

Oration delivered by V/W/Bro. Keith Dinning, Provincial Grand Chaplain, at Jarrow Lodge of MMM No. 701 on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

R/W/Bro. S. Davison, Assistant Grand Master, Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master Prof. D. K. Wilson, Worshipful Master, Brethren All. Tonight is a very special occasion for you and the Brethren of this, the Jarrow Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 701, as you celebrate your Centenary, may I, on behalf of the Right Worshipful Assistant Grand Master, the members of the Deputation, your visitors and distinguished guests, offer you our warmest congratulations.

For many present tonight, it will be a first, that is to celebrate a centenary, and as always I feel confident to say, no one here will have been in attendance, at your consecration, in January 1920.

Brethren, for each of us here there is an obligation to be concerned, not only for the present, but acknowledging all we have inherited from the past. Both factors will help you and I to build the foundations for the future. We give thanks for 100 years of unstinting and faithful service, given by succeeding generations of Freemasons to the Brotherhood in general, and to this lodge in particular.

In the beginning God. These four words from Genesis Chapter 1 of the Volume of the Sacred Law, introduce the wonderful, familiar story of the creation of the world. God slowly unfolded to the man and woman he had created, His great love for them, and His power to guide them in the way of life. This revelation of Himself, given to His prophets and chosen people, was written down for the guidance of His children.

The story of the Bible is a tale of great adventure. Although it was first completed all those centuries ago, it is still the key to life and the greatest book the world has ever known. Today the Bible is at the very centre of our national life, and the Volume of the Sacred Law, as

we Freemasons know it, is at the centre of our Masonic Structure. At all Coronations, the Archbishop says, “Our Gracious Sovereign, we present you with this book, the most valuable thing the world affords. Here is wisdom, this is the royal Law, these are the lively oracles of God”.

Christianity first reached the shores of Britain in the early part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, although people did not have the Bible in their own tongue. Early English manuscripts are linked through Caedmon (who died 676 AD) to the Venerable Bede, at the monastery of Jarrow, and tonight, we are very much in Bede’s World. One of the most fascinating characters of the Early English Church, Bede was a great scholar, teacher and saint and more than any other, he made Northumbria the literary centre of Western Europe. It is uncertain how much of the Bible he translated, but we know the Gospel of John, was the last task of his life. As he lay dying, he was dictating the end of the Gospel to a youthful scribe. Towards evening the boy at his bedside said “There is yet one sentence unwritten, dear master” “Write it quickly” replied Bede. And after a few moments the boy told him all was finished. “You speak truthfully” said Bede “all is finished now”. These were the last words of the Venerable Saint as he peacefully passed to his rest, in 735AD.

Brethren, as I said before, for each of us here there is an obligation to be concerned not only for the present but acknowledging all we have inherited from the past. Many changes have taken place in the last 100 years, some good and some not so good. However we have much to celebrate, and the message I leave with you tonight is clear and simple. Your lodge grows ever older and giving thanks to its founders and those who have continued to support its ideals, for the time and labour spent on its foundations, and ongoing development, the task is not finished. It is my earnest wish that you have many more anniversaries to celebrate. Continue to be proud of our Worldwide Brotherhood and be thankful for all that your Mark Lodge means to you.

“We can’t retrace our steps through life we must go on, we can’t turn back,

We must leave the past behind, and walk, the unfamiliar track  
The next step is the one that takes us out, along the unknown way  
This is the road we must travel, not the roads of yesterday  
Every step into the future, is a venture in the dark  
On a path there may be no friendly sign, no guiding mark,  
Fear not, take the next step forward, walk in faith into the night,  
There is ONE who walks beside you in the darkness and the light”

In fine Brethren, we are assembled here, to thank the Great Overseer of the Universe, for His many Blessings to us, for His Wisdom and Knowledge, for Brotherly Love, Charity and all that ennoble Character. For His Guidance and Blessing which has prospered over the centuries bringing relief to many aged and suffering.

We thank Him for Jarrow Lodge of Mark Master Masons No.701, for the preservation of it, since its Consecration, for the good it has accomplished, and the example it has shown. We pray that we can keep its precious heritage, and be wise builders, always true to our vows and ideals, in this, our generation, and for all generations to come.

May I thank you for your attention and your patience and as always I greet you, and wish you all well.