



## Grand Chaplain's Message for Easter 2016

VWBro John Rushton, Grand Chaplain, Grand Lodge of Alberta

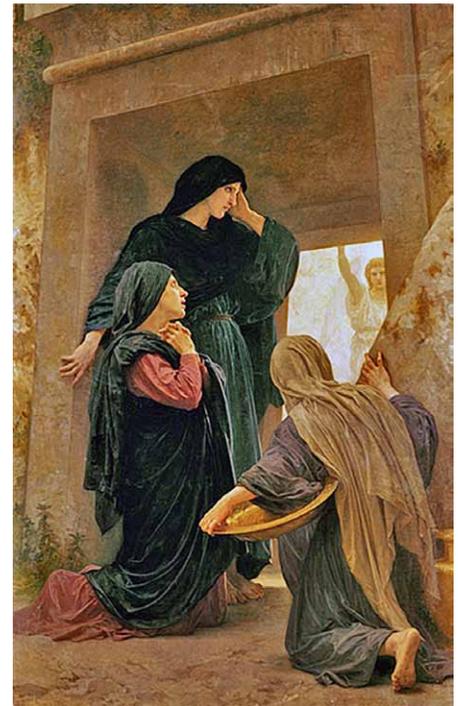
Easter is primarily a Christian celebration involving several events. First is Ash Wednesday — this year February 10<sup>th</sup> — which begins the season of Lent, a forty-day period of preparation. During this time, many Christians will take time to examine or reflect on their lives in terms of their faith and how they practice their belief. It leads into observing the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on Good Friday, followed by His Resurrection on Easter Sunday. After the days of quiet contemplation during Lent and the sadness of Good Friday, Easter is indeed a time of joy and happiness. The Resurrection of Our Lord is the gift of the promise of eternal life for all people who believe in and adopt the Christian faith.

Christian theology includes the doctrine of the Trinity, which is God, His Son Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. It is essentially Three in One, as all three are manifestations of God, our Great Architect of the Universe. As Masons, we are always aware that the Masonic order includes Brothers of all religions and doctrines of different faiths throughout the world. The Christian observance of Easter, in relating to Jesus Christ, who is God, is indeed focusing at the same time on God, The Great Architect of the Universe. This opens up the reality that all our Brothers, all Masons throughout the world, believe, honour, and worship the same Great Architect. Regardless of whichever religion our fellow Brothers embrace, and what they name their special days of celebration and how they observe them, they all include the belief that God created the world and the universe, and gave us the promise of eternal life. This universal belief in all our Brothers is confirmed by the fact that before we could be initiated into the Craft we had to give affirmative answers to questions regarding our belief in a Supreme Being.

For this reason, when we celebrate Easter we are with our Masonic Brothers

throughout the world. The events of Easter, including the promise and revelation of eternal life and similar festivals throughout the world, are of course very positive and joyful. In our hemisphere, Easter comes around the same time as winter is over, and the freshness of spring begins to surround us. It's a time of awakening from short, dark days and seeing and living the joys of life. It leads to revitalizing ourselves to do more both for ourselves and for others, including our Masonic Brothers.

There are many ways we can incorporate the spirit of Easter in our Masonic Brotherhood. Many Lodges have fun events such as crazy tie or casual dress code at meetings, Wild West nights, open-air meetings and so on. We feel less restricted, and probably more aware of the beauty of the universe which our Great Architect created for us. It's also a time we can do more to support our less fortunate Brothers, especially those who are shut-in or who have mobility difficulties. Options may include taking more time to visit our Brothers at their residences, nursing homes or facilities or, if possible, taking them for drives to see places such as where they may have previously lived or enjoyed visiting — something that can allow them to relive precious memories.



*Jesus appears to three women at the tomb on the first day of the week, giving them great joy.*

These are just a few ideas that may help us express the spirit of Easter and the refreshment of Spring.

I wish all my Brothers good health and God's richest Blessing throughout the Easter season.

