



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam Harris, P.G.M.

## Symbolism in the Realm of Nature

*In contemplation of created things,  
By steps we may ascend to God.  
—Milton.*

Once again we emerge from the shelter of winter to work in the fields and gardens, imbued with the great Masonic principles we have heard in the enchantment of our lodges. As we do so we see all around us those truths demonstrated in the realm of nature, in the great outdoors.

The questions may be asked — What has Freemasonry to do with the great outdoors? Are not its teachings confined to the tiled lodge? To making men better? To putting more Masonry into men? Let us for a moment search in the Great Light of Masonry, the Volume of the Sacred Law, and there we shall find the answer to these questions.

Jacob was asleep under the stars when he had that wonderful vision of "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and beheld the angels of God ascending and descending on it". It was on this occasion he received the great Promise that so bewildered him and caused him to exclaim, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven".

Moses received for mankind direct from God on Mount Sinai the Ten Commandments, which are as applicable today as when originally given—uncompromising Commandments to be broken only at our peril.

There will occur to our readers many other incidents recorded in the pages of sacred history where man walked and talked with God in the great outdoors. And so down through the ages we read of mankind groping for that Light which at times seemed so clear, only to be lost again until the search ended when the Son of God Himself came down and dwelt amongst men. He gave to man in the Sermon on the Mount, and on many other occasions in the

open air, the true Light to lighten the minds of all men and lead us to the source of true happiness, the Fountain of Life itself. Did He not use the symbolism of the natural world to explain to men and women the fundamental principles governing the relationship between God and His Universe? The most sorrowful event ever recorded, which exposed the terrible weakness of man, took place in the Garden—the open air—succeeded in a few hours by that little procession of heartsick and dejected followers to witness the apparent doom of their Leader, apparent to them at the time but followed in a few days by that amazing and glorious Triumph over the worst man and his laws could do; thus creating in the hearts of men and women such a Light which shall not be extinguished, although at times obscured by worldly cares and disappointments. A short while afterwards was witnessed by a chosen few, standing under the open sky, the departure and drawing up of the Son of God, who left them that priceless promise so soon fulfilled probably in an upper room, the gift of The Spirit, which came as, "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind."

It is then to the countryside we must go if we would witness living examples of the symbols of Freemasonry; for those emblems vibrate through and through with life as exemplified by God in nature. Freemasonry is not for the dull of mind or weak-hearted, but is truly a philosophical system for the conduct of life, through which we may learn something of the mysteries in the workings of the G.A.O.T.U. For instance, the fields of bare brown earth, fresh from the frozen quarry of winter, symbolize the rough ashlar of the Great Architect, for after seeding will slowly come a transformation. Day by day and week by week we see appearing the new vegetation covering the bare field, first with a living green, and then gradually changing to the golden tint of the ripening grain—the perfect ash-

lar. All this change and growth is the handiwork of the Complete Craftsman—the Master Himself, using man as His working tools.

If, on a midsummer day when the sun is at its meridian, we stand in a field and look towards the distant horizon, we are, unknowingly perhaps, but, nevertheless, truly representing great emblems of Masonic symbolism. Those brethren who are fortunate to reside in the country see such direct evidence of His workings: in the silent growth of vegetation, the changing colours, the storms, the wonderful skies; all of which seem to urge man "to cast away the works of darkness" and breathe in the pure healing balm of Life descending direct from the heavens above. No human intermediary is needed to becloud our personal spiritual contact with the G.A.O.T.U., for each brother in his own way is striving to produce a perfect ashlar within himself, hoping, in Faith, he will be found acceptable for a small niche in the building of His Great Temple, the Temple of many colours, the dwelling place of the Most High.

Just as the principles of Masonry are eternal, having existed since the beginning of time, so does the realm of nature itself confirm those principles. Has man been able to make a simple ear of wheat, containing as it does the great mystery of life? No. Neither has he been able to create a stream of pure water—both of which are given by the Great Architect Himself.

