



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: A. M. Mitchell, P.G.M.

The Cardinal Virtues for 'Forty-one

"Let prudence direct you; temperance chasten you; fortitude support you; and justice be the guide of all your actions."

—The Charge to the Newly Initiated,
Book of Constitution.

HOW many of the Brethren have pondered these words and measured by them their conduct in the present emergency? Probably not many, for here as with many another fine grouping of words in our ceremonies, the lesson is frequently lost in its formula and the oral expression, even by the finest ritualist, wasted because the hearer fails even to examine the idea behind the diction—much less apply it in his every-day conduct.

Mature men know that it is impossible to anticipate and prepare for every eventuality. We prepare in advance and with all the reasoning and forecast at our command, but rarely can we realize what the actual event will mean to us. It is only when the event occurs and we are faced with reality that the wave of understanding buries us in emotion and drive us, unless firmly anchored, far from our moorings.

The effect of the wave of emotion on the individual brings out his quality as a man and a Mason. Lacking prudence, he acts without thinking; lacking fortitude, he faints with each temporary ill-turn of the tide; and lacking justice, he accuses all men who refuse to dance to his pipe.

The present crisis is the greatest wave of emotional reality to engulf democratic thinking since time began. But all democratic thinking is not anchorless, and at the worst, albeit recognizing some apparent weakness, the whole cannot be swept away if democratic thinkers will keep their heads.

Freemasons are presumed to be democratic thinkers, therefore, it is vitally necessary that they maintain the upright conduct and level steps of their teaching. In the world holocaust the individual is nothing, but in the union of like minds he is invincible and peace shall come to that band of brothers, which, facing reality, refuses to move from its high and ancient purpose—goodwill and freewill to all men.

Let the individual Mason, however, consider *his* part in this band of brothers. Is he prudent in his conduct, refusing to accept propaganda at its face value, desisting from idle talk of that which he has no sure knowledge, but which might in his talk bring comfort and aid to the enemy which strives to destroy him? Does he strive to do his share quietly and patiently, believing that in the end right will prevail?

Is he temperate in word and deed, measuring his contribution by his skill and capacity but bending his best effort where it can be of most real effort?

Does he brace himself gallantly against the shocks of temporary set-back, bound to come, as well as remain calm in the moment of triumph?

Is he just in his thinking, accepting the effort of those in command without flinching or whining because, mayhap, his normal routine may be disturbed?

When the Freemason does these things, he has absorbed the Charge of his Initiation, he has learned that words convey ideas and that ideas will change the world.

Let him couple the virtues represented by these words with those of another exhortation. Let him practise Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, and setting them up as a standard for his conduct, he will find himself surely one more stone in the solid wall firm set against the forces of evil.

Masonic charges are based upon knowledge of human character. They cannot anticipate the force of a particular blow, but they can harden the steel of sound character to resist any blow, hence the great need for Masons to examine and absorb the ideals and ideas behind the oral demonstration of their rites and ceremonies.

The practice of the ancient virtues will find the Mason prudent in defence and attack, temperate amid the passing hysteria of the moment, armed with fortitude in the grim trials of the day, meting out justice, without vengeance, in the end to the beast he must destroy.

The practice of these cardinal virtues can be sure armour for this new year and every year to come. May they be a very real armour for *You* in 1941.

A.M.M.

PROGRESSIVE MASONRY

1. THE CHANGING ORDER

By R. W. Bro. A. E. OTTEWELL, P.G.R.
(The First of a Series of Six Papers)

Editor's Note.—Opinions expressed and speculations advanced in articles of this kind are the writer's own. Official approval of Grand Lodge is neither expressed nor implied.

"MASONRY is a progressive science." So runs a sentence from our ritual. But, as we know and practise it, is this true? The word progress means, literally, "forward movement". But if there is to be such movement two things must be clear. In the first place what is the goal or end, and, is it definitely a forward one? And in the second place is there a movement in that direction?