## Wise and Serious Truths

*Lessons of wisdom abound, but it is up to us to apply them.*

MWBro John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master, Grand Lodge of California, *California Freemason*, August–September, 2015: 19–20.

Much has been written about Masonic wisdom. Take this example from the *California Monitor*:

*Tools and implements of architecture most expressive are selected by the Fraternity to imprint upon the memory wise and serious truths; and thus, through the succession of ages, are transmitted unimpaired the most excellent tenets of our Institution.*

And yet, despite the great amount of research in this area, and the realization of its importance, wisdom is sometimes hard to pass down. Solomon, King of Israel, was reputed to have been one of the wisest rulers in history. His wisdom is legendary, and some of it is enshrined in the book of the Bible attributed to him, "The Proverbs of Solomon." Chapter 7 of that book (Prov. 7:1–4) includes a saying attributed to King Solomon as advice to

his son, Rehoboam:

*My child, keep my words, and store up my commandments with you; Keep my commandments and live, keep my teachings as the apple of your eye;*

*Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart.*

*Say to wisdom, "You are my sister"; and call insight your intimate friend.*

Despite this impassioned plea, upon the death of Solomon, Rehoboam ascended the throne of Israel, and ignored his father's advice. We find this story in the First Book of Kings, Chapter 12. In that story, as the new king, Rehoboam is asked by the people to lighten the burdens that his father had placed on them. Solomon had been a very popular king, and had made Israel into a great nation. There was a cost to this, of course, but the people had been willing to bear it for the sake of Solomon's achievements. They did not believe there were sufficient advantages to continue to do so for his son, and thus they asked Rehoboam if he would lighten their load.

Rehoboam sought the advice of the Elders of Israel, who advised him to rethink the heaviness of the burdens, and to make himself more acceptable to the people. He then also sought the advice of some of the other young people



Rehoboam takes the advice of the young men

with whom he had grown up, and they advised him of the opposite: to keep the heavy burdens on the people. Rehoboam chose to take the latter advice, and told the people — with a great deal of arrogance:

*Now whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.*

(1 Kings 12:11)

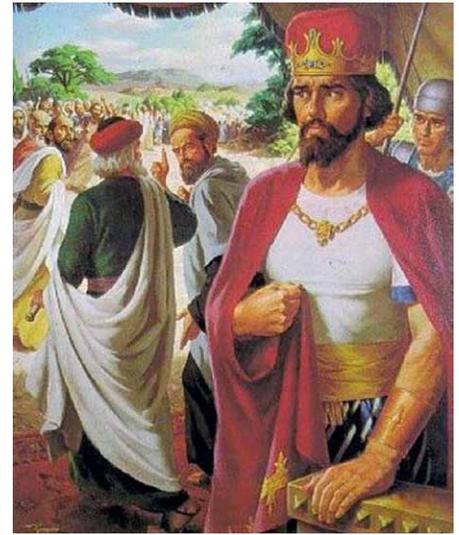
This was a big mistake. The exiled general, Jeroboam, returned from Egypt and initiated a rebellion against Rehoboam. At its conclusion, the ten tribes in the north split off into a separate country, and Rehoboam was left with a tiny portion of his father's former kingdom. The wise King Solomon had been unable to hand down any of his wisdom to his son, and as a result, his powerful and prestigious kingdom — and his legacy — were destroyed.

Wisdom is notoriously difficult to hand on to others. As more than one wag has said; "Experience is what you get just after you need it!"

Most of us say this immediately after we have ignored sound advice from others, or failed to look at the entire picture carefully before proceeding. It is here that the teachings of Freemasonry might be of some help.

In the lecture of the Fellowcraft degree we are told that Freemasonry hands down "wise and serious truths" through the "tools and implements of architecture." One of the most important of these is the trowel, a tool presented to a new Master Mason. He is told that the trowel is:

*...an instrument made use of by operative Masons to spread the cement which unites the building into one common mass; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection; that cement which unites us into one sacred band or society of*



Rehoboam's actions lead to revolt and a splitting of the 12 tribes of Israel.

*friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist, but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree.*

A Master Mason is expected to be a leader. But, his effectiveness, both as a leader and as one who imparts wisdom, is based on his brethren's opinion of him. If he is perceived as selfish, it won't be long before others stop following him. But if his brothers regard him as someone who cares more about them than about himself, he will soon be recognized and trusted by them, and accepted as a leader. For the Master Mason, the trowel is significant as a tool to build his Lodge into "one sacred band... of friends and brothers." This is a skill that can be learned, and the heart of it is that: "noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree."

King Solomon seems to have known about the use of the trowel, or at least his leadership reflected such knowledge. His son, Rehoboam, didn't quite get it, and he lost his father's kingdom. Masons are given the tools to pursue the wisdom handed down to us "through the succession of ages." All we need to do is use them!

Provided to Freemasons of Alberta and the Northwest Territories west of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meridian who are members of

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**THE ALBERTA**  
**FreeMason**

Published each month except July and August by  
**The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M.**

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Annual subscription rate for non-members of the GLA is C\$10.00 plus mailing costs. Republication rights are granted to other Masonic Jurisdictions, but acknowledgement of the source is requested. The Editor reserves the right to accept, reject and re-write material submitted for publication. Deadline for copy is the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month, two months prior to the month of issue.

## Bro George (Mat) Mathews

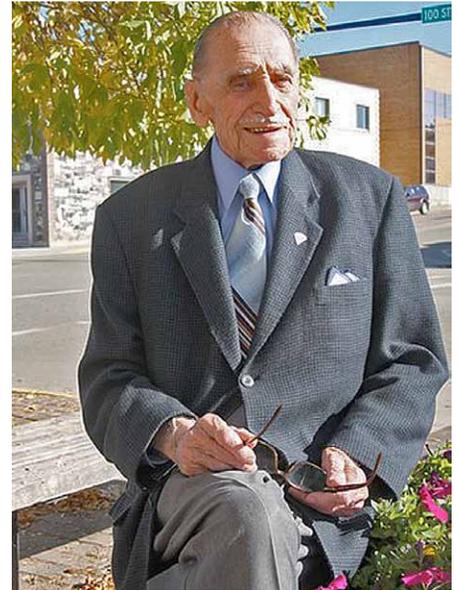
On 3 January 2016, Bro George (Mat) Mathews passed away at the age of 96. He was born 8 February 1919 at Waterhole, Alberta (two miles south of Fairview), where his grandfather, who had migrated from Germany, lived. His father, who had been a stevedore at the London docks, had emigrated from the UK, and in partnership with H. A. George helped to build the Peace Hotel.

Bro Mathews was a member of Norwood Lodge, where he was raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on 15 May 1984. He demitted from that Lodge in 1991 and retired to White Rock, BC, where he joined Joppa Lodge No. 112, GRBC&Y.

In 2012 an agreement was signed

between the Grand Lodge of Alberta, on behalf of the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund (MHEBF), and Brother Mathews. The agreement transferred three properties, two 80-acre parcels in Peace River and a bachelor apartment in White Rock, BC, to the MHEBF. With the sale of the Peace River properties, the funds were invested and have been used to provide Bursaries and financial assistance to students from the Peace River and Grand Prairie area, as approved by the MHEBF Committee. It is also planned that his White Rock apartment will be eventually sold and the funds invested likewise.

*Bro George (Mat) Mathews at 92.*



## 51<sup>st</sup> Masonic Spring Workshop

8, 9 & 10 April 2016, Delta Lodge at Kananaskis

***Freemasonry: A Progressive Science.***

The Principles, the Landmarks of Freemasonry (not the lists which predominate American Freemasonry but those personal matters whose removal would cause our Fraternity not to be Freemasonry) are set in our own minds and, in some ways, in stone and have been for many centuries — debate is open as to how many centuries. Yet, our Fraternity is a progressive science. Based on the Principles and Landmarks, each new discovery of any of the many different aspects of Freemasonry increases our knowledge and we progress along the road to enlightenment.

