



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

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

## EDITORIAL

### ON RITUAL

IF you have ever watched an expert mechanic grease your car, and you are inclined toward reflective analogy, you may have had some inkling of what ritual is and the purpose thereof. Ritual is really an established pattern for imparting knowledge of the tenets of a belief or philosophy. It is the pattern or specification for doing things accurately and in their proper order without waste of time or energy and, on a utilitarian basis, is the secret of mass production.

But it has been said that there can be no mass production of the things of the spirit and too often we find those whose whole Masonic interest is wrapped up in the crossing of every "t" and the dotting of every "i" regardless of the thought behind the verbal geyser. Ritual by rote is no ritual at all. By dint of sheer repetition almost any man can learn to repeat a ritual, but the exercise of remembering the empty sounds of the words he must repeat destroys for him and his hearers the real sense of what is being said. As Shakespeare has it, "I'd as lief the town crier mouthed my words." Sound we must have but it must be sound with sense else it is naught but the tinkling cymbal.

In many respects the Mason's ritual, considered entirely apart from the ceremonies, is a literary masterpiece. It contains interpolations from the Old Testament, from Plato, Shakespeare and many a lesser poet, orator and essayist. It bears the stamp of scholarship and if its terms are at times quaint and archaic, they are but clues to the student of language by which he may trace origins and the literary history of the Order.

A good ritualist not only knows the words he must repeat but knows their meaning. Only so can he teach and only so can he direct the attention of the neophyte to the symbols of Masonry which are in the future to be to him the visible and tangible expressions of conduct which Masonry ever strives to teach. To understand the meaning of words is not difficult. A pocket dictionary will explain most

of the words in the ritual as words, but to get the real flavor of the ritual words as they are moulded into sentences and paragraphs one must dig deeper and this is a task for the real ritualist.

As a small sample of this compare the lecture in the north-east corner with Portia's speech on mercy in "The Merchant of Venice", beginning, "The quality of mercy is not strain'd." To know the origins of some of the fine phrases in the ritual and with that knowledge to flavor their teaching with a full spiritual insight into the depths of their meaning is vastly more important than the most exact repetition of words like unto the ejections of an automatic phonograph.

Accuracy should be the objective of every good ritualist but it should be accuracy with knowledge of the inner meaning of the words spoken. Only thus can the ritualist be sincere and only thus can he earn the reward of hearing his brethren say, "He gives that just as if he were making it up as he goes along." That is the highest praise and is born only of accuracy, knowledge and sincerity.

A.M.M.

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Superstition thrives on the hits reported. The overwhelming number of misses is rarely mentioned.

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The gossip should remember that ignorance of the faults of others is the lock of the door of the cupboard in which he keeps his own skeletons.

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Too often strongest conviction is based upon least knowledge.

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Effort, discipline, enthusiasm and modest creation are the well springs of strength and peace.

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Because you can always pass the point you reached yesterday you can be richer than you realize.

## THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

### 2. FORTITUDE

*"To be honest, to be kind—to earn a little and spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary and not to be embittered, to keep a few friends, but these without capitulation—above all, on the same grim conditions, to keep friends with himself—here is a task for all that man has of fortitude."*  
—Robert Louis Stevenson, "A Christmas Sermon".

**T**O endure is the fate of all men and while there is a connotation to the word "endure" indicating pain or adversity, there is just as much need to endure success. Fortitude in the hour of triumph is just as much of a virtue and shield against swelled head as it is when one is left temporarily beaten and on his beam ends.

The more apparent needs for Fortitude are easy to appraise. Is one hurt mentally or physically? Then one summonses his supply of courage, moral and physical, to meet the time of trouble. If he is something of a philosopher he will appreciate the application of another well-worn Masonic phrase which runs to the effect that life is chequered with good and evil, and hang steadfastly to the law of human average that he cannot be out of luck nor a fool all the time. That takes moral strength of a high order.

Is he hurt? He will bite on the bullet, grin and bear it as best he can, secure in the knowledge of medical science and its ability to mend the hurt or cure his ache if that be within human compass. If not, he needs must face finalities. That takes physical courage of the highest order.

But extremes like these come only at rare intervals in the life of the average man. When the last extremity comes he will not know it! There are, however, minor instances where every ounce of a man's courage, patience and forbearance must be called up from the depths of his reserves of conduct.

Does he see an abuse which he can't cure? Does he observe the posings and imposture of some cocka-hoop strutting in office by reason of some fancied service in the years gone by, by reason of impudent nepotism or political patronage? Since alone he cannot cure, alone he must endure, and for the honest man this calls for the greatest trial of moral fortitude he is likely to meet.

To be gallant against the hurt of major sorrows comes with comparative ease to most men, and the greater the need the greater the fortitude which comes to his rescue. The conduct of the "little people" of London Town is the world's grandest example of the fact.

But can he summon his fortitude in the minor difficulties, suffering the pin pricks of life without developing into a grouser or a crank to whom nothing can ever be right and nobody own a motive which is not ulterior? In short, can he realize that his fellow has all the virtues he credits to himself and,

mayhap, one or two he has overlooked? Can he speak the honest word for the high qualities of the man he knows possesses less high qualities? If he can, he has Fortitude, Masonic Fortitude, the moral strength and courage of a man of sterling character.