At harvest time, when He fills our cornucopia, not with gold, not with money, but with the fruits of the earth, let us take fresh heart, for it is direct evidence He does not desire the law of the jungle to prevail amongst men, but that these fruits should be shared with one another. They are given for the sustenance and enjoyment of all peoples.

As the sun sinks slowly away in the west, one by one the stars appear, reminding us of "the universality of our science." Soon a sweet-scented quietness seems to distil over the countryside, and looking up we see the glorious dark blue canopy displayed in all its brilliancy, and gaze with awe and humility at the stupendous works of our Creator. As the night wears on we observe, what appears to us, sublime, glistening, diamond studded compasses moving so slowly and silently around the universe, reminding humanity that within the points of those Divine Compasses the Master Builder enfolds all peoples, nations and languages, for "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

—V. Wor. M. J. Brodie, Past Grand Steward, Alberta.

### LOOKING BACK AT EVENTIDE

When day is done, and evening shadows fall, we like to turn our face toward the east, and in memory view the day that has just passed. We live over again the beautiful daybreak, the early morning, with its hurried preparation for a day's work, the warm noon sunshine, and in the west we see the beautiful twilight, that reminds us that the day is

almost spent, and that darkness will soon settle down around us, and will be remembered only in the recollections of yesterday.

Such is life. When we have passed life's happy, playful morning, gone through the hustle and tussle of life's busy noon, and stand in the contented evening of life's twilight, we like to look back across the years, and in memory live over life's short day, and count one by one the brightest gems that stand out on the pages of memory.

We see the little school house that stood among the oaks by the roadside, and the spring that gushed from beneath the rock in the valley near by. We see the little church where we first heard the story of Jesus, and it was there that we began to follow reverently in His footsteps, that have led us safely down the rock-strewn journey of life, from the cradle to life's approaching twilight.

It was in this same little churchyard where the writer saw his first gathering of Freemasons, and the event stands out in my mind as one of the major events of yesteryears. They had gathered to pay their last respects to a Brother Mason who had been called from labor to rest, and the one being laid away was one of the very best citizens of that or any other age or time.

The writer had known him from my earliest childhood, and had at that early time in life received many kindnesses from his helping hand.

More than a half century later I was permitted to visit that little graveyard in the hills of Tennessee, and stood with uncovered head before the little mound of earth that contains his earthly remains, and I thought of the influence of his life on my early childhood, and what Masonry has meant to me in the years that have passed. The world has changed to almost beyond recognition since then. The oxcart, the stick-seat buggy, the muzzle-loading gun have gone, as have the old-fashioned churn and the side-saddle. And with them has about vanished the family altar that meant so much to us in our early childhood.

But Freemasonry seems to be the only institution that has withstood the ravages of time, and remains about the same in life's twilight as it was during those happy, care-free days of life's early morn. God seems to have given His blessings to this venerable, time-tested institution. It has been persecuted, legislated against, and its members have died in the dungeon, but it seems to thrive on persecution, and grow stronger with the years.

May it ever be thus. May we who have grown up under its wholesome teachings, and been found worthy to walk side by side with other Master Masons down the pathway of life, keep its standard high, and pass it on to our children and our children's children as honored and respected as we found it.

To this noble principle let us dedicate the declining years of our life, that those who follow after us may enjoy the same happy, pleasant surroundings that we have enjoyed.

—Bro. John L. Sipes, Jacksboro, Texas.

### RITUAL NOT ENOUGH

Masonry has no room for narrowmindedness, nor is its educational horizon confined to the Temple. It is not a secret society, for its aims and objects are known the world over and no attempt ought to be made to conceal them. The only secrets attached to the Craft are the modes of recognition and the methods of identification; and these, after all, are our safeguards against the admission of undesirables into a community of men who prize honour and virtue above all else.

There are so many Brethren whose knowledge of the Craft does not go outside the Ritual, Brethren who have been given little or no instruction in Masonic symbolism or the inner meaning of the ceremonies, and who have but a limited idea of the Fraternity of which they are members. A good knowledge of the Ritual is highly desirable, but it should also be remembered that Ritualism is only the outward and visible sign of Masonry.