Our Guest Speaker, Adam Kendall, will start the weekend off with an enthusiastic and knowledgeable journey through the progress of our science in his Theme Address entitled “*The Progressive Science: Tradition vs. Modernity.*”

The Schools of Instruction are divided into four specific streams: The Progressive Science; History and Legend; Philosophy and; Symbolism and Training.

Come and join us for a first class Masonic weekend with harmony and happiness being the key to your enjoyment.

**Adam Kendall**

**Freemason, Masonic Archivist,  
Researcher and Speaker**

Adam G. Kendall is the Collections Manager and Curator of Exhibits for the Henry W. Coil Library and Museum at the Masonic Grand Lodge of California and a Past Master of Phoenix

Lodge No. 144 in San Francisco. A sixth generation Californian, he is an enthusiastic advocate for state and local history, particularly the study of fraternal and benevolent societies. He has presented on the topic of American fraternal organizations’ social impact at several international symposia, most notably the World Conference on Freemasonry & Fraternalism at the Bibliothèque nationale de France; the British Association for American Studies at Exeter University (BAAS); the International Conference on the History of Freemasonry (ICHF) at Edinburgh; the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH); The Quarry Project, University of California Los Angeles; and the Scottish Rite Library & Museum at Lexington, Massachusetts.

In addition to his many public presentations, video scripts and exhibits, he has published several essays and reviews in notable publications such as the *European Journal of*



*Adam Kendall (l) with Mike Bayrak of Ivanhoe Lodge (142) when WBro Kendall spoke in Edmonton, 29 November 2008.*

*American Culture, Western Museums Association, the Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism, the Journal of the Philalethes Society, Heredom, and Ahiman: A Review of Masonic Culture and Tradition.* From 2013–2015, he served as President of the Masonic Library & Museum Association (MLMA). He currently serves as the editor of *The Plumblin*, which is the quarterly bulletin of the Scottish Rite Research Society, and is also a member of their governing board.

## 60 Years Ago, Grand Lodge Bulletin, March 1956 Between the Pillars: Masonic Education

(Originally printed in the *New South Wales Freemason*)

Freemasonry, being a science of progressive enlightenment, must of necessity go hand in hand with education. For the Craft to achieve its ultimate objective, every member must aid to the utmost of his ability in the Masonic education of himself and his Brethren. Every

Mason must possess some knowledge of the traditions of the Craft, its history, its aims, its place in our social scheme and its lessons. One and all must seriously consider the effect of Masonic teaching on himself, his attitude towards God, his relationship with his fellow men.

It is not sufficient to say that Masonry is a great thing and that if practiced in so far as each one is able makes men better in every way. It is of no advantage to say Freemasonry has deep spiritual qualities if it cannot be substantiated by a knowledge of the Craft. Masonic education is a positive and absolute necessity. Very few men perceive of themselves the integral truths of the Craft, and failing this perception their second condition is no better; indeed, it is worse than the first. They are members of the Masonic Institution, they help to swell the number of members, they are among the hundred and fifty thousand, but estimable though their virtues may be, great as their ritualistic ability may be, they are not, and can never hope to be, good Masons, for they have not received their Masonic education.

All Freemasonry is not contained in the Ritual. It extends its influence to every corner of the private and public lives of its adherents, and these must be educated, these must be taught that such is the case. Too many of our Brethren accept the Craft at their own valuation, which is like placing a human valuation on things immortal.

