

GRAND LODGE BULLETIN

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THE DEFINITION OF PURPOSE

Were Freemasons, as individuals, asked the question: "What does Freemasonry stand for to you?", probably there would be as many answers as there are divergent individual characteristics.

Were the average Freemason questioned on what he believes Freemasonry trying to do, he might have considerable difficulty in formulating anything approaching an exact definition. He might answer in ritualistic phraseology, might have some vague idea that we are banded together to help brethren in distress, or might hold the common but vaguer idea that Freemasonry is a "good thing". And the astonishing fact is that he is quite willing to pay dues, wear badges and attend meetings for that "good thing".

The average member of a "blue" lodge has no really definite conception of what Freemasonry stands for in the wider sense, hence the chasm between Masonic pretension and Masonic performance which seems so difficult to bridge. That may be one underlying reason why we have so many lodge members and so few Freemasons. We add members but fail to make Masons. That has been said before.

It seems then that a primary task of Freemasonry today is to restate its purpose and the relation of that purpose to modern life. Obviously the subject is too wide for discussion in these confined columns but, at least, we can attempt a brief restatement, void of archaic language, obscurity and emotionalism.

Here is a first attempt:

Freemasonry, believing that its philosophy and code are fundamentally sound, spiritually and ethically, attempts to influence the mass of mankind by the precept and example of its devotees, initiated into an appreciation of benevolence and tolerance, passed to the positive knowledge of the value of organized effort and work and raised to understanding of the supreme social value and ultimate reward of courageous integrity.

I mildly challenge my brethren to let me have their statement of the case.

A.M.M.

A CONDEMNATION OF THE PERSECUTION OF FREEMASONS

It is gratifying to learn that one Masonic Body, and that of very high standing has published a condemnation of the atrocities perpetrated against Freemasons in certain countries of Continental Europe. At its Biennial Session, the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction and Mother Supreme Council of the World, issued a pronunciamento condemning the persecution, murder, assassination and imprisonment of Masons and drew attention to the significance of the fact that such action against Freemasonry has taken place under varying forms of absolutism, both political and spiritual. The statement of the Supreme Council is as follows:

"The committee again takes occasion to condemn the persecution, imprisonment, assassination, and murder of Masons, for no reason other than that they are Masons, in some of the Continental European countries by ruthless and irresponsible powers that seek to destroy all whose humanitarian ideas tend to thwart their own diabolical designs. We extend to our brethren in Spain, and other countries where the atrocities of murder and assassination of Masons are practised, our sincerest sympathy and fraternal good will, and we express the hope that the end of their persecution and sufferings is near at hand.

"The committee points to the fact that it is not without significance that wherever in the world today despots are seeking to destroy the liberties and take away the God-given rights of the people, there Masonry is being suppressed, its property confiscated and its members imprisoned or murdered. Tyrants and despots, both political and spiritual, have long since learned that the ideals of Masonry are incompatible with the nefarious business of despotic and oppressive rule, and it is not strange that those who seek to impose their iron will of tyranny upon a people, despise and fear Masonry. On the other hand, it is likewise significant that wherever in the world the ideals of democracy obtain and the principles of constitutional government by the people's representatives are in force, Masonry prospers and carries on its work unmolested, and is respected by those who love liberty and believe in government by law."

MASONRY IN GERMANY COMPLETELY SUPPRESSED

The wreck of the Masonic Fraternity in Germany is as complete as could be desired, even by Hitler or Mussolini, according to the latest reports from that country.

All personal property of the Lodges has been destroyed, all buildings of the Fraternity confiscated, and what is worse, all members rendered incommunicative with one another, under penalty of arrest and imprisonment. A few leaders have committed suicide, others have died before their time, and some have become traitors to the liberal cause of the Fraternity, as was true of some members of the Order and a few leaders in Italy, after over a hundred and thirty members of one Lodge were murdered during one night in that country.

Virginia Masonic Herald.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CORNER STONE

By Harry K. Green.

Perhaps it may be interesting to explain briefly the moral and spiritual significance of corner stone layings of the Masonic Fraternity.

In accordance with our ancient rites, the corner stone should be square and its contents a cube. The square Masonically symbolizes MORALITY and the cube symbolizes TRUTH.

