

**The Grand Lodge of Alberta
A.F & A.M.**

**REDEDICATION IN
MASONRY**

**Papers given at the 1968
AREA MEETINGS**

**AND Address of
M.W. Bro. Bernie Brown
Grand Master**

REDEDICATION IN MASONRY

Presented by

R.W. Bro. E. J. Thompson, J.G.W.

Dedication is an essential part of any and every man's life, if that life is to amount to anything. If you were organizing a hockey team or a football team, you would want men who were dedicated, i.e., men who were ready to consecrate themselves to the team, devote themselves to the purposes of the team, that of mastering and winning the game. Evidence of their dedication is that they are ready and willing to give up some things ; they are ready and willing to spend and be spent so that the team may play a better game.

What is true in sport is true also in education: If a boy's schooling is to amount to anything, the boy must be dedicated to it. He must be willing to put aside "fun and games" until he has mastered his lessons, done his homework. Without this dedication, there is not likely to be the achievement of a good education.

The same thing is true in a man's business or occupation. If he is to succeed and build for himself a career, he will have to have dedication. He will have to set aside some things so that he can concentrate on making the finest possible performance in his vocation. Without it there is not likely to be much success.

It is true that dedication is needed in home and family life. Only as a man is willing to forego some things, only as he is ready to put something into it, can his family and home life succeed.

When it comes to the building of character, dedication is at the foundation. A man must be determined to deny himself, to devote himself to an ideal, to strive with courage and patience to build the kind of man he wants to be.

There is no area of life where dedication is not necessary and essential. It involves giving up things that interfere with one's purpose, and consecrating oneself to achieve the goal set before him. Dedication is a basic ingredient in a worthwhile life.

As we consider our dedication, we have to remember that life changes, life moves on. The goals and purposes which we had as boys or as young men are not adequate for the mature man. As we grow older our horizons broaden, our vision expands. We need greater goals and larger purposes. Many of the things to which we dedicated ourselves in former years, have lost their interest or have been outgrown. St. Paul tells us, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child. I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish things." So it is that as we grow and mature we must deliberately move forward to greater and more important values in life. It is here that the need for rededication comes. Our dedications of yesteryear are not big enough for today. We need to reassess our lives and re-dedicate ourselves to the larger goal the more comprehensive purpose.

It may be well to look, for a moment, at the aims and purposes of our Fraternity. At the outset a man comes seeking more light in Masonry. He must give evidence that he has this purpose of finding light. With the help of the brethren, he is given more light until he is raised to the sublime degree of a master mason. He has been told to remember always that "he is a builder." His attention has been directed to the Holy Bible, "within the covers of which are found those principles of morality which lay the foundation upon which to build a righteous life." He has been reminded of his duties to God, to his neighbor and to himself. He has been exhorted to cultivate brotherly love, to practice charity, generously sharing with the needy, the abundant gifts with which God has endowed him. In many ways he has been given the light of masonry to enable him to build his character and live a good and satisfying life.

The man came with the purpose of getting light. That aim is now fulfilled, he has been given light. Is this the conclusion of the matter? No. On the contrary, it is only the beginning. The foundations have been laid, the ideals have been set before him, the vision has been delineated before his mind. Now comes the real task: to erect upon this foundation a super-structure worthy of the ideals and vision set before him. Now comes the long arduous task of building the character, of living that life whose strength and nobility, whose goodness and beauty shall bring joy to all. As this project becomes clearer, the old dedication is outgrown, there is need for rededication to a larger and more worthy purpose. The man began with the desire to become a mason, to this he dedicated himself. He attended Lodge regularly; received and mastered the instruction given him by a brother; observed the rules and regulations required by the fraternity. Now the time has come for rededication. He realizes that becoming a mason is only the first step, only the beginning of the task before him. He now must dedicate himself afresh to the enlarged goals and visions extending before him. As in the former case he will need the presence and help of his brethren to guide

him, to assist him by instruction, by example and by association with him in his new adventures. As in the first case he will need to discover, study and practice the great truths and wisdom available within the Craft. But above all, there is the supreme task of exemplifying those truths, of living out what he has learned, of practicing in all areas of his life the excellent moral principles made known to him.

Of course, this was the real purpose of our previous dedication. But at the beginning we were too busy with the matters of immediate concern: - getting up our work; performing those duties which were referred to us from meeting to meeting. With the passing of time, the full picture of our purpose becomes more clear.

We are confronted with a task that will continue to life's end; we have a character to build, a life to live, a service to perform. Our adventure and our task will end only when the hand of death beckons us to the Grand Lodge above. As this vision of our goal becomes more clear we need to dedicate ourselves anew to the larger purpose.

