



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor, pro tem: S.m Harris, P.G.M.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

LONG AGO the Great Teacher, when on trial for his life, was asked by his judge, "What is truth?" So far as the record tells, no precise answer to the question was attempted. Some have suggested it was asked in irony. There does not seem to be any sound reason for saying so. Let us give Pontius Pilate the benefit of the doubt and believe he was sincere. Certainly if he was, he is to be included among many men who in all ages have asked and attempted to find the answer to the question.

Masonry professes to teach truth. Therefore, every sincere Mason is bound to satisfy himself so far as he is able that there is truth to be taught.

Now there is one thing which has claimed the attention of thoughtful men always and everywhere. This is the evidence of perpetual change. Nothing we know today was the same yesterday or will be the same tomorrow. With every moment of time every object of our surroundings changes. The tree grows or decays, the mountain erodes, the river changes its course by ever so little, the cells of our bodies break down and are replaced; even our minds change from one day to the next. This seeming fact of universal change has been the subject of much thought. One of the ancient philosophers said "everything changes" or as he expressed it, "all things flow". He set himself to prove that there is nothing outside this general statement. Another takes the exactly opposite view and said nothing changes but only seems to do so. He used the famous illustration of an arrow in flight. He said, "When you see the arrow it is at a certain place and so it is actually not moving at all and so will never arrive anywhere." In some such fashion grew up the idea that all the things we think we see are illusions and exist only in the mind itself. If this is correct, then there can be nothing of which we can be sure or in a final sense true.

To some philosophers such a conclusion seemed absurd and they sought to find a way to reconcile the two extreme views. The mathematicians came to

the rescue and argued that not all things could be measured by the senses of sight, taste, hearing, touch and smell. We all remember the axiom which we learned: "The whole is greater than its parts and is equal to the sum of all its parts." A man is, after all, only a part of the world or universe and cannot measure or understand the whole thing.

In this way the idea developed that there are two kinds of truth. One, that which deals with the so-called world of our experience where change rules supreme and which to some extent we can understand, and the other, which lies behind the world of change and which is unchangeable and for the most part unknowable.

The finally unknown reality has been called by different names, such as Necessity, Final Cause, or God. The need for some unchanging reality seems imperative. If all things seem to change how do we know it? A log floating down the river seems to move because we on the bank are not moving. We could not think of change unless, at the same time, we think of something which does not change.

It is risky to speak too sweepingly, but perhaps one can say that for the most part religious teachers and moralists have this two-sided view. On the one hand is the Supreme Being, omnipotent, omniscient, the final Good, by whom all things are ordered to a definite end and who is unchangeable having established final laws of life and conduct which can be learned and obeyed, and on the other hand, is the world of our experience with ourselves set in the midst of it confronted with the problems of life and living.

If there are divine laws which we may obey to our benefit or disobey at our peril, it is important that we learn what they are. How can we be sure of what moral or religious truth is? In general there are two sources of certainty. One is the way of revelation. Some tell us that in the V.O.T.S.L. there is revealed the final will of the G.A.O.T.U. complete for all time. The difficulty in accepting this claim without reser-

vation is that this volume, even with all its magnificent contribution to truth, has passed to us through human hands and we know it contains many inaccuracies. Further, conditions have changed. Our knowledge of the world has grown since it was committed to writing. Such an institution as slavery was taken for granted in those days.

The other source of truth is experience. One of the Greek philosophers laid down this principle, "Man is the measure of all things." This is interpreted today to mean that any idea which when put into effect works, is sound, and to be permanently accepted as true. But here we get back to the first question. If we say, that which works is true, we must agree what is to be worked for, that is, what end is good or desirable. The old-time philosophers were right when they insisted that there must be some final truth whether we can comprehend and understand, even state it or not. We as practical beings say that is good which promotes human welfare and happiness. Then what is this welfare and happiness? Again our old-time philosophers can help us. They said a man should be happiest doing that which only he, as different from other animals, could do, that is, in using his superior intelligence.

Happiness in this rich sense is then not something cheap or easily obtained. Not all of us have either the time, ability, or opportunity to follow the efforts of the philosophers as they do the necessary and valuable work of trying to establish final truth. We can, however, be sure that there is nothing yet unearthed by the most profound study which is superior to the belief that there is a moral order in the universe at the centre of which there is a Supreme Intelligence which may be beyond our understanding.

Further, we can without apology, assert that in the world of change we can, by our efforts, contribute to the welfare and happiness of mankind. Experience has shown us that certain things do work to this end. *Honesty and fair dealing, kindness, faith in ourselves and others are in this class.* In a word, the application of the Golden Rule pays dividends into the bank of human happiness. This is the teaching of Masonry.

Necessarily owing to the limitations of space in this article many interesting and fascinating topics related to the theme have to be barely touched on or omitted altogether. May the writer hope to have made some contribution toward clearing up certain confusions in the minds of some of the brethren who are in earnest search of that truth which makes us free.