The modern man is above all a thinker, an inquirer. The age of unquestioning faith is passed. In every phase of life men are asking "Why?" and expect to be answered plainly. If the answers are not forthcoming enquirers turn away, and that means in Masonry a great army of unattached Brethren.

—Ashlar, Queensland.

### SLOPPINESS

How can the word come within the realm of Masonic conventions? It is a serious question to be asked. It solicits much thought. Brother, cast your eye around the lodge room just after the Master sounds the gavel in the East. What do you see? Every officer at attention occupying his chair and filling his station. No slouching in his chair, no feet spraddled over a half acre. He sits upright, alert, with arms as they should be and with feet resting squarely on the floor with no more than twelve inches between them. He will not be "at ease" but he will be alert. Such it should be in opening, closing, conferring degrees and when attending to the business meeting and features of the lodge. Periods of relaxation will come throughout the session or meeting, but "sloppiness" has no home in Masonry. While order and decorum in appearance and action are always expected, that does not call for a stiff collar and tie when it has been 100 degrees at three o'clock in the afternoon. Common sense can be depended upon when it comes to personal appearance in a Masonic lodge room. Every brother needs to avoid the extreme and thereby he will find himself harmonizing with others in "appearance and gesture."

—P. C. Somerville in Masonic News.

### HOPE . . .

The three principal rounds of that theological ladder which Jacob saw in his vision are referred to as Faith, Hope, and Charity, with particular stress placed upon the latter. But no attention is directed to that all important round next to it, without which the

latter would be of no use—that all effective round called Hope.

The one virtue that is common to all mankind alike is hope, whether with the highest business executive or the lowliest laborer; the five-star general or the G.I. in a foxhole. And no one is so miserably wretched as the one without hope. No struggle is ever lost until hope is first abandoned.

The trite old expression "live in hope even though you may die in despair" has been so oft repeated it sounds like a bundle of empty words. Yet our endeavors prove it to be an apt suggestion. We struggle a lifetime in an effort and with hope of attaining some degree of wealth whereby we can live in comfort and ease; and even possibly then we may end up as a pauper. But at least it was a happy vision that carried us along, and in the effort we provided the comforts our families needed even though we stopped far short of our goal.

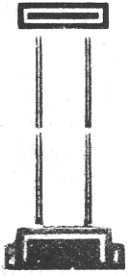
By the hope we carry on during the short span allotted to us with our eyes on a moveable goal just a little further on, Hope leads us on like the star of the East which led the three wise men. We approach the goal we have in mind but by the time we are nearing it our interest is switched to another just a little further on, and we never become self-satisfied.

We can liken it to a mirage. When driving across the desert we see what seems to be a beautiful lake in the distance. By the time we have driven the distance we thought we observed the lake, either it appears to be still a like distance ahead or it has disappeared altogether. Or let us liken it to a trip as children to the end of the rainbow in search of the fabled pot of gold. We may travel toward the rainbow, yet we do not reach it. Even though we never reach the lake nor find the end of the rainbow, yet that blissful anticipation was full compensation for the effort.

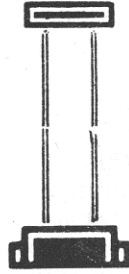
Likewise our very lodges are kept together and the lodge work carried on through hope and faith. A deserving member is appointed to a lower appointive office. He looks with hope and pride each year to his succession to the next higher office. By the time he has attained the next office it becomes commonplace to him and he is then looking to the next and so on until he reaches the highest honor the lodge has to confer. Then he looks hopefully for the time he can retire with the title of past master. Further then his vision expands into broader service in the fraternity. Through it all he has carried the abiding hope he could be of service to his fellowman and make his burden just a little lighter and by so doing have the happiness of brightening the lives of others.

By this very same hope we have carried on and sacrificed through these war weary years. And now our thoughts turn to another goal, an era of peace when "the lamb shall lie down with the lion" and when we shall know no more war.

—Square and Compass.