Oliver Wendell Holmes expresses the challenge of this call to larger purposes in these words:

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

As we approach our Lodge we need to rededicate ourselves to its work and to its welfare; and as we leave our Lodge we need to rededicate ourselves to practice in life temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice, to the practice of brotherly love and of charity to all.

Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg address in part said: "It is for us . . . to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced . . . It is for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us: . . . that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

So it is for us to carry forward with courage and devotion the great purpose to which all good men of the past have devoted themselves, and to make our finest contribution to the generations of the future.

Dedication is an essential part of every man's life and rededication is the logical carrying forward of that essential part.

"From compromise and things half-done,
Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride.
And when, at last the fight is won,
God, keep me still unsatisfied." (Louis Untermeyer)

REDEDICATION IN MASONRY

Presented by
R.W. Bro. P. J. Kendal, S.G.W.

In following R.W. Bro. Thompson's excellent introduction of our Area Meeting topic, "Masonic Rededication", in which you will note that he has confined his remarks to the philosophical aspects of the subject; I will endeavour in following our learned brother to point my remarks towards the practical aspects of this discussion.

Thinking minds and understanding hearts are prerequisite to living a life of dedication to purpose, with a will to serve.

Lives without purpose and without usefulness will lose, or never gain, the sense of respect which gives life color and purpose.

Appalling as it is some men seem quite content with mediocrity. They expect life to yield them little satisfaction, and indeed their expectation is fulfilled.

One of the great difficulties with which we are confronted today as we consider "Rededication", is the apathy shown by most of us. Apathy of course means indifference and is a sort of device which compels us simply not to pay attention, a care less attitude, nor do anything but just drift.

Not so the people who have evil causes to promote, they are not afflicted with apathy. They never cease promoting whatever it is they have to promote.

There is an old story but it illustrates this difficulty. Away back before the dawn of history, man lived with other animals. They greatly deplored the fact that man never lived more than forty years. They held a meeting one day to see what they could do. The horse said he would give man ten years of his life and the dog and monkey said they would each give ten years of their lives. So the result is now that from forty to fifty, man works like a horse, from fifty to sixty he leads a dog's life, and from sixty to seventy he just monkeys along. I am inclined to think that a good many of us who should know better just monkey along at all ages.

As 1968 unfolds itself, might not this be a good time and place for each and everyone of us to examine and weigh ourselves in the balances of Freemasonry, its tenets, its lights and standards and as we find ourselves wanting, to use this occasion to rededicate, to reconsecrate, to resurvey our Ancient Landmarks, and to reclaim our own lives for God, for Country, for neighbor and the tenets of Freemasonry, and that our light may so shine that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

While not a pessimist at heart, there are certain things taking place in the world today which I think we should take cognizance of in the hope that something can and will be done to remedy the situation. There are evil forces at work within this Country which are inimical to the Church, to the Institution of Freemasonry and to our way of life, which you and I have learned to love so well. Love of self and love of power and authority have enslaved the hearts of many of our people.

Our moral standards have been lowered and no nation makes progress when God's laws are violated. Selfishness, arrogance, greed, intolerance of the rights of others, self interest and unwillingness should all be subordinated for the common good. There should be no desire for personal aggrandizement and lust for power and authority should be unknown to us.

Human institutions are mortal. They can easily decay and sink into oblivion, if the principles upon, which they are established fail to be exemplified in the daily acts of those who advocate the doctrines and teachings of those institutions. Masonry is such an institution. Our Craft aims to produce the highest moral results. May our high purposes be realized, may peace ever abide within us, may we cherish and respect the blessedness of our brotherhood, the value of every virtue and the glory of universal charity.

May I remind you, my Brothers, that so long as Masons reflect in their lives the spiritual and moral teachings of Masonry, the institution will stand. The destiny of Masonry is not in hands outside of Masonry. The destiny of Masonry is in the hearts of the Masons.

I like to think of Masons as dedicated men who are more than ordinary citizens. They are men who are workers and willing to overlook the shortcomings of their fellow Masons; men who are not selfish, not jealous, not wanting what belongs to someone else; men who give what they can for the Craft and are certain that their actions will not cause others

disappointment or worry. Masons are men who have God before them at all times and who do not let their prejudices and intemperances govern their actions.

I still believe today, and if our people, all people, do not awake and rededicate themselves to God, our Homes, our Churches, our fellowmen and to the high ideals of our Fathers and Mothers, and the great teachings of Freemasonry, that Freemasonry, free Religion and the Freedom of Man itself will not be around very long. It is time, and it is way past time that we as Masons take a stand, and stand for the same high ideals and same principles that our Forebearers stood for in the land of our inheritance.

