



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam Harris, P.G.M.

Inculcate The Practice of Virtue

Some month ago I had the privilege of writing an article in the Bulletin and at that time I expressed my appreciation of the honor done to me by Grand Lodge, and now I again wish to say thank you, for the added honor of placing me in the West as the Senior Grand Warden.

Since my elevation last year I have taken the opportunity of attending as many of the District Meetings and other functions as I could. By so doing, I was enabled to meet a great many Brethren and shake their hands and see the light of friendship in their eyes. It is a great thing to know that one has so many Brothers in all walks of life and all motivated by "a sincere wish to make themselves more extensively serviceable to their fellowmen". All of these Brethren have at some time said they had a general desire for knowledge and in my journeyings I found a real thirst for Masonic Education, particularly amongst the Brethren living in the far flung outposts of the jurisdiction. They revel in the visits of Grand Lodge Officers relying on their bringing an educational and inspirational message. They were certainly appreciative of the message brought to them by M.W. Bro. Howard B. Macdonald and they seem to love to hear from our Grand Secretary, M.W. Bro. George Moore, with his informal, entertaining and instructive talks.

I was impressed by the need of more frequent visits with instructive addresses and, in my opinion, it would be a step in the right direction to relieve the Grand Secretary from his routine duties and permit him to make a round of visits each year. In addition to this I am in agreement with the idea of a panel of speakers or instructors. I am sure they would be welcome and that the "truly Masonic Virtue", Hospitality, would be extended to them.

In my last article I dealt with some phrases at the beginning of the first lecture and I would like to continue this by a reference to the expression "every character figure and emblem has a moral tendency and serves to inculcate the practice of virtue in all of its genuine professors". This would apply to every ceremony, sign, token, symbol and allegory.

Our art and speech and every-day living are crowded with these symbols. If we lack a symbol we invent one, for they make life more tolerable in many ways. They speak for us and they also speak to us. They

are progressive hints at truth and those who understand may likewise enter into a more abundant life; a life, too, for which there is neither decay nor death. A system of morality, a logical and social way of living, there must be, else life would have neither centre nor circumference.

A plumb-line is emblematic of rectitude and by it we are taught to walk uprightly but with humility before God, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left from the strict path of virtue.

In the very opening of the Lodge there is reference to the marking of the sun at its meridian and calling from labor to refreshment. Why this reference to the Sun when at its meridian? We must not lose sight of the fact that Freemasonry is a symbolic system, and the questions and answers can admit of an interpretation only in the light of symbolism. The sun at its meridian marks the centre of a circle of the Earth and the indicated centre of a circle is a symbol of deity; the essential idea is therefore calling a halt in the labors of heart and brain for refreshment at the fountain of the life-giving Spirit of God.

There is also a reference to the marking of the setting sun . . . after having seen that every Brother has had his just due. The setting sun is frequently a symbol of the close of life. The just due can be admitted as being a just reward for life's labor. There are many applications of the sun to human life and probably the setting sun may be regarded as implying the conclusion of daily duties under the symbol of the All Seeing who is the giver of all and awards to each one his due.

Again we have a reference to the Master being likened to the Sun opening and enlivening the day; the idea of service, the Sun going forth in his strength as it were in the Service of mankind; that service which produces and sustains the life of nature for the needs of men. The Greeks made Apollo, the Sun God, to be the God of Wisdom and it is doubtless in this sense also, that the W.M. is likened to the sun for his Column is that of Apollo which is that of wisdom. Being also a representative of Solomon as the presiding High Priest he should, to maintain his character, instruct the members of his Lodge upon the vital principles of assuming the character of service in its highest relationship to the needs of men.

Thus my Brethren even the first opening ceremonies involve the highest principles and we can go on with the interpretation of our symbolic art.

A closing thought for the day:

*"It is my joy in life to find
At every turning of the road,
The strong arm of a comrade kind
To help me onward with my load
And since I have no gold to give
And love alone must make amends
My only prayer is, while I live,—
God make me worthy of my friends.
—Frank Sherman Dempster."*

—HARRY E. HOWARD, Senior Grand Master.

FOR TRUTH AND FREEDOM

Some day, when the cloud of prejudice has been dispelled by the searchlight of Truth, the world will honor Masonry for its heroic service to freedom of thought and freedom of faith. No part of its ministry has been more noble, no principle of its teaching has been more precious than its age-long and unwavering demand for the right and duty of every soul to seek that light by which no man was ever injured, and that Truth which makes him free. Down through the ages—often where human conscience was dragged as a slave at the wheel of the ecclesiastical chariot—always and everywhere, Masonry has stood for the right of the soul to know the Truth, and to look up unbidden from the lap of the earth unto the face of Him in whose great hand it stands. Not freedom from faith, but freedom of faith, has been its watchword, on the ground that as despotism is the mother of anarchy, so bigoted dogmatism is the prolific source of skepticism.

—JOSEPH FORT NEWTON.

THE VOICE OF ALBERT PIKE

That our influences shall survive us and not merely that our names shall be remembered—this is the aspiration of the human soul.

