

Brethren,

In my first presentation we began the discussion of the WHY for our Brethren to have as their “elevator speech” if someone asks them about the Craft, for our new Candidates to better appreciate and fully embrace the Craft as members. We examined how society is still catching up to our ideals of LIBERTY, EQUALITY and FRATERNITY. How we must be on guard for charlatans who attempt to make a mockery of our good intents, and who like the COWANS of old seek to profit at others expense and leave carnage in their wake through their self-serving incompetence.

How Masons though the benefits of what we now call networking, gained and promoted the benefits of education, governance and justice. Groups of like-minded men, of varying classes, politics and religious beliefs hoping for a better tomorrow met in secret, found common ground and a mutual respect for one another. Justice and opportunity were born. Most recently we discussed Temperance. Temperance is individual restraint by practicing humility and modesty instead of arrogance, from extravagant show of luxury, and restraint from rage (through calmness and self-control). Put another way it is the essence of being judicial, concerned with the facts, and overlooking the external advantages of class or religion, rank or fortune. Our judicial system is founded on the presumption of innocence in criminal matters, meaning everyone is innocent until proven guilty. Canada’s legal system is based on a heritage that includes the rule of law, freedom under the law, democratic principles and due process. Due process is the principle that the government must respect all of legal rights a person is entitled to under the law. There can be no justice until there is recognition of the dignity of a person, and the right to their property against unlawful seizure. In 1215, the Magna Carta brought the protection of church rights, protection for the barons from illegal imprisonment, access to swift justice, and limitations on taxation..

The King James Version (KJV), also known as the King James Bible (KJB), is an English translation of the Christian Bible for the Church of England, commissioned in 1604 and completed as well as published seven years later in 1611 under the sponsorship of James VI which brought a different layer of freedoms. In short “illumination”, and a direct connection between common individuals and divine precepts of their Creator, without the need of a privileged class to translate its contents. Noting this span of time, few received literary education save nobility and the clergy, so learning and recognition became physical, hence our dramas and modes of recognition both of which were closely guarded. The Masons of that era though the benefits of what we now call networking, gained the benefits of education and governance in secret in their lodges. These are the underpinnings of Liberty. Freedom is the state of being free from any oppression, while liberty is the freedom to act in one's own way.

Liberty is a significant concept because people enjoying liberty have to take responsibility for their actions performed. Freedom, on the other hand, is a concrete concept. Freedom is synonymous with independence. These conditions may include the presence of a democratic constitution and a series of safeguards against a government wielding power arbitrarily, including popular control and the separation of powers. Liberty was the watchword of the Atlantic revolutionaries who, at the end of the 18th century, toppled autocratic kings, arrogant elites and (in Haiti) slaveholders, thus putting an end to the Old Regime. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Black civil rights activists and feminists fought for the expansion of democracy in the name of freedom, while populists and progressives struggled to put an end to the economic domination of workers. true freedom is not about collective control over government; it consists in the private enjoyment of one’s life and goods. From this perspective, preserving freedom has little to do with making government accountable to the people. Democratically

elected majorities, conservatives point out, pose just as much, or even more of a threat to personal security and individual right—especially the right to property—as rapacious kings or greedy elites. This means that freedom can best be preserved by institutions that curb the power of those majorities, or simply by shrinking the sphere of government as much as possible. Early colonists already were free, even though they lacked control over the way in which they were governed. The abolition of slavery, rapid industrialization and mass migration from Europe expanded the agricultural and industrial working classes exponentially, as well as giving them greater political agency.

William Graham Sumner, an influential Yale professor, likewise spoke for many when he warned of the advent of a new, democratic kind of despotism—a danger that could best be avoided by restricting the sphere of government as much as possible. “Laissez faire,” or, in blunt English, “mind your own business,” Sumner concluded, was “the doctrine of liberty.”

The enjoyment of financial and personal privacy is fundamental to a free and civil society. True liberty is to be able to walk down the street, cash a check, buy goods, talk on the telephone, or take a trip without being hassled, hounded, followed, or interrogated by government bureaucrats. People should be able to get away from the madding crowds without being followed or asked stupid questions. Despite the recent intrusions into individual personal affairs in recent years, you can still maintain a certain degree of privacy. You can take a car, bus, or train, and go to most destinations without being noticed or tracked. In small transactions, you can still pay with cash instead of using credit cards or checks. But as private citizens we must remain vigilant for these social treasures that those before us earned for future generations. As Ronald Reagan famously stated “Perhaps you and I have lived too long with this miracle to properly be appreciative. Freedom is a fragile thing and it's never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by way of inheritance; it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, for it comes only once to a people. And those in world history who have known freedom and then lost it have never known it again.” We need only to turn on the news on any station to know that he was right.