Probably no one will object to the statement that Masonry aims to promote the moral and social betterment of the individual and society.

But first there must be some agreement as to what needs to be done. There are large numbers of people who believe that many of the troubles of the present day are due to the state of mind which insists that there be no change or as little change as possible. There have always been the stand patters. They are the ones who sigh for the good old days, the old time religion, the old time education, the old time farming, the old time morality and even the old time Masonry. But such people forget that the price which must be paid for life is that of learning how to meet changing conditions. We know that nature has experimented and continues to experiment on a vast scale. The natural history museums are filled with the remains of animals which have now disappeared from the earth because they could not adjust themselves to changing conditions. The giant reptiles which once lived in Alberta when it had a warm climate perished when that climate changed, but the warm blooded animals remain to this day in spite of sub-zero temperatures. They adapted themselves to the changed conditions. Man is the most adaptable of all the animals and can live anywhere from the equator to the poles.

Now, whether we like it or not, conditions over which we have little or no control are constantly changing. Individuals and institutions which are to survive must adapt themselves. One of the alarming signs of our times is the steady increase of mental disorder. Every so often there is a suicide wave. Mental hospitals are full to overflowing and constantly being enlarged. A student of social conditions stated in a paper recently published that the care of the mentally unfit in the United States cost *seventeen* billion dollars in a single year, while *two* billion dollars was the total spent on public education. To a large extent mental illness is caused by the failure to adjust to meet the demands of changing conditions. The life of the present has become so complex and difficult that many cannot keep up,

and insanity or the final surrender of suicide is the result.

All of the above brings us back to the fact that Freemasonry being an institution set in a changing world *must* adapt itself or perish.

Such adaptation is not new in Freemasonry. There is no certain or accurate information at present available as to changes in ancient times, but it is clear that at the time of the revival of 1717 and the following years great changes occurred. The two most drastic ones were that religious sectarianism was eliminated and that the teaching was placed upon a speculative basis. In the more or less fragmentary literature of the pre-revival days it is clear that teaching of Freemasonry was definitely Christian, including such things as the doctrine of the Trinity. It would seem that neither a Jew nor a Mohammedan could then have been a Freemason. But in the ritual which was developed from that time onward there is nothing which prevents either from being Freemasons in the most complete sense. This was surely a revolutionary change. In the same way apparently in ancient times no one not actually engaged in the practice of some branch of operative masonry could belong to a Lodge. Of course, this rigid rule was falling into disuse in practice before 1717, but at that time it was definitely established that Accepted Masons were encouraged to join. What happened was that a new valuation was placed on the moral and social graces. Henceforth the character of a man was to be the test of fitness for membership and the teaching became definitely speculative and symbolic rather than practical or operative.

As a result of this adaptation a far-reaching revival took place. Freemasonry quickly spread all over the western, and to some parts of the eastern world. Under the conditions then prevailing a new and satisfactory dynamic or driving force had been found. To put it in other words emphasis was placed upon spiritual rather than material values, or morality rather than money.

In the world of today the most common complaint seems to be disillusionment. This results in cynicism. The new contender for world domination frankly advocates lying, deceit, brutality and hatred as desirable. Has Freemasonry an answer? If not, there is no excuse for its existence and it cannot and will not survive.

The following articles of this series will deal with other points on the general theme—Progressive Masonry.

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When I go down to the grave I can say, like many others: "I have finished my day's work." But I cannot say: "I have finished my life." My day's work will begin again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes on the twilight; it opens on the dawn.

—Victor Hugo.

THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS OF MASONRY

By V. W. Bro. WM. R. DAVIS, Calgary
(The Third of Four Sections)

Editor's Note.—Opinions expressed and speculations advanced in articles of this kind are the writer's own. Official approval of Grand Lodge is neither expressed nor implied.