Too many are satisfied to drift along, attending their Lodge, voicing their puny sentiments, not fully or even at times remotely grasping the fundamental principles of the Faith they profess. They are satisfied that Masonic Life is only the visibility of darkness and in that darkness they are content to remain. Few, pitifully few, seek to know

the Truth underlying the allegory and symbolism. Few realize the relationship between Freemasonry and good citizenship. Few understand the assistance the Craft gives to make men better sons and better parents. Fewer still have any but the faintest conception of the great philosophy and glorious promise of the Craft. How many Masons grasp, even after years of connection with and active participation in their Lodge, the lesson of the Third Degree, the uncertainty of the mundane existence and the sure promise of the Resurrection and the Immortality of the Soul! How many know anything of the traditions of the Craft, or its history, or even the history of their own Lodge? It is not altogether their fault, for they have not received the benefit of Masonic education. The destiny of Masonry is not the negative singing of Omar. No Mason should come out by the same door wherein he went. If he does, and all too many do, the fault lies in the lack of instruction.

Yet it remains a fact that those who seek enlightenment have a hard and difficult task. Their elders and superiors in rank have had no education themselves, and are, therefore, rarely qualified to teach. Some there are who earnestly seek, but not knowing where to look, give up the search as hopeless. Some few reach their goal and endeavour to transmit their knowledge to others, but owing to lack of organization or encouragement, theirs is, indeed, as a voice crying in the wilderness.

We teach in our ceremonies the neces-

sity of acquiring Masonic knowledge and fail to give any instruction. We stir up a desire without making any attempt to fulfill. We exact an obligation from every candidate to make some daily progress in the Art, but we have no organized system of Masonic education. Each and every one is, once he is a Master Mason, permitted to admonish his Brethren and correct his fellows, but except for what he may have achieved by his own efforts, he has no information, correct or otherwise, on Masonic matters. The position seems almost Gilbertian, and if it were not so serious might even be humorous.

Master Masons are being turned out in hundreds, but how few Masters of Craft. Once a Brother has received his Third Degree he is allowed to shift for himself, the interest of his sponsors and of the Lodge Officers is at an end. For exactly the same reason the newly-made Master will neglect his candidates in the future, for having received no education he is not competent to instruct.

In the light of the fact that education is compulsory in the State it should prove a good thing if Masonic education was made compulsory in our Lodges. In the latter condition, Masonic knowledge would flourish and the Brethren and the world be the better thereby.

Masonry is truly enlightenment and knowledge and education are its handmaids. We are bound as Masons to educate ourselves and to provide means for the better understanding of our Brethren.

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## ***Excerpt from Grand Oration, 2015 Annual Communication***

### **The Pursuit of Excellence**

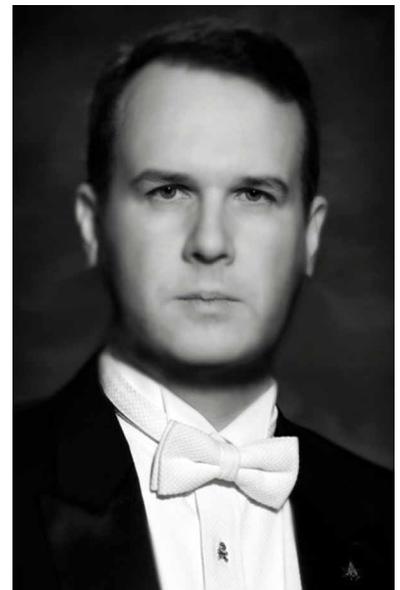
WBro Andrew Hammer (r), Grand Orator, Grand Lodge of North Carolina. (Secomd of three parts.)

*In part one of his oration, Bro Hammer discussed our personal journey — what it was that we, as Masons, have come here to do. In part two, he expands on our pursuit of excellence.*

Masonry calls us to *excellence*, or what one might specifically refer to as the perfection of the stones with which we work. Excellence is a word so commonly used today to describe the degree of quality of a thing, that one fears we might forget that it is a noun derived from a verb. To excel means to surpass someone or something, to be better than we have been, in a particular quality or action. The etymology of the word from its Latin origin reveals an engaging meaning for Masons, to *rise out from*, or *rise up*.

Clearly we are not just talking about simple goodness, but rather an attempt to surpass, or rise out from ourselves as we were, to make ourselves something more than we have been in every respect. It cannot be just getting out of it what we put in, or we will have ended up with nothing more than what we started out with. That means that we will have never moved

beyond the question of what we came to the Craft to do. Sadly, many Masons seek to get out of the Craft only what they wish to put in, and despite physically moving through the degrees, they have never truly advanced beyond the door of the Lodge to understand the business in which they are meant to be engaged.