R. W. Bro. A. E. OTTEWELL,
Junior Grand Warden.



Anyone, however eloquent, can teach others the truth and beauty of his religion better with his life than with his lips. *Selected.*

ALL HONOUR TO THE TYLER

By the Editor of The Masonic Chronicle

Dear Brethren: This week I wish to pay due honor and tribute to that humblest of Masonic officers—the Tyler. Perhaps some of us think of him only as the member elected to sit without the door armed with the proper instruments of his office. If so, we miss something of the grimness, the glory and beauty of our order.

I ask you to remember the origin of the Tyler's position and to recall the serious duties he performed. Indeed, there was a time—there have been times, and may be again—when the Tyler's work equalled in importance that of the W.M. himself. That was, or may be, because if the Tyler's work is not done properly and efficiently, no meeting of the lodge can be held.

In olden days his was the responsibility of keeping off all those opposed to the work of the order. His was the task of seeing that none passed or repassed who were not recognized as Master Masons. Without his work and devotion to duty, Masonry would have been destroyed long ages ago. Through all those long centuries he has stood as the shield, the guard, to protect us against evil forces that would ruin us, even now.

I have known lodges who chose some brother for this office simply because he was available, willing to serve and faithful in attendance. A lodge cannot be opened without a Tyler, so, if the regularly elected officer is not present some one else is pressed into service "because the work is simple and easy."

Would that each member of the lodge and each brother who fills the office of Tyler could always be aware of what that office once meant—yea, even what it means today. Today the instruments of his office are but symbols; but once he carried them for a noble though deadly purpose. The Tyler who stands without the door today, properly armed, is in commemoration of those danger fraught times when his alertness and fearlessness insured the possibility of fraternal meetings secure from molestation.

Today, however, the Tyler's office holds a deeper, though symbolic, meaning to all of us. And that is but another of the deeper secrets of Masonry.

While it is true that certain officers must be present to open a lodge of Master Masons in actuality, it is also true that each of us as we go about our daily affairs constitutes a lodge unto himself. In this personal lodge each must hold all of the offices. Over our own lives we are the W.M. to govern and guide, the S.W. to see that we receive our wages and are not dissatisfied; the J.W. to oversee our work; but most important we must be our own Tyler. In this capacity we shall see to it that no evil or wrong doing shall gain admittance to the lodge which is within our own hearts.

Herein, Brethren, is the secret of every true and well governed lodge. Only if the lodge which is within our own hearts is pure, clean, moral and upright can we

hope that our association together in a physical, material lodge will be successful. Men who are not good Masons when away from the lodge cannot be good members when within it.

Here it is that the Tyler we appoint to guard us against cowans and evildoers must do his work. The enemy knows we are weakest when alone. Then is when we must be doubly alert to prevent the intrusion of thoughts, of deeds that have no part in our Masonic life.

Some men call the unseen Tyler, conscience. Once we are truly imbued with the genuine Masonic spirit that Tyler will report for duty and be always on the job. And, Brothers, in your personal Masonic career no office is more important. Remember that when next time you attend lodge—and look upon the Tyler as the symbol of a power that stands always between you and the evil forces that ever seek to destroy not only you but your honored and beloved order as well.



NO HALF-WAY MEASURE

One of the first requisites of a successful officer in a Blue Lodge of Freemasons is that he familiarize himself with every portion of the ritual.

From many quarters recently have come complaints that some worshipful masters do not know their Master Mason Degree lecture or that the wardens have failed to properly acquaint themselves with their duties in the lodge room. Such neglect is a violation of the oath of office and each person guilty of failure to comply with the simple rules of the order should be required to learn the ritual or should be summarily removed from office by those in authority.

Slipshod methods of exemplifying degrees should be discontinued. It not only is injurious to the order but is unfair to the candidate. There is nothing more humiliating to lodge members than a worshipful master who does not properly conduct the degree work.

If a person feels he has not the time to properly learn his ritualistic work then he should not be elected to a lodge office, and, if elected, he should resign to make way for someone who has the interest of Freemasonry and his lodge at heart.

There should be no half-way measure in officiating during a degree, no matter in what branch of the order it may be. Either it should be done properly and with appropriate solemnity or it should not be done at all. —*Masonic Home Journal*.

(The above article appears to be very appropriate at this time in that a great many Lodges are now electing their officers to guide and conduct their business through the present year.—S.H.).



Only the nondescript is carefree and so the only completely happy one.

CONGRATULATIONS

Our sincere congratulations are extended to M.W. Bro. W. R. Simpson, P.G.M., who has been appointed as Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia to succeed our late distinguished brother, M.W. Bro. Frank S. McKee. It will be remembered that M.W. Bro. Simpson favoured us with his presence when our Grand Lodge convened in Calgary in 1941. We trust the Most High will give M.W. Bro. Simpson good health and strength in order that he will be able to serve his Grand Lodge for many years to come.

S.H.



TIGHTENING THE BRAKES

There appears the following in the annual address of Grand Master Carl H. Claudy of the District of Columbia:

"Our mushroom growth (after World War I) had no lasting qualities. The depression caused a great majority of those whom we too hastily admitted to drop away. Accustomed to large growth, much money all clear on the books in annual reports, we were poorly prepared to face adversity. In those days it was thought wise and right to issue dispensations for any number of candidates—it was for the 'boys who fought to make the world safe for democracy' and nothing was too good for them. But what we intended as good proved a boomerang for the fraternity; it lost forever the regard of many a good man and true, and injured our Masonry and our lodges by taking from us our own feeling of the sacredness and solemnity of the degrees."