At no time in the world's history will there be greater need for Fortitude than now. Life is shrinking to bare necessity, death and disaster are abroad and the Four Horsemen ride the wind. Permanent bereavement and temporary impoverishment may be our portion, but impatience in the hour of trial is cowardice and patience without complaint the highest kind of Fortitude to which each must add his portion to the common stock.

The courage of quiet resolution is the nation's greatest need. That courage is the inward meaning of this the second of Freemasonry's four cardinal virtues.

A.M.M.

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### WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

"And what is around the corner? Would that we could predict with sufficient assurance to convince. One thing we do seem to know, and it may have a very direct bearing on the future of Freemasonry; it appears certain that this country, and perhaps the world, has seen just recently the end of an era. A New Order, whether one likes that phrase or not, is about to dawn; an Order of Things in which humanity has got to pay in one way or another for this destruction which is now going on under the name of war; for these preparations for war; for this change in the attitudes, the modes of thought, of all men wheresoever they be. In short, the era of free spending and of luxuries is past; and in its place there will be another in which other standards, other and more stern limitations on the luxuries of life will prevail. Perhaps this new Order may have a wider place for Freemasonry in its pattern of society. We are very definitely inclined to believe that Freemasonry, with some readjustments will certainly have a larger place in the lives of men, at least on this continent, than it has had in the past decade."

(Excerpt from the Reviewer's Greetings in the Masonic Reviews—1941, prepared for Grand Lodge of North Carolina, A.F. & A.M., by J. Edward Allen.)

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The intelligent use of leisure is the hall mark of the cultured man.

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By his actions every man answers his own question: "Why do I live?"

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The man who cannot endure his own society usually has good reason for his objection.

## THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND HONORS ALBERTA MASONS

The Grand Lodge of Scotland, in recognition of the assistance rendered to them, and as an expression of gratitude for the help forwarded from our War Distress Fund to aid in the rehabilitation of Brethren of that Jurisdiction who suffered from enemy action, have signally honored the Grand Lodge of Alberta by conferring upon Most Worshipful Bro. F. P. Galbraith and Most Worshipful Bro. George F. Ellis the Honorary Rank of Past Senior Grand Warden.

This very gracious gesture by the Grand Lodge of Scotland is a tribute of appreciation to every member of the Craft in Alberta who has contributed to our Masonic War Distress Fund.

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## THE CONQUEST OF PETTINESS

By Bro. L. J. HUMPHREY,

Secretary, Nanaimo Lodge, No. 110, G.R.B.C.

**M**EMBERSHIP in the Masonic Order carries with it many happy benefits, among which the opportunity of studying the reaction of brother to brother and the play of personalities is not the least. This observation, if pursued with detachment and charity, is rich in rewarding humor and provides an understanding sympathy with and tolerance of the seeming frailties inherent in the human family. Indeed, Freemasons, joined in devotion to wide ideals and animated by a dynamic adherence to the principle of brotherly love are, by the very nobility of their profession, able to follow this survey of themselves under the most generous auspices.

Now, since we are recommended to study ourselves, I would ask you to consider for a few moments an occasional tendency of behavior which is noticeable in our Fraternity as in all human associations, a tendency which must be constantly checked—the tendency to surrender to a display of narrowness, or pettiness—because an indulgence in this trait can be detrimental to the well governing and proper functioning of our Lodges and may prevent us from realizing the blessings of poise and mutual happiness in their amplest form.

If we honestly cast our thoughts back over our Masonic travels we will all acknowledge occasions when an indulgence in narrowness, or pettiness, has somewhat spoiled an otherwise completely harmonious occasion. To state this is not to cast any particular aspersion on our beloved Order which, after all, is comprised of human beings—may the Architect be praised!—and is not an arid coterie of purists. All I desire is that we simply examine the cause of such occasions in the light of the greatest

good and under the influence of a consideration for the real promotion of brotherly love and the extension of the Masonic kingdom.

What, then, is the nature of this narrowness, this pettiness, I have in mind? First, it is selfish, having its roots in an apparently irresistible desire to obtrude personal likes or dislikes and to force personal desires in Masonic pursuits. Secondly, and perhaps more fundamentally, it is grounded in a lack of appreciation of the wideness, the spirituality of Freemasonry—beside which all merely personal considerations are small; otherwise we would never allow it to appear.

Hence it follows that we should always strive toward unselfishness and be prepared to sacrifice our own personal predilections; and above all should endeavor to sense Freemasonry's inner significance.

Suppose we look at the matter this way:

If we go to our place of worship with our minds encrusted by selfish considerations we simply cannot derive the benefits of spiritual refreshment. We know—all of us—that we must approach prayer with our hearts free of all self, must lay our souls before God with humility and awe.

But, one might say, ours is not a religious order. True enough. But the point is this: we should always revere it as we revere religion—with surrender, with an open readiness to appreciate and attain to its central blessedness and with a realization that our own personal wishes are petty and of no importance whatever compared with it. For it is just in our view of it that we are so apt to miss the real beauty of the Masonic calling, just here that we fall short, just here, therefore, that we limit ourselves and deprive it of our best potentialities.

