

The Freethinking Freemason

by Tim Bryce

- Reviewed by Northeasterly



Tim Bryce refers to himself as “a footsoldier for Freemasonry”. After reading and re-reading his book, I think that he must be a footsoldier with a Field Marshal's baton in his knapsack.

This is a most enjoyable, thought-provoking and, at times, argument-provoking book; but it is never boring. It is a collection of Tim Bryce's articles written for various magazines and internet websites; about 70 give or take. These articles are grouped together under the following headings: Lodge Administration, Management Issues, Masonic Commentaries, Membership, Grand Lodges, Masonic Stories, and Masonic Quotations & Poetry. In the introduction, the late W Bro Theron Dunn tells of the trouble the author has had with his local Masonic authorities for some of his controversial views. Do not be put off by this – W Bro Tim Bryce is certainly controversial at times, but always interesting and he makes you think about your Freemasonry and what you can do to serve the Craft better.

Each of his articles takes not much more than 15 minutes or so to read; but he writes so well that you will be thinking

about what he has said for some time. Sometimes you will agree with what W Bro Bryce has written; sometimes you will think, why that's so obvious why didn't I think of it; sometimes you will disagree with what he has written. I don't think that W Bro Bryce is looking for agreement from you – what he wants from you is to think about the issues he has raised. At the end of each article, he writes two post scripts: “Keep the faith” and “THINK”.

One paragraph early on in the book made me realise that W Bro Bryce does have something relevant to say: this was some advice he offers to brethren looking to move to the Chair of King Solomon at some time in the future: “Whatever you are going to memorise, do it now.” He goes on to say, “when you become Worshipful Master, your plate will be full and you will have little time to spare.” Here is W Bro Bryce's view on the Festive Board: “When we eat with our brothers (*sic*), we digest more than the meal.”

He also writes about fighting lodge apathy, about fundraising, about alcohol at the festive board, about falling membership and many other topics, including a very controversial issue for American Freemasonry – the recognition of Prince Hall Freemasonry.

Clearly, Tim Bryce loves Freemasonry; he doesn't always agree with the powers that be, but there is no doubting his love for the Craft. Freemasonry would be much poorer without him.

I've only had my copy of this book for a few weeks. It is already becoming well-thumbed and is more on my desk than in the bookshelf; several articles I have read more than once. I understand the GL Library will be getting a copy, but in the meantime, it is available from www.amazon.com and www.cornerstonepublishers.com for US\$24.95 + p&h.

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