The pursuit of excellence in every aspect of your life is what it means to observe the Craft. That means seeking more out of yourself, and consequently seeking more out of the Craft than you might have originally done. It means a continual effort at self-development and lifelong learning, at least one part of which is manifested in physical representations of things which are themselves considered to be exceptional.

Here we are not talking about matters of elitism in socio-economic class or possessions; we know well that Masonry regards no man for his worldly wealth or honours. We are talking about very old, primal elements of human interaction which accompany the spiritual process of self-development; dress, behaviour or mannerisms (which we might call ritual), and even sharing food.

Each of these, since time immemorial, have been methods of establishing inner and outer psychological and sociological identity. Among Masons, these elements are part of the edification in which we are involved; they are living tools, every bit as much as our symbolic working tools, to perfect our living stones.

So in the same way as the Buddhist monk may be known by his saffron robe, his mantra rituals, and his vegetarian diet, the Freemason is ideally known by his ultimate standards in Western dress, his precision in his ritual, and the traditional celebratory feast of Western culture. To excel in these pursuits is an important part of how we observe the Craft.

But how do we relate this demand for excellence, for that man who will agree to surpass himself, to the composition and identity of the Craft? We start by understanding that Freemasonry, unlike other social endeavours, is not for everyone, and should never be offered as such.

Masonry is and was always intended to be an initiatic organization that an individual must *seek* to join. He does so not out of necessity or hope of material benefits, but out of an inner calling to greater wisdom, i.e. intellectual and spiritual light. Then after he makes that choice, he must in turn be chosen by others who agree to admit him into their assemblies. In such an environment, the nature of the individual far outweighs the number of men knocking at our doors, quality of character far outweighs

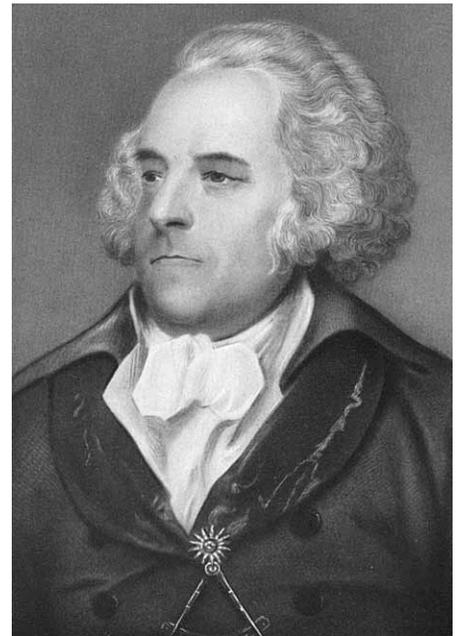
quantity of candidates, and less is more. While the idea that fewer men should become Masons might be utterly baffling to some Brothers, the idea is not so difficult to understand.

If a craftsman carefully selects ten exceptional men to whom he can teach the whole of his craft, each of those ten men can then teach ten others. By working with fewer but dedicated men, the craftsman gains more; he gains the survival of his craft. If however, he tries to shout his knowledge out to a crowd of one thousand men who simply want to have what he has, the fullness of his knowledge will never be transferred, both because it is impossible to do so, and because the crowd is indiscriminate.

Yet in some corners of the Craft it is thought that more men need to be convinced to become Masons in order to save dying Lodges, or simply because some Brothers are looking at the Craft in the same way that they might look at any other commercial enterprise. They relate numerical decline—for whatever reason, even if it be the natural result of a decline in population growth—to failure, and then become panicked when the decline is not arrested. In that panic, these Brethren are willing to reverse the direction of centuries of initiatory theory and praxis, sacrificing it all in the attempt to seek out new members, rather than having men seek us as they have always done.