Yes. Above all I am persuaded that we should bow all selfish considerations before the principle of Brotherly Love, which is unselfishness itself, and open our hearts to its power. We should not approach it with minds hardened by narrow desires but should open them to its greatness and constantly dwell upon this greatness. In other words, we should look upward to the letter G.

Let us know, therefore, that in the beneficent glow of this greatness and in our refusal to allow pettiness to hold sway, lies a true Masonic balm and benediction. Let us hold constant before our eyes the wide charity of our Order and ever understand that to be worthy of it we, too, must be charitable in the most charitable sense.

In a final word, let us see that by being selfish and petty in Masonic pursuits we actually insult the Craft we profess to admire—for it is by a recognition of this incontrovertible fact that we will enable ourselves to rise superior to an unworthy tendency and render ourselves clear channels through which Architectural grace may flow.

## FREEMASONRY AND TOTALITARIANISM

(Condensed from a *Bulletin* published by The Masonic Service Association of the United States and reprinted by special permission.)

**W**HY do Dictators stamp out Freemasonry? Why is Freemasonry forbidden in Italy, Germany, what was Czechoslovakia and Austria, Russia?

It is not sufficient to say, "Oh, Dictators cannot afford secret societies—they might foment plans against the totalitarian State." Nor is it a complete answer to say, "Totalitarian States control religion, dictate the one and only worship of God permitted, or forbid church and religion altogether, and Freemasonry is predicated on a belief in and worship of the Great Architect." Both these reasons are a part of the whole, but the whole is much larger. Completely to understand why Russia, Germany, Italy have outlawed Freemasonry, it is necessary clearly to understand just what a totalitarian State is, and why it comes into being.

Individualism persists—it is more controlled now, but it still interferes with the good of the whole. So more and more laws are made; if three laws make us happy, six ought to make us happier, and sixty, happier still, is common, if fallible, human reasoning. Gradually the laws interfere with a man's fight for existence.

It is from such society, infinitely ramified and extended, multiplied, that totalitarianism evolves. The struggle for existence becomes a greater load than many men can bear; the idea that if the State controls all it will provide all, gains headway. Presently a Dictator arises, or is forced out of the population, into power. Instead of people making their own laws, he makes them. Instead of a rule of law, there comes into existence a rule of men, or of one man. Individuals gradually come to the point where they are more contented *without* the individualism which they have sacrificed for protection, security, the comfortable sloth of letting some one else do their thinking for them.

What has happened abroad has followed the old familiar pattern of history. The success of Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini must be in large part ascribed to the belief of their peoples that security is better than freedom, that a State which is more important than its people can also give its people more than a State in which the people are most important.

Freemasonry, like all other philosophies, religions, ideals, ways of living, came into being in response to a demand in men's hearts for spiritual freedom. A man needs mental and moral food as much as he needs food for his stomach. He will get it, in some way; by church; by Lodge; by association; by club; by organization; by "the men's house"; by philosophy;

by preachers; by a Great Light containing his idea and ideals of religious and moral thought.

Millions find in the Ancient Craft an additional outlet for their inner yearnings; its universal symbols, its simple if profound philosophy, its gentle if steel-strong teachings, welded into a whole through uncounted years, provide for each man what he can take to nourish his individual spiritual requirements.

Here, then is a fundamental conflict. The Dictator says "I am the law. What I say, you do. In return I will insure you a job, security, protection, happiness."

Freemasonry says nothing like this. She offers every man a wide choice of what he will believe in regard to life and religion. Her laws are never a compulsion; men obey the laws of Freemasonry because they wish, rather than because they must.

Freemasonry encourages men to think for themselves. She teaches by symbols, and every man may interpret those symbols as he will. Dictatorships encourage all men to stop thinking for themselves and to leave to the authorities the interpretation of everything. Freemasonry believes in the right of the individual to earn, to hold, to own. The totalitarian State believes that the earnings of the individual belong to the State, that the State alone may hold, that all property, as all human rights, are vested in the State.

Freemasonry's greatest, most fundamental, most important teachings are those of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

The brotherhood of man is predicated upon the idea that men *can* live together in harmony, even with different ideas and ideals, if they construct their lives along lines laid in unselfishness, toleration, mutual trust and respect.

The totalitarian State is built upon force; upon the idea of punishment not only for infractions of law, but for infractions of the will of the Dictator.

That which is built upon force and the imposition of a superior will upon a subject nation, can only be maintained by force which compels obedience to the superior will.

That which is built upon love of God, respect of man for man, humanitarianism, the Golden Rule, must be eradicated, stamped out, done away, if the rule of force is to exist.

The totalitarian State cannot live if the ideas of Freemasonry survive—therefore, the need for the eradication of Freemasonry.

The foreign eclipse of Freemasonry can only be temporary because no dictator, no totalitarian State, has ever found a way to control a man's heart.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." And Freemasonry abroad, even as here, lives as it must begin: *in men's hearts.*