Albert Pike, an eminent Masonic writer makes these profound observations on the influence radiating beyond the limited sphere of this life. The true Mason labors for the benefit of others and for the advancement and improvement of his race. Most men desire to leave some work behind them that may outlast their own day and brief generation. The rudest unlettered husbandman, conscious of his inferiority, the widowed mother, giving her life blood to those who pay only for the work of her work worn hands, will toil and stint themselves to educate their children that they may take a higher station in the world-such are the world's greatest benefactors. In his influences that survive him, man becomes immortal. The thoughts and actions of the past control the destiny of the living.

And what of the influence of Freemasonry in the world today? Freemasonry is dedicated to the Higher Way of Life and, as Freemasons, our great aim is to establish a world order in which all mankind shall be free. As Freemasons, one of our great missions is to be happy ourselves and to convey this happiness to others. This can best be accomplished by doing good to others and dedicating our lives as an influence for good.

If you want to know how to rededicate yourselves, my brethren, I can tell you how. Get down on your knees at your home, church, lodge, business or any other place, and promise God that you will live up to the teachings of our fathers and mothers, our churches and of Freemasonry. Then go out and live those principles each day.

In the third chapter and the first five verses of the book of Joshua, you will find that after the death of Moses, Joshua was named his successor to lead the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt and house of bondage. They were camped on the banks of the River Jordan, and after the third day

Joshua sent messengers through the camp telling the people to take down their tents, and come to his headquarters, and when they had assembled there, he told them many things, he told them about the great hardships and troubles that lay ahead for them. He told them how they were to form the procession, and who was to carry the Ark of the Covenant; he told them exactly what they were to do. And after he had told them all these things, he said to them the most important words known to him at that time. He said to them "Sanctify yourselves because ye have not passed this way before."

So, today like Joshua of old, when our world is on fire with hatred among men, and among Nations, there are wars and rumors of wars, no man knows what to-morrow will bring among our people; I repeat to you "Rededicate" yourselves to the great teachings of Freemasonry and to the high ideals of our Fathers (because ye have not passed this way before).

Let us my brethren rededicate ourselves and live the lessons taught in this poem;

I had walked life's way with an easy tread
I had followed where comforts and pleasures led
Until one day in a quiet place
I met the Master face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for my goal,
Much thought for my body but none for my soul,
I had entered to win life's big race,
When I met the Master face to face.

I met Him and knew Him and blushed to see
That His eyes full of sorrow were fixed on me.
I faltered and fell at His feet that day,
While my castles melted and vanished away.

Now my thoughts are for the souls of men,
I have lost my life to find it again,
Ever since one day in a quiet place,
I met the Master face to face.

Go and do likewise my brethren. Meet the Master of Heaven and earth face to face.

Let us "Awake - Rededicate".

Finally in closing my brethren, as Masons we want our lives to be full of meaning with a sense of values. We want our sights to be raised to dedication of ourselves to the highest goals, realizing the best that is in us.

To him who wears the lambskin or white leather apron, consecration and dedication is not a sacrifice. We all know there is joy and pleasure and happiness in every effort we give to meaningful purpose or goal.

Let us here rekindle within ourselves that Spark, which, with the help of God, we will take back with us into our Lodges and ignite into the lives of

our Brother Master Masons a genuine burning desire to develop thinking minds, understanding hearts and dedication to purpose.

This is Masonry's purpose today.

LIGHT IN MASONRY

Address of
M.W. Bro. Bernie Brown Grand Master

We have just listened to the excellent papers of two Senior Officers of Grand Lodge, on the subject of rededication. The most outstanding statement made, was the apathy in the World today. Recently I had the privilege of hearing a Past Grand Master of Texas and a retired Baptist Minister speaking on this same subject. While listening to him, I had many thoughts of my own pass thru' my head. Again tonight I have been stirred by the papers given.

I realize that I have a captive audience and maybe I am not speaking to the ones that I should be talking to. But the only way that they can be reached is thru' you, my Brethren. So I ask you to listen well and take my message back to the missing and the needy. Yes there is apathy in the world today. There is apathy in Governments, in Churches, in Service Clubs, in business and in Masonry. We no longer live in a world of Right and Wrong. There is no longer a White and a Black. Everything is in the Grey. We are living in a Grey World of indecision and apathy. There is no longer a Right, we find excuses and even make our own to stretch the Right to fit into our way of living. Historians, looking back on this day and age will in all likelihood classify it as the years when man wilfully rejected the standards of conduct laid down for us in the Word of God, in favor of indecision and expediency, for standards created in his own arrogant brain. They may designate it as an age of immorality or dual morality to fit our needs. Yes we no longer obey the laws laid down in the Volume of the Sacred Law. There is no Wrong, we find excuses for this wrong and that wrong committed by Man. Extenuating circumstances we call it.

