



Grand Lodge Bulletin

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EDITORIAL

ON FREE SPEECH AND FREE MASONRY

AS has been enunciated by the President of the United States and others of less importance in the present scheme of things, the theory of social righteousness to which we subscribe depends upon certain freedoms, and that without these freedoms Democracy is a mere label meaning nothing. Freemasonry, a part of the body politic, is likewise democratic and in it we should expect to find the same freedoms operating. An examination of the usage of the Order discloses that this is in the main true, but that there are certain peculiar prohibitions against outright freedoms of action, some of which are part of the philosophy of the Order, and some of which have been at one time or another imposed upon it by regulation.

It is quite apparent that a secret society must have something it imparts to its devotees which is not the common property of all men. In Freemasonry that secret is the means of recognition, their derivation and traditions. There is little else that is not well known except, of course, the month by month transactions of the Lodge's business which in the normal way are the Lodge's business and nobody else's. It is apparent therefore, that a Freemason is prohibited from discussing these things with the profane, the first by reason of his vow to refrain therefrom, and the second because he will do so in conformity to the dictates of ordinary prudence and good taste.

But these are not the freedoms upon which traditional regulation has imposed prohibition. In a Mason's Lodge one must discuss neither politics nor religion, subjects which according to the eminent James Anderson, Doctor of Divinity of the University of Aberdeen, and father of the Book of Constitution and its Charges of a Freemason, "never yet conduced to the welfare of the Lodge nor ever will."

In our modern Lodges these prohibitions have been interpreted to mean that the slightest attempt to discuss the things which most concern men of our time is prohibited and in this prohibition we

venture to disagree with the learned Doctor and his modern proponents. True it is that the discussion *sectarian* religion and *party* politics are likely to create bickerings with the possibility of unfortunate repercussions, but surely Masons should be big enough and wise enough to stick to wider issues and be able, without rancor, to consider the most important implications of our life and time without any party or sectarian smallness of soul. If they can't, something is out of joint in their philosophy or its teaching.

It has always seemed to us a defect of the Order that, because once a system or a tenet has been established, it becomes sacred by tradition and cannot be altered regardless of changes forced by the course of events upon the manner and thinking of the men who are protagonists of the general scheme. In Anderson's time, when for instance, Rationalism was at its height and the battle of Whig and Tory raged with sound and fury the easy way for Anderson and the Masonry of his day to avoid part and parcel of the quarrels was to prohibit any reference in the Lodge. The process continued becomes that of sticking one's thumbs in one's ears to keep out the sounds of the calliope, but the calliope brays on just the same with disastrous results to the thumber because he has failed to hear the sounds of coming catastrophe.

In our view politics and religion, meaning the effects of the philosophy of government and the good life upon us and those who follow us, are subjects of paramount importance for every living man, woman and child, and to ignore them because of a prohi-

The Grand Master wishes to offer his apologies to the lodges and brethren who were kind enough to send him Christmas Greetings. He has not yet been able to acknowledge them personally and he hopes that the lodges and brethren will accept this word of thanks for the present. The Greetings were very gratefully received.

bition worn so thin as to be almost nonsensical is nothing short of intellectual suicide. Moreover, we are convinced that here is one of the factors driving thinking men into the ranks of the indifferent and unaffiliated today.

There seems to us no valid reason why Freedom of Speech in respect of these things should not be a feature instead of forbidden in a Lodge program. We might learn something, find reason instead of emotion as base for sane action, and on the whole build sound thinking on these very foundation stones of our life and living. An occasional overzealous missionary for some creed or code might appear, but any Master of a Masonic Lodge worthy of the name and rank should have little difficulty in steering him along the broad highway and out of the alleys of sect and party.

One of the principal pillars of a new world order is Freedom of Speech. Masons should recognize that the prohibitions of the late Doctor Anderson are as dead as he is and begin to brush off the useless dust of senseless tradition before their philosophy is pushed into limbo with him.

A.M.M.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

3. Prudence

"Surely human affairs would be far happier if the power in men to be silent were the same as that to speak. But experience more than sufficiently teaches that men govern nothing with more difficulty than their tongues."—Spinoza "Ethics", Part III.

WE have all heard the Aesopian fable of the frog and its moral "Look before you leap," but altogether too many of us leap first and look afterwards if we can!

It seems easier to think before speaking but, alas, too many of us speak impulsively and chew the bitter import of our words when they have winged their foolish way.

The virtue of Prudence, then, is not the building up of elaborate defenses against the impact of the future, but rather the sane preparation of one's capacity that he may meet what comes with his best degree of assurance. A man may insure against most of the changes of life by passing the risk to professional risk-taking agencies for a price, but he must be careful that in so insuring the future he is not jeopardizing the present. He might do well too, to remember with Burns that—

"the best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft agley."

But it is of Prudence in the daily round of which we would speak.

