

## Tendency to modernize Freemasonry

A very instructive and entertaining report on Correspondence is appended to the Proceedings as usual. Long-established custom divides the work of review among the five members of the Committee. Canada falling to the care of Past Grand High Priest William B. Meredith, whose introduction is of more than passing interest:

"In this Jurisdiction we cling tenaciously to the 'Ancient usages, customs, and landmarks of Freemasonry,' regarding them as unalterable; we hold that modern ideas have nothing whatever to do with them; that in their construction and interpretation we must look to the past."

"In reading the reports of sister Jurisdictions we regret to find a tendency to modernize Freemasonry. Against this we must enter a solemn protest. Our proud boast has been the Antiquity of our Fraternity, and our sincere desire to adhere to and uphold those ancient teachings and traditions. Pennsylvania's views on this subject are best expressed by the declarations of one of our distinguished Freemasons. 'We have adhered to the past with a fidelity that is remarkable in any organization whose principles are handed down by tradition. Whatever is new in Freemasonry is an innovation.' Would it not be well for all Jurisdictions to adhere to this declaration?"

It would, most noble Festus, but they won't and they don't. What is more, they pride themselves on their feats of legislation and "progression," and glory in their up-to-date achievements. Oh we, even in this enlightened section of a great continent, are not immune. The microbe found a cosy nesting place even when the fathers of Canada's Grand Chapter were pleading for a return to ancient usage from the modernisms imposed upon us by circumstances. Environment had done its deadly work and it was found pleasanter to follow the beaten path than to break away from a habit which even Pennsylvania is not altogether freed from despite a belief in its pure conservatism. A ceremony conceived and wholly fabricated in "New" England and interjected there into the Royal Arch system can hardly be held to belong to the "Antiquity of our Fraternity," nor handed down to us by tradition.

### **Sources:**

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1912 report on Foreign Correspondence - Pennsylvania