The stone, in accordance with strict Masonic observance, should be laid in the north-east corner between the North and the East. The North, Masonically, has always been deemed a place of darkness and the East a place of light. Consequently, the ceremony signifies to us man's progress from darkness to the light of a better day and from ignorance to better wisdom and more useful knowledge.

Masonically, the corner stone is the most durable part of a material structure. It signifies to us that, though the building will fall to waste and decay, due to the devastation of time, yet the corner stone will endure, and that although our earthly house, our temple of flesh and bone, will some day decay and be relegated to the silent clods of mother earth, yet within ourselves there is a foundation stone upon which we may depend — the corner stone of eternal life — the corner stone of the immortality of the soul.

The Master advises us that this stone is true, trusty, tried and well laid; to us a reminder that our virtues must be tried by pain, temptations, adversity and suffering, before being deemed by the Supreme Architect as worthy material for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

From early Masonic history we learn that the Jews were the first to celebrate corner stone layings. They engaged in such festivities as these in the laying of corner stones of their individual homes, dedicating them to useful service to their families and localities. Oftimes some prince or man of high standing in the Jewish tribes was defined as a corner stone of his day and age. We likewise hear today in Christian churches, the Christ referred to as "the corner stone of civilization". Thus, the Jew and the Gentile of Masonic association join hands in such celebrations as these to stress the moral and religious meaning of Masonic corner stone layings, and to create in our individual lives a desire and ambition to lay corner stones within ourselves made of those virtues, principles and ideals, that go to build up a better humanity and a finer world.

If there is one thing needed more than all others today in the solving of the problems of a troubled world it is the spirit of fraternity and fellowship among men. It is to be hoped that when the real spirit of brotherhood is deeply written into the hearts and souls of all the peoples of the world, the clouds of war hovering over the world today will vanish for ever and strife, dissension and rebellion be supplanted by peace and good will among men. The real corner stone is laid in the hearts of men and on it should rise walls of ideal and aspiration which cannot be measured in the currency of the day but in the consciousness of service and unselfish fellowship, nourished by toil, exalted by virtue and dedicated to the principles of brotherly love, relief and truth.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

The second virtue denominated as cardinal is that of Fortitude. It is derived from the same root as fort — a strong place. So the essential idea of the word is strength. But it is a certain kind of strength. It is the quality of character which makes him who possesses it able to stand fast and endure. In the soldier, steadiness is one of the most difficult things to develop. The raw recruit is likely to be impetuous, enthusiastic, eager, but erratic and unreliable. One of the marks of the veteran is the ability to wait for the right time to act and meantime to "stick it".

The world today seems to have an ever increasing number of people who lack this quality. They whine and complain because conditions are not made pleasant and comfortable for them. Unless the rules of the game can be altered to suit them they refuse to play, and frequently they themselves will make no sacrifices and endure no hardships to bring about the changes they desire.

Masonry is a progressive science. This should mean two things. The individual Mason should feel responsible for pushing ahead in knowledge and self-development. And the institution should feel responsible for promoting advances in social betterment. In making advances there are two necessities. From time to time at opportune moments there must be vigorous attacks, carefully planned and skilfully executed for the purpose of reaching new objectives. This sort of thing is sometimes thrilling and spectacular. But it is equally important that results so obtained be safeguarded and new positions won be consolidated. This is precisely what is meant when we speak of guarding the landmarks. There is nothing thrilling about the effort necessary. It is comparatively easy to rise to an emergency. The laziest man living will hustle around if his house is burning down, but he will not subject himself to the daily exertion of providing adequately for its upkeep or replacement.

A fort is not constructed for offensive purposes. It is a place of retirement for defence or reorganization. Fortitude is that essential quality which enables the institution or individual to stand fast and endure the storm in the calm certainty that this too will in due time pass.

"Where true fortitude dwells, loyalty, bounty, friendship, and fidelity may be found." -- Sir Thomas Browne.

A. E. Ottewell.

I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow-creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it for I shall not pass this way again.

Author unknown.

APOLLO No. 27 and DONALDA No. 150 AMALGAMATED

On December 6, 1937, the above lodges completed their amalgamation and resolved to continue under the name and charter of Apollo Lodge No. 27 at Stettler. W. Bro. Dr. N. W. Connolly of Stettler was elected Secretary for 1938, to whom all communications regarding the former lodges should be directed.