## Between the Pillars



### FOUR TASSELS . . .

"Pendant to the four corners of the Lodge are four tassels . . ."

At first sight the virtues constantly practiced by our ancient brethren may appear to us to be four good qualities taken at random from the pages of a copybook. Temperance, Prudence, Fortitude, Justice—they are all very obvious virtues.

Temperance may refer to far more than moderation in eating and drinking. To be temperate in opinion and in expression is to obey the injunction not to be an enthusiast—which means, or meant when the word came into the ritual, a hot-headed crank. "Act moderately," said the old Greek adage. Restraint is one of the qualities of strength, not of weakness. "An educated man," said Confucius, "should above all be a reasonable being who is always characterized by his common sense, his love for moderation, and his restraint."

Prudence is providence. Providence is the quality of foresight, of looking ahead. Providence with a capital P is the All-Foreseeing, the Absolute. Psychiatrists tell us that the way to resolve, or cure, a fear-complex or anxiety-neurosis is to face the facts of what we fear, assess probabilities honestly, take reasonable precautions. Foreseeing will lead us to this, and hence we may discern the relation between providence and prudence.

Fortitude is the quality which most of us can discover in times of real stress, but which we are apt to forget in normal but slightly trying times. The lover of trinities may regard Prudence as Wisdom, Fortitude as Strength, and Temperance as the beautiful combination of the two in the avoidance of excess.

Justice, justness of life and action, teaches us not to rationalize. Rationalization is another psychiatrist's term. It means explaining away whatever has happened so that it works out that whoever was wrong, we ourselves were right. It amounts to saving one's face with oneself, finding excuses for oneself, blaming other people—generally the boss. Constant job changers are more often than not the victims of rationalization. In its acute forms rationalism is a manifestation of schizophrenia, that aberration which sometimes manifests itself in Jekyll-and-Hyde personality.

We all rationalize to some extent. The justness of our self-appraisal is the measure of our honesty with other people. To do full justice to them, we must be no more than just to ourselves.

Justification is a word which is well known in its metaphorical sense—to justify God's ways to man—to explain them and show what they are right. But in certain trades the old literal use survives: to make just, to make true, right and accurate.

Justice is straightness, accuracy, precision. Justice implies having standards and adhering to them, turning neither to the right nor to the left from the paths of virtue. Justice implies giving every man his due, rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and not falsifying our income tax returns; neither letting our neighbor down nor taking him down. It is no more than justice to render unto God the things that are God's. Justice, said the great jurist, Justinian, is a firm and continuous desire to render to everyone that which is his due.

The standards we apply to ourselves should be strict, but when it is in our power to judge others—whether or not the community vests it in us—we should at least remember that one of the distinguishing characteristics of a good Freemason is Mercy. "Temper Justice with Mercy"—it is a noble counsel. How much better society would be if we were all suddenly to adopt a harsher standard for ourselves and a kinder one for other people. It would mean the biggest revolution that mankind had witnessed. Our judgment would be Temperate, our character would be informed by Fortitude, our Prudence would become developed, while something more clearly approaching Justice would guide our relations with our fellow-creatures.

—The New Zealand Craftsman.

### MAKING A MASTER MASON

How is a Master Mason made? Not by passing through a few ceremonies and answering a few test questions. He is made a Master Mason in the months and years after his raising. Throughout these years he needs the support and encouragement and personal fellowship of his Brethren. He needs constant instruction in Freemasonry, even not so much as instruction or education within itself, but as part of an intelligently conceived and properly executed long range plan, promulgated by Grand Lodge and carried out by subordinate Lodges.

—Exchange.

### NEVER ETC.

Never let us be discouraged with ourselves. It is not when we are conscious of our faults that we are the most wicked; on the contrary, we are less so. We see by a brighter light; and let us remember for our consolation that we never perceive our sins till we begin to cure them.

—Fenelon.

Put a seal upon your mouth and guard your heart with the same vigilance as the ramparts of a city. Write your name in kindness, love and mercy on the hearts of the thousands you come in contact with year by year, and you will never be forgotten.

—Chalmers.