Let us take, as example, the matter of the ballot in a Lodge. A name appears on the order paper; the appropriate committee has reported favorably. But A knows something of B which might preclude B from becoming a good Mason. A, in the fitness of things, must give the Lodge the benefit of the doubt

and report his reasons in the proper place. But he must think the thing through and be satisfied he has reason and not prejudice. To dislike a man is no good reason for doing him an injury. Prudence dictates that A must take care and act only if he be certain.

Again A sees the collar of office bestowed on B and jealously proceeds to whisper B's shortcomings abroad. Is he sure that there is no beam in his own eye? Prudence dictates careful thought and mature reflection before indulging in malicious gossip.

Has the turn of an honest business deal deprived you of some petty profit? Prudence dictates that you shall consider *all* the facts before maligning the agent of your temporary discomfiture. He may be acting in the best interest of his principal with a clearer conscience than yours on the question of personal gain.

These are but samples of the need for Masonic Prudence. Others will suggest themselves every hour of every day. It simplifies itself, perhaps, when expressed in the form of still another axiom, this time of the comic order, that it is better to keep quiet and be thought a dunce than speak and prove it.

To take reasonable care of the possible exigencies of life is prudent; to make exigencies by idle talk or failure to consider the worth of the other fellow and fail to back your words is most imprudent.

In short, the Masonic Prudence is merely the quiet business of striving ever to be a gentleman.

A.M.M.

SPECIFICATION FOR A MAN

TO RESPECT my country, my profession, and myself. To be honest and fair with my fellow men, as I expect them to be with me. To be a loyal citizen. To speak of my country with praise and act always as a trustworthy custodian of its good name. To be a man whose name carries prestige with it wherever it goes.

To base my expectations of a reward on a solid foundation of service rendered. To be willing to pay the price of success in honest effort. To look upon my work as an opportunity to be seized with joy and to be made the most of, not as a painful drudgery to be reluctantly endured.

To remember that success lies within my own self and in my own courage and determination. To expect difficulties and force my way through them. To turn hard experience into capital for future struggles.

To believe my profession heart and soul. To carry an air of optimism in the presence of those I meet. To dispel all temper with cheerfulness, kill doubts with strong convictions, and reduce action with an agreeable personality.

To find time to do every needful thing by not letting time find me doing nothing. To hoard days

as a miser does pounds. To make every hour bring me dividends in increased knowledge and healthful recreation. To keep my future unencumbered with debts. To save as well as earn.

To steer clear of dissipation and guard my health of body and peace of mind as a most precious stock in trade.

Finally, to take a good grip on the joys of life. To play the game like a man. To fight against nothing as hard as my own weakness and endeavor to give it strength. To be a gentleman, so I may be courteous to man, faithful to friends, and true to God.

—“The Freemason,” London.



THE CONFLICT IN WIDER CONTEXT

From an Address by V. W. Bro. G. Calvert Barber, D.D., Grand Chaplain, at a Communication of the Grand Lodge of Victoria, Australia, September 1942.

WE see now quite clearly after three years of War that our cause is righteous. But we must be on guard against any self-righteousness in ourselves. At a recent authoritative and representative Church Conference held in England, and presided over by one of the greatest Englishmen of this generation, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, it was said: “This war is not to be regarded as an isolated evil detached from the general condition of Western civilization during the last period.” I believe that to be profoundly true. What we are seeing now is the end of that phase of the life of the race which began with the Industrial Revolution. We have passed from an era of scarcity to one of plenty, but we have not forged the instruments with which to deal with that profound change. We have not done so because we have neither resolutely grasped that fact, nor do we possess in any adequate degree the spirit which can forge those necessary instruments when the need of them is seen. The symptom of this has been the tragedy of unemployment spread through every country in the world, than which there can be no more soul-destroying evil in human life. It is a problem which has disappeared under a wartime economy, but it has not been solved. Unless it is solved, this evil spirit will come back again with seven others more evil than itself.

The thrilling story of the expansion and revolution of life in the Western world during the last couple of centuries is familiar to every one, though perhaps only a few realise how revolutionary it has been. The development of science, the growth of man's power over nature, the invention of machinery almost annihilating distance and multiplying comforts of every kind—this has been man's glory and his reproach, his achievement and his problem. The amazing success of this achievement has betrayed him. It has led to a belief that God is unnecessary for the living of life. The result has been that Man

has lost his sense of dependence upon God. Indeed, Man has made himself to be God, and there has descended upon the world the withering blight which we call “secularism”—an attitude which is concerned solely with things upon life's surface, with no sense of unseen spiritual realities, no awareness of ultimate and eternal destinies. Our standard of values became reversed.

In consequence of this, Man's life has been almost wholly organised around “these things,” his days consumed with a fever of getting, his nights broken by the nightmare of losing. Commercial pursuits became his supreme concern, stratifying men and nations into classes and groups on the basis of their economic status. It encouraged ruthless competition—that is what we call it within the State; between States it simply is War.

Gold has been our god, with greed as its high-priest and pleasure the one end to be served. Our very use of words betrays us. This afternoon I looked up the most recent dictionary to come out of Oxford, and this is what I found as a definition of “Wealth”—“abundance of material resources, riches,” and then came the significant note “archiac—well-being.” You see what we have done; we have taken that word and emptied it of all moral content. That is an eloquent commentary on the drift of life in the last century.