(I wonder whether the above is not happening again at the present time?—S.H.).

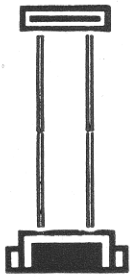


Those who flatter themselves that by suppressing radical thoughts they can make the present systems work, are due for more than one terrific jolt in the days to come.

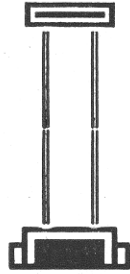
(Continued from page 20)

the Great Architect, but we do know as a result of patient research, much regarding the people of Israel, how they worked, ate, lived, loved and labored. Knowing other great artists who have devoted their lives to the creation of the beautiful it is with some assurance we liken Hiram Abif's character to the average of great workmen who have labored to produce beauty before the eyes of him they worshipped.

Legendary though our story of Hiram Abif is, and must ever be, our conception of the Architect can continue to be an inspiring fact, and we the better men and Masons because it is such a man as this that we are taught to represent.



Between the Pillars



IN the sublime degree of Master Mason you were doubtless impressed by the tragedy of Hiram Abif more than any other part of this impressive ceremony. As the degree is the climax of initiation, so is that tragedy the climax of the degree.

The drama of Hiram Abif is ritualistic, and while it has an historical connection, it is a mistake to accept it in its entirety as historically authentic.

Just when the legend of Hiram Abif came into our symbolism is a study by itself of which only a few bare facts can be here included. Common understanding holds that Hiram Abif has always been in our system. Our oldest manuscript, dated approximately 1390, makes no mention of Hiram Abif. However, a later manuscript dated about 1550 mentioned him, but only as one among many. Not until the King James version of the Bible appeared (about 1611) do we find Hiram Abif known as such with any degree of familiarity. Yet sometime after the Bible made its appearance (late in the 1600's when the King James version became well known) interest in King Solomon's Temple was so keen that many models were made and exhibited, and handbooks about it printed and distributed. From this may have arisen the familiarity, by inference, with Hiram Abif.

In First Kings we read: "And King Solomon went and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and cunning to work all kinds of brass. And he came to King Solomon and wrought all his work."

In II Chronicles, Hiram, King of Tyre is made to say: "And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, Hiram my father's, the son of a woman of the daughter of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skillful to work in gold, silver, in brass, in iron, in stone and in timber, in purple and blue and fine linen, and in crimson, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men and with the cunning men of David thy father."

The end of the story of Hiram Abif is short and calm, not great or tragic. In Chronicles it is stated: "And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for King Solomon for the house of God." The writer of Kings is no less brief: "So Hiram made an end to all the work that he made for King Solomon for the House of the Lord."

It is quite easy to picture any historical character with at least reasonable accuracy by comparing with others of the time his opportunities, habits and work.

Sacred history teaches much regarding the time of Solomon; of his queen, the daughter of Egypt; of Hiram, King of Tyre; of Adoniram, the tax collector; of officers whom Solomon set over the various districts. We have a regal picture of Solomon's court, and a lengthy and minute description of the Temple.

The Chief builder, architect, master workman, give him what title you will, could hardly have directed the greatest work in Israel's history, been received by Solomon from Hiram, King of Tyre, as the best he had to offer, and not have been at the same time a man of skill, ability, learning and culture. To think of him only as an artisan or workman would be to misunderstand the few sentences in Kings and Chronicles quoted above. He must have been a wise man indeed into whose charge Solomon the Wise was content to give his most ambitious undertaking.

It is not surprising, therefore, that one legend tells of intense loyalty, firmness and fortitude under duress, reading into these qualities an exalted and elevated character, quite in keeping with the architect and builder of the Temple.

For the Temple built by Hiram Abif was no mere shelter; it was an expression of Israel's love and adoration of the one God. To consider Hiram Abif as a mere decorator, beautifier, or ornament, is to deny the very thing for which he lived and (according to legend) gave his life. Architect he was in every sense of the word; builder, too, he was, in that he carried out his own plans.

Hiram Abif was doubtless regarded with great veneration by the workmen of the Temple over whom he came to rule while the building progressed. For at that time the knowledge of the tribes generally in art and handiwork was crude, and it is only natural to assume that one so skilled as Hiram Abif was highly respected. No wonder they called him "Abif", "my father".

While it is probable that Hiram Abif treated King Solomon with the highest respect in public, as was exacted from all subjects, high or low, it is also likely that Solomon regarded him as a close friend, and as nearly an equal as was possible for a potentate in those days with absolute power and authority. Therefore, there is nothing incongruous in our legendary picture of Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif acting together in concert as co-rulers—"our first three most excellent Grand Masters"—in governing the workmen and erecting the mighty structure of the Temple which engaged their attention for seven years.

While it is easy to say this picture is but a flight of fancy, it is less easy to draw another in its place and make it appear true. We know almost nothing of

(Continued on page 19)