I wonder how many of us obey all the traffic laws the leaders of men, obey all the laws laid down by man, and what about the greater laws laid down by the Almighty. I wonder how many of us here tonight would go to the aid of our fellowman or woman, being attacked by thugs? Would we go to the assistance of a Policeman, whom we ask to protect our lives and property, if he was being attacked? Yes murders have been committed, right under the noses of people who could have prevented them if they so desired, but nothing was done. Would we do our part? We are so obligated. I wonder, would we offer ourselves as witnesses to a crime or even to a bad accident? The truth is we do not want to become involved. But we are involved not only by common decency but by our obligations.

I wonder how many of us, who are supposed to be and never speed? I am sure none of us would steal, but how many of us would try to get away with

something on our Income Tax? This is stealing from the Government and from our fellowman. Yes we are living in a Grey World that has no Right and no Wrong. Where man makes the rules to fit his own actions.

We must realize these odorous facts and we must do our part to correct them. We are Masons and as Masons we have our responsibilities to our fellowman, to our Governments, to our Churches, to our Families and to ourselves. We cannot, we must not overlook these responsibilities and our obligations toward all. We can be a powerful force in the World for good, but we must first of all recognize our own failures and correct them. Then we must show, by actions, the rest of the World what we as Masons think.

This leads me to my theme for this evening entitled "Light in Masonry".

The glory of Masonry consists in the character of the men who in times past and in the present generation have constituted its membership. That it has drawn to its standards the greatest figures in our country's history and that it still persistently appeals to the strongest and noblest of our men; is an evidence of its inherent worth, for it is the highest tribute that can be paid to any organized body.

Our lineage is one of which Masons may be justly proud. It is generally conceded that to develop character in men, is Masonry's object. It should be a function of Masonry to encourage a development of the mind and an accumulation of intellectual wealth; so that the individual may free himself from superstitious fear and take advantage of the forces of nature and the rules of mental healthfulness.

It is in the control of the mind and in the ordering of the emotions that man reaches the highest point as a civilized being. How to live the ideal life is a problem each of us must solve for himself. We should live so as to be worthwhile in our thinking, which is the most effective preparation for being worthwhile in the opinion of others. We cannot realize the possible value to our personality development unless we are willing to give time and attention to consideration of Masonic instruction.

No definite exposition of Masonic truth can be made effective without our mental co-operation. Attending lodge meetings on special occasions is not enough. We must discover it for ourselves and interpret it our own way. Each candidate listens to good words of the ritual; so the task remains for us to make these words properly effective.

We were told to be just, to be faithful and to be true. We were instructed to convince the world by our actions, that on becoming a Master Mason we had become better men. We were entreated to retain a goodness of heart, a purity of intention and a love of virtue. To be happy and to endeavor to communicate that happiness to others.

We have all seriously declared upon our honour that we were prompted to solicit the privileges of Masonry by a favourable opinion conceived of the institution, a desire for knowledge and a sincere wish to be serviceable to our fellow creatures. In its highest sense doing one's duty means; living in harmony with people; by being honest; showing your love and abiding by the principles of justice. Man did not make these principles; they came from Deity. That is why in the very first degree we were given the three great duties to perform. The three are inter-related; they cannot be separated, either we do them all; or we fail in all.

No man can go around using God's name profanely, and at the same time act upon the square with his neighbour. He cannot be dishonest with his fellow-man and be faithful to his Creator; and by the same token, he cannot do evil things to others for his own personal gain and expect his attendance at church to serve as God's means of forgiveness. He cannot defile himself and at the same time perform the other two duties.

There is no doubt, the most difficult of these duties is probably the one dealing with ourselves. This one means conquering the evil we were born with and have acquired. This we have to do alone. Nobody else can know exactly the thoughts that go through our minds during our daily life; no one else can measure the desires and impulses that we have. It takes great courage to be face to face with one's self and arrive at an honest opinion of what we really are. No definite explanation of Masonic truths can be made effective without our mental cooperation. We must discover it for ourselves and interpret it in our own way. Since everyone is an individual, each must generate his own spiritual balance.

Masonry presents symbols for consideration, and there too, each individual must interpret the meaning of the symbols in the light of his own understanding.

