The Declaration of Independence is about the same age as the Master Mason degree, but few complain that it is "archaic." As to the allegedly "bloody oaths," the historic penalties associated with the Masonic obligations have their origins in the legal system of medieval Europe and were actual punishments inflicted by the state on persons guilty of fighting for civil liberty and religious freedom. Included in the accused were many of the martyrs who died to secure the principle of religious toleration. In Masonry, these penalties are entirely symbolic. They refer to the shame a good man should feel at the thought he had broken a promise, and they remind us of the price so many have paid for the liberties and freedoms Masons are pledged to protect.

"Paganism"

Some critics of Freemasonry claim the recommended readings for some of the degrees of Masonry are "pagan." Pagan, as they are using the term, simply means pre-Christian. The study of man's moral and intellectual history allows the achievement of Masonry's major purpose, the enhancement of an individual's moral and intellectual development. Such a study has to start with the concepts of man and God as held by early cultures and evidenced in their mythologies. The Greeks and Romans, as well as earlier peoples, had much of importance to say on many topics, including religion. The idea that a physician must act in the best interests of his patient comes from the pagan Hippocrates, and the concept that the government cannot break into your house and take what it wants on a whim comes from the pagan Aristotle. None of us would want to live in a world without these ideas. In almost every field—law, government, music, philosophy, mathematics, etc.—it is necessary to review the work of early writers and thinkers. Masonry is no exception. But to study the work of ancient cultures is not the same thing as to do what they did or believe what they believed. And no Mason is ever told what he should believe in matters of faith. That is not the task of a fraternity, nor a public library, nor the government. That is the duty of a person's revealed religion and is appropriately expressed through his or her church.

The Bible as "Furniture"

Ironically, some people complain about the Bible in the lodge being referred to in Masonic rit-

ual as the "furniture of the lodge." Again, it's a matter of not understanding how Masons use the word. Freemasons use "furniture" in its original meaning of "essential equipment." All lodges must have a Volume of the Sacred Law open during every meeting. In North America, this is almost always the Bible which is an essential part of Freemasonry and its ritual.

The Meaning of "Light"

Other critics of Freemasonry are concerned that when Masons use "light" someone might think the word is referring to salvation rather than truth or knowledge. But that's a word confusion again. Light was a symbol of knowledge long before it was a symbol of salvation. The lamp of learning appears on almost every graduation card and college diploma. Masonry uses light as a symbol of the search for truth and knowledge. It is very unlikely any Mason would think Masonic "light" represents salvation.

"Salvation by Works"

Some believe Freemasonry teaches salvation may be attained by one's good works. Masonry does/not teach any path to salvation. That is the job of a church, not a fraternity. The closest Masonry comes to this issue is to point to the open Bible and tell the Mason to search there for the path to eternal life. Masonry believes in the importance of doing good works, but as a matter of gratitude to God for His many great gifts and as a matter of individual moral and social responsibility. The path to salvation is found in each Mason's house of worship, not in his lodge.

"Universalism"

There are those who claim some Masonic writers teach the "heresy of universalism." Universalism is the doctrine that all men and women are ultimately saved. Masonry does not teach universalism nor any other doctrine of salvation. Again, doctrines of salvation are the province of a church, not a fraternity. In point of fact, one has to look rather hard to find those "many Masonic writers" who supposedly teach universalism, but even if you could find one, he's writing a statement of personal opinion. It's important to remember that any Masonic author writes for himself alone, not as an official of the Masonic fraternity. Masonry simply does not have a position, official or otherwise, on salvation. Since men of all faiths are welcome in Freemasonry, Masons are careful not to offend the faith of any. Possibly, that may seem to be universalism to some critics. Masons call it common courtesy.

Racial Exclusion

Some critics, more eager to attack Freemasonry than to put their own houses in order, allege "most Lodges refuse to admit African-Americans

as members." Masonry is not a whites-only organization, as the hundreds of thousands of Black, Native American, Hispanic and Oriental Masons all over the world can testify. The petition for Masonic membership does not ask the race of the petitioner, and it would be considered completely wrong to do so. At the international celebration of the 275th anniversary of the Grand Lodge of England in 1992 (the most recent Masonic gathering of about the same size as the Southern Baptist Convention) there were far more people of color present than there were at the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston in 1993. At the same time, Masonry in America, like churches and society in general, has not lived up to its teaching of brotherhood as well as it should. That is changing, in Masonry as in society. While it is still true, as Martin Luther King, Jr., remarked, "Sunday morning at 10:00 is still the most segregated hour in America," it's getting better throughout all organizations.

Masonry Compatible with Christianity and Other Religions

Clearly, Freemasonry is compatible with religion. It may be incompatible, however, with the way a few narrowly focused people see religion. Of course, most of them feel that only they have the truth and that even many members of their own congregations are not as pure as they should be. Masonry stands, as it has always stood, with open arms, saying, "Believe as your conscience dictates, and if you are a good man who believes in God and that there is something more to life than bread and circuses, if you believe that you have a responsibility to develop yourself and benefit others, come join us." Freemasonry is simply a fraternity—an organization of men banded together to develop themselves further ethically and morally and to benefit the community at large. Give yourself a chance to find out who we are. We're the next-door neighbors you've known all your life.

The Masonic Information Center is a division of The Masonic Service Association. The Center was founded in 1993 by a grant from John J. Robinson, well-known author, speaker, and Mason. Its purpose is to provide information on Freemasonry to Masons and non-Masons alike and to respond to critics of Freemasonry. The Center is directed by a Steering Committee of distinguished Masons geographically representative of the Craft throughout the United States and Canada.

(Editor's Note: This pamphlet is available from the Masonic Information Center, 8120 Fenton St, Silver Springs, Maryland 20910-4785)