Instead of speaking about the good a man has done, we speak most about his goods. Instead of estimating a man's place in society by the richness of his life, we place him according to the riches he has amassed. We have taken the clear, limpid stream which rises in the heights of Man's moral nature and sets the seal of nobility upon him, that is, his desire for a richer and fuller life, and we have turned it into the turbid, foul-smelling and poisonous town-river of avarice, the feverish desire to possess things.

This is the disease which, working through Western civilization, has brought us to this agony. It is this which has corrupted our conception of freedom, and held the idea of democracy up to derision. The democracy against which the Dictators inveigh is a secularised, selfish, anarchical parody of the real thing. Instead of being a principle of social unity it had become identified with individualism in its worst form. Instead of being an instrument whereby freemen might be subject to the will of God, it became a justification for the selfishness of men and nations. When freedom had come to mean simple liberty to do what one likes regardless of others, and pacifism meant, for many, no more than a petulant demand for non-interference in pursuit of that end, we had fallen far from those conceptions of liberty as a cause worth dying for and as a true foundation for ordered life. It has been our materialism which has betrayed us. It is upon this that the judgment of God is falling today.

—“The Victoria Craftsman.”

"FREE AND ACCEPTED MASON"

WE are indebted to Brother J. Rice Williams, Grand Lecturer of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, for the following tabulated interpretation of this meaningful expression—"Free and Accepted Mason":

FREE

Free to meet when, where and as we please.

Free to express our opinions as freely in the presence of dignitaries as in the presence of the humblest citizen.

Free to express by our ballot our choice of the administrators of our government.

Free to criticize adversely those whom we have placed in office regardless of rank or station.

Free agents and **Masters** of our own actions.

Free, if prepared in heart, from the **Dominion** of passion, prejudice, false pride, and the follies of human nature.

ACCEPTED

Accepted as a builder of character as distinguished from an operative or stone mason.

Accepted as an enlightened, speculative Mason to whom has been entrusted the esoteric mysteries of the Fraternity.

Accepted into an ancient and honorable Institution that guards its honor so carefully that none are "**entered**" except by unanimous ballot after due investigation of his past and present behavior.

Accepted into a band of friends and brothers with the privilege, and charged with the duty of advancing respect for, and reliance on, the Supreme Architect of the Universe, ameliorating the suffering of humanity, realizing that in his collective capacity he can do much but not forgetting his **individual** responsibility.

MASON

A man whose word is his bond.

A man whose ear is open to hear the cry of distress, whose eye penetrates sham and deceit, whose feet are swift to run errands of mercy, and whose hand supports the falling brother.

A man who eschews evil, and clings to the good

A man subject to the faults and foibles of human nature, but whose desire is to do good and to show mercy.

The cause of human progress is his cause, the enfranchisement of human conscience his mission, and the guarantee of equal rights to all people his supreme desire.

Elaborating still further on this same theme,

Brother J. W. Parker, while Grand Master of Masons in Georgia, said:

The right of free speech, freedom of the press, free assembly, freedom of worship, and trial by jury that we enjoy today as commonplace were acquired at great sacrifice. It is our privilege to enjoy them and our duty to transmit them unimpaired to posterity.

It seems that three despots have designed to conquer and divide among themselves the entire world. They have overrun small nations, slaughtered and enslaved free men, and shown their utter contempt for those things we hold sacred. Today the high altar of St. Paul's which was designed by our brother, Sir Christopher Wren, likewise is a shamble of ruin. It was my sacred privilege to worship at that high altar, likewise to witness the rays of the noonday sun through the Rose Window of Westminster—a priceless treasure of antiquity, which is endangered by the ruthless aggression of those who came to destroy and not to fulfill. Not only has Masonry been destroyed in those countries but the rights and privileges we hold to be inalienable have been swept away. Consequently, Masonry, with few exceptions, no longer exists in any but the English-speaking countries.

Therein lies the challenge to us. In America we face our greatest crisis. For the first time in history we are confronted with a law calling for peace-time conscription of our manpower for military service. Let me urge, with all the emphasis of my being, that every member of our Craft, yea every man, woman, and child within our far-flung borders, fully, completely, and whole-heartedly co-operate with our Federal Government in its program to establish the complete defense of our country. The only language dictators know or understand is the language of force. Our only hope for peace, the only hope that we have that our American institutions shall not be destroyed, lies in such a complete armament of this nation that no other nation and no combination of powers on this earth would dare attack us.

At the present time our greatest opportunity for service is the privilege of serving our country in this its greatest crisis. Let us do all within our power to train and equip our nation to meet the emergency that is sure to come. In the language of Admiral Nelson, "America expects every man to do his duty." Never before have we seen so great a need for loyalty to our American ideals. At a time when they are threatened from within and without, it becomes essential that we display a sincere patriotism—not a synthetic fervor brought about by the music of bands and the waving of flags, but deep and serious consideration of what Americanism means and how we can best preserve it.

That challenge to service is ours today!



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