MANY attempts have been made to give tangible form to the expression "The Ancient Landmarks of Masonry" and to give it some exactness of definition. There are many respectable and respected schools of thought on the subject. These definitions range all the way between the limits of those who hold that the expression covers the ten commandments only, to those who put the very broadest interpretation and include the ritual, clothing, the form and furniture of the lodge room, etc. On one point only are all schools of thought in agreement, viz., that it is essential for a Mason to hold a belief in a Deity with attributes of omnipotence, omniscience and benevolence.

There is another expression with which we are familiar, and which puts us in the same difficulty. We speak of "The British Constitution."

If a person were to go to Washington or to Paris he could be shown the American or French Constitutions in that form which permits the use of the senses of seeing and feeling. But if the same person were to go to London, England, he could be shown Magna Charta, the Petition of Right, and the Acts of Parliament which established the present dynasty on the throne, but if he asked to see the British Constitution he would be told that there was no such thing in any concrete form. Yet it has a profound significance in our daily lives.

On enquiry and reflection we learn that the expression consists of certain well tried principles of legislation and administration which cannot be departed from without danger of disorder and discontent. These principles are embodied in certain axioms of which two only will be here mentioned, viz.—

- (1) The King can do no wrong, and
- (2) An Englishman's house is his castle.

We are then faced with the fact that we have on occasion deposed and even executed our Kings for wrong doing. Anyone who has had a recalcitrant tenant he wishes to eject but who declines to move, might very well say that the operation of the principle embodied in the second axiom creates injustice. What then, is the explanation of this apparent contradiction?

It is that these incidents are the exceptions that prove the rule. Most of our Sovereigns have taken their responsibility seriously, and the number of recalcitrant tenants are few in proportion to the whole. On the other hand we know that whenever we have departed from the spirit or principle embodied

in these axioms, we have opened the way for oppression and tyranny.

It is in this broad sense that we are to interpret the expression "The Ancient Landmarks". The expression symbolises the idea or doctrine that AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME the Deity laid down certain principles for us to observe in our relations with each other, which principles must be expressed in all our law and administration thereof, as well as in our more intimate relations with each other. If we are desirous of fulfilling His purpose and establishing His Kingdom upon earth, where peace and harmony will prevail, and where order will have taken the place of doubt and chaos, that doctrine we accept.

It is a somewhat startling thought that all natural laws were laid down at the beginning of time. In this country, where there is little illiteracy, it is common knowledge that the chemical composition of water is a mixture of the elements of oxygen and hydrogen. What is not, perhaps, so well understood is that they must be mixed in exact proportions, in all places, and at all times. Any deviation from these proportions will nullify all effort toward the desired result. The same reasoning can be applied to the more modern and complex equipment of the motor car or the radio. These instruments are effective because we have learned the laws governing the natural forces and properties employed. When we see a phenomenon like this recurring so unerringly we are forced to the conclusion that there must be in the scheme of things, a Law-giver who laid down these laws, and that these laws were not enacted in recent years, but have been in existence since the beginning of time.

A law of necessity requires that there be a penalty for its violation. We frequently criticize parts of our Criminal Code of Canada, by saying that "there are no teeth in it," meaning that the law is ineffective because there is no penalty provided for violation. No such charge can be laid at the door of the Lawgiver of the Universe. Violation of a natural law invariably produces an undesirable result even if it be but the negation of effort—to get our car started, for example. Without the right mixture of gas and air the engine will not function and the car will not move.

With these illustrations of the presence and application of Law in the realm of Physics, is it not reasonable that we should look for a similar presence and application in the world of morals and ethics, in thought and conduct?

It is here submitted that such is the speculative meaning of the expression "The Ancient Landmarks of Masonry." AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME the Lawgiver laid down rules for the government of our relations with each other, the observation of which is necessary if peace and harmony are to prevail in our Institution, and to be transmitted by us to the outside world by precept and example. It has been

the constant endeavor of mankind to obtain knowledge of these rules or laws, and to define them with exactness.