Masonry is not peculiar because it uses symbols, emblems, allegories and rites; for they are as universal as language. Masonry did not invent its own symbols; they were here before; operative Masons adopted such symbols as were required and employed them for its own purposes. So we today, retain the old symbols, giving them a Masonic meaning which is to be interpreted in the terms of their purpose for modern Masonry.

Too often we find modern Masonry soars too high into unknown space, emphasizing little known and questionable facts; whereas the ordinary Mason is anxious to find out more practical information about some of the ceremonies, history and working of the craft into which he is coming as an active member.

I am also of the opinion that too often the emphasis is put on the wrong phases of Masonry, and the everyday work, the charities and lodge activities which ought to be understood in their fullest degree, are neglected. What we need most, as Masons today is a better and clearer understanding, not only of the structure of Masonry, its history and traditions, but a greater devotion on the part of each of us to maintaining and conserving those traditions, lest they be lost to us by neglect and misuse.

We must always bear in mind the lessons of life which the ritual of Freemasonry aims to impress; the common lessons which so many pass by without realizing; the helplessness of birth; the fellowship of mankind; dependence through life on a higher power; the value of cloud and sunshine in ripening character; the sureness of death; and the certainty of a resurrection to eternal life. All these are taught in dramatic picturing on the Masonic stage and when we concentrate upon these lessons we receive the light which underlies the ritualistic ceremonies. Reflection on them, quickens our thinking and sharpens our understanding of the great mission and object to which Masonry has set its hand.

So let us all endeavor to improve ourselves in the matters of the craft. I do not mean to discourage a thorough knowledge of our beautiful ritual, but I would most seriously and earnestly recommend that our studies be not confined there alone. They must be extended beyond the surface of the ritual to those great principles which constitute the foundation of our institution. This will assure him, who so applies himself, that thus being brought from darkness to light he will realize that the true spirit of Masonry lies beyond the forms and ceremonies of initiation.

I believe that the sooner we can inspire the craft as a whole to an intelligent study of these principles; the sooner will Masonry exercise that power for fraternity and morality. Everything in Masonry has a beautiful meaning if rightly understood. The Mason who stops his study of Masonry when he has committed the ritual to memory, never really enters the storehouse of Masonic knowledge.

The power and influence of Masonry is just what Masons choose to make it. It can be a great force in the world for good, uplifting and elevating. Alternatively, it can become merely a body, practising secret signs and symbols, meaningless, unless it leads to the practice of what is preached.

The mere conferring of the degrees upon a man has never made him a Mason. The making of a Mason is no swift or sudden process, for Masonry is not a mantle to be donned or doffed at will. You can no more turn a profane into a Mason by having him take an obligation, than you can turn a pumpkin into a peach by hanging peach leaves on it. The making of a Mason consists in a continued course of education and training, from which evolves character formation.

While in a small and very limited sense, it may be true that it is the obligation itself which makes one a Mason, yet in a truer and better sense, a man who takes the obligation is only being given the opportunity of becoming a Mason, and he cannot truly claim to be a Mason until he lives up to his obligation. We must never feel that we have accomplished anything in our lodges by adding to our roll of members, unless we have created in each of them a desire to be of service.

Numbers alone have never made our fraternity great. That which has marked us for some measure of public approval, is that we have somehow instilled into our membership an evidence of improvement. Our continued success will depend upon the progress we make in stimulating our membership to further improvements, in their daily lives and conduct.

It is tremendously important to the fraternity that we succeed to the point where; "when one is said to be a Mason, all will know that there is a good man." The seed must be planted and tended before the tree can grow.

When someone says to me, that so and so is a Mason, I am more concerned about what kind of a man and citizen he is, than I am about the number of degrees he has received or the office he has filled. It is not enough to be good; a man must also do good. It is not enough to profess high sounding

moral principles; it is also necessary to live up to those principles in daily contact with every person whom one meets day by day.

Something should be done to make the Mason realize that there is something to Masonry, more than the price he pays for his membership. He should be made to realize that the lodge is a group of picked men; that it is not something that everybody cannot have for merely paying the price. He should be made to realize that a Mason is judged by his character, rather than by the cash register.

Our ancient brethren had ideas of the eternal fitness of things, and they practised them. There was with them, a time and a season and a place for all things. Dignity and decorum and decency were no idle words with them, for they were all earnest minded men. So must we be, if we would save and uphold the principles and ideals of Masonry. When all is said and done, the real remedy lies in the deepening of moral earnestness in each individual's soul.

It is not enough that we should learn to subdue our passions, but we must also learn to improve ourselves in Masonry; and we cannot do that until we come to know in our heart of hearts what Masonry means.