The fundamental problem with such a viewpoint is that Freemasonry is not just another commodity to be bought and sold. To be fair, the selling of degrees to all comers was a practice that affected the Craft from the very beginning of speculative Masonry. At the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so-called ‘Masons’ could be made instantly, in dockyard pubs, merely by paying a nominal fee.

But what is significant to point out about that fact, is that it was perceived to be such an unacceptable situation that it was one of the motivations for the creation of the Grand Lodge in 1717. In that moment, which was the first codification of Freemasonry as we know it today, reputable Brothers saw the indiscriminate mongering of Masonic initiations as a problem, and took steps to correct it. Imagine what those Brethren might think of the billboards and television advertisements found in some places today, which openly solicit men to become Masons, to do what they have not yet arrived to do of their own



William Preston, 1742–1818. Much of modern ritual is based upon his writings

free will and accord.

Are such efforts any different than the efforts of those who attempted to sell Masonry so long ago? What should the response of the observant Mason be to such forms of recruitment?

William Preston's response in 1772 was stern and uncompromising, and could just as well have been written today:

*It is an obvious truth that the privileges of Masonry have long been prostituted for unworthy considerations, and hence their good effects have been less conspicuous. Many have enrolled their names in our records for the mere purposes of conviviality, without inquiring into the nature of the particular engagements to which they are subjected by becoming Masons. Several have been prompted by motives of interest, and many introduced to gratify an idle curiosity, or to please as jolly companions. A general odium, or at least a careless indifference, must be the result of such conduct. But the evil stops not here. Persons of this description, ignorant of the true nature of the institution, probably without any real defect in their own morals, are induced to recommend others of the same cast to join the society for the same purpose. Hence the true knowledge of the art decreases with the increase of its members [emphasis added], and the most valuable part of the institution is turned into ridicule...*

Our response, therefore, must be that not only should not every man be a Mason, but not even every *good* man should be a Mason, any more than he should be an airline pilot, doctor or mechanic.

Only the man who knocks in earnest, in full knowledge of both the risk that he may be rejected, and yet proceeds anyway because the search for light is that important to him — only such a man is one who should become a Mason. Why? Because such a man will understand that as with all things worth doing or having, the ‘true knowledge of the art’ takes time, and cannot be achieved in a day. It requires a sincere pledge of time and effort.

Men who should be Masons will make time for the Craft. If we truly are an organization that claims to want only the best of men, then all men who seek our company must rise to meet the Craft, and make time for our methods as well as the commitment asked of men by the Craft.

A man who ‘hasn’t time’ to make that commitment is a man who, no matter how fine he may otherwise be, is not ready to become a Mason, nor should we want him to. The Craft must not change its principles, methods or techniques to descend to take all men at all costs, especially those who have told us that they do not have the time for it.

Consider a man who asks you if there is a quicker way to do a job, not because he is looking for a better way to do it, or one which would provide savings to you, but simply because he hasn’t time to do it the usual way, the way a true craftsman would work. Would you hire such a man who says he hasn’t time to do the job right? Nor then should any such men be brought into the Craft, and especially not for fear of declining numbers or any other such sense of desperation. An undignified and undemanding approach to membership results in an undignified and undemanding organization.

And the demands made by the Craft can be easily studied and determined

when we look at the question of intent. The intent of those men who founded Freemasonry was not to have a jovial supper club. It was to contemplate and discuss the meanings of things philosophical as well as empirical, and to establish a space where that might be done in freedom and tolerance. So in this sense, what one claims here is that there was a clear intent on the part of those men who shaped the Craft to make it a thing of earnestness, piety and decorum. Therefore, to improve ourselves in Masonry is to do these things in both a respectful and respectable manner.

Freemasonry does not offer itself up to those who are outside of the doors of the Lodge, or even to those who may simply be curious about its contents. The very essence of membership in the Craft is not about bringing people in, for whatever reason; that is the function of those religions which proselytize, and of political parties seeking voters. Again, the essence of membership in the Craft is that it must be *sought*.