Those who see Ancient Landmarks in the ritual, the charges, the furniture and position of the Lodge room are close to the truth if they will more clearly distinguish between the point, and the peg which marks its position. Thus, it is held that the tiling of the lodge and the necessary preparation of the candidate are landmarks. The truth is that the Ancient Landmark is the requirement, gained in centuries of experience, that knowledge must only be revealed to those who can and will use it for the benefit of the society as a whole, and who have sufficient strength of character to decline to abuse it for selfish and unworthy ends. It may be noted here the growing tendency for Lodges to meet in committee of the whole, untiled, and without the authority of the Master with his gavel. Whichever way this is looked at, it seems to be a violation of an Ancient Landmark, for in removing the peg there is danger of overlooking the point.

THE SUBLIME SCIENCE

By H. B. COLLIER, Viking

ON the walls of my memory are vivid pictures of a furniture factory, where, as a boy, I used to watch the bewildering activity. Among the maze of machinery were men directing the operations with fascinating skill. The turning-lathe was a spell-binder, for here emerged from a cloud of little chips the most graceful of curves, under the guiding hand of the expert workman.

Years later I was ushered into the workshop of the Great Architect of the Universe. There was much to see with the unaided eye, but through telescope and spectroscope, Creation was revealed as still in process. No factory could be more interesting. Here the raw material is of such vast proportions, speed so intense, distances so great, that the mind cannot possibly appreciate all. One can but grasp a few facts. These are amazing and serve to excite the most intellectual.

Among the Seven Liberal Arts Masons are directed to study, Astronomy holds an honored place. Unfortunately it is a subject that receives but little attention from the average member. The cause of day and night, the seasons, tides, eclipses are generally known. There is much beyond these which can be learned by just a little effort.

A Lodge should be a school and not merely a social club. Without educational features interest lags and the Lodge stagnates. The importation of noted speakers or educationists is not necessary. Such action may not be nearly so good as to form a study group with each member allotted some specific feature.

In the study of Astronomy the book of the heavens is open almost every night. By learning the groups

of stars, the constellations, the reward is large. Thereafter you are among friends extending a friendly greeting. As one masters the rudiments of Astronomy, it is so easy to build a worthwhile structure. Then when the scientist says "The solar system is moving toward the star Vega at the rate of 13 miles per second", there should be no difficulty in grasping the meaning. You visualize the sun with its family of planets, continuing the respective rapid movements, while at the same time moving at incredible speed within some other still greater system.

Every Lodge may make membership more attractive by systematic study of "that sublime science which inspires the contemplative mind to soar aloft and perceive the wisdom, strength and beauty of the Great Creator of the Heavens."

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CHIPS FROM A ROUGH ASHLAR

Gathered by "THE TYLER"

Even time can never quite erase the graving on the mind of a great love, a great hate, a great sorrow or a great fear.

Men who accomplish, waste no time in gossip.

The pride which persuades a man he is perfect blinds him to his imperfections and builds a wall against all opportunity to improve.

When Freemasonry ceases to be a Temple of Righteousness it is like to become a menace or a nuisance.

The practice of measuring every move in the light of possible reward can become a sinister habit, coloring even action intended as pure benevolence.

The difficulty about Masonic Education is in relating it to life. Addicts take to it like a drinker to wine, but to most of us their knowledge is about as useful as ore pockets in unprospected hills.

A problem may be solved by a fluke, but he who thinks in, around and about it, reaching a conclusion when all the evidence is in, is most likely to find the satisfying solution.

One should beware of rejecting the lesson with the dogma in ridding himself of orthodoxy.

Confidence among place-seekers has shallow roots.

Criticism may outrun construction and find organization discredited with no new conception established.

The teacher who has ceased to learn is no teacher.

It is easy to display one's information but much more difficult to reflect one's education.

The basic fear in learning is the possible loss of crowd confidence.

To grow in tolerance, seek knowledge. The well-filled mind, having business of its own, minds its own business.

It is difficult to confine charity in words, for humanity can be frozen in a formula.