To learn, to attain knowledge, to be wise, is a necessity for every truly noble soul; to teach, to communicate that knowledge, to share that wisdom with others, is an impulse of a noble nature, and the worthiest work of man.

BE FAITHFUL

Be faithful to Masonry, which is to be faithful to the best interests of mankind. Labor, by precept and example, to elevate the standard of Masonic character, to enlarge its sphere of influence, to popularize its teachings and to make all men know it for the Great Apostle of Peace, Harmony, and Good-will on earth among men; of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.—Albert Pike.

Masonic labor is purely a labor of love. He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold and silver will be disappointed. The wages of a Mason are earned and paid in their dealings with one another. Sympathy begets sympathy, kindness begets kindness, helpfulness begets helpfulness—and these are the wages of a Mason.

MATERIAL FOR THE TEMPLE

The question is asked: If Masonry points to universal brotherhood: If Masonry is the teacher through a system of morality, why are certain qualifications necessary to gain entrance into the Institution? The answers would be varied and interesting. What would my answer be?

First, I would say that the pattern of Masonry was drawn by those who were divinely inspired, and that the ages have marked the stamp of approval on the wisdom of that pattern. Those Masons looked far into the future and determined that men could never build for others unless they were living examples of the material for the completed Temple. In their wisdom, they saw that only those who had made progress in the paths of brotherhood, through the development of the desire within them, could be serviceable to their fellow creatures. They saw that only the strong physically, mentally, and morally, could build for posterity. Those who were capable of placing themselves in a position to receive great truths could be inspired to receive still greater truths.

To offer it to those who do not have the faculty for recognizing the spiritual beauty of the gift, is to desecrate the Temple of Masonry.

The work of Masonry is not for the weak. Neither is it for the strong to use as strength to conquer the weak. It is for the strong to elevate all by living the principles of Masonry. It is the silent process wherein actions speak while words are left unsaid.

Let us, therefore, ask the question when a petition is presented the Lodge—"Will this material add beauty and strength to the temple?"

—Masonic Messenger, Georgia.

The Membership Statistics for the United States and Canada as at December 31st, 1949, are as follows:

The 49 Grand Jurisdictions in the United States report the substantial gain of 120,149 members and the nine Grand Jurisdictions in Canada report a gain of 7,304 members. Report is not at hand for Newfoundland. Every Grand Jurisdiction in the United States and Canada report a gain in membership although the Grand Jurisdiction of Vermont reports a gain of only one member. The largest gain in membership is reported by Texas with 9,646 members. The 15,304 Lodges in the 49 Grand Jurisdictions in the United States have a total membership of 3,548,121 members and the 1,422 Lodges in Canada have a total membership of 218,139 members.

Compiled from the Grand Lodge Bulletin of Iowa.

—S.H.

There are two principles which divide the wills of men: Covetousness and charity. Covetousness uses God and enjoys the world; charity is the opposite. Charity should be a distinguishing characteristic of every Freemason. It is in the practice of this virtue that man most nearly reveals his kinship to God.—York Rite Trestle Board.

GUARD WELL THE OUTER DOOR

A perusal of the Proceedings of various Grand Judisdictions throughout this and other countries reveals the fact that many Grand Masters are very apprehensive lest there be an influx into the Craft at the present time of a number of persons who are desirous of becoming Masons for different ulterior motives and who for that and other reasons are not likely to develop into genuine and worthwhile members of the Fraternity. Emphasis has been given again and again to the behest that all applications for admission into membership be carefully considered and the motive and character of the applicant be thoroughly investigated. One writer in a Grand Lodge Bulletin has said: "Freemasonry was never designed for the great majority. It is a peculiar institution. It is in no sense a club. It is on the other hand a brotherhood or fraternity of high ideals seeking to place before the individual the vital facts of living and to help men realize the higher and better things. Not every man, regardless of his moral qualification, is fitted to become a member of the Masonic fraternity."

It is evident that a serious responsibility devolves upon all newly installed and invested Officers of the Constituent Lodges in that they are expected to make a careful selection of new initiates, to create a serious impression upon the candidates by a proper rendition of the ritual, to make manifest a genuine welcome of the newcomers into the Lodge family, to maintain their interest and encourage their attendance at the regular meetings and to provide such a program of Masonic Education for each individual as will make possible his development into a satisfied and enthusiastic Mason.

—Grand Lodge Bulletin, Canada, in Ontario.

MASONIC ADMONITION

Many of our Members are Masons in name only, having eagerly rushed into the Order and failed to grasp and absorb the teachings they received. It takes a long time and much study to know and understand all that is implied in the various degrees of our Order. Every Member, who have been Masons for many years, confess freely that they know very little compared with all that can be known. A life time is not enough to become really well qualified and proficient in all the Degrees. Our education in Masonry is never complete. So I suggest that we should read, mark, learn and inwardly digest as much as we can of what Masonry teaches. Knowledge of ones self is the deep meaning of Masonry and will enable us to build wisely and well, a Temple that will receive the stamp of approval of the Great Architect.

Push on to know more, do more and be more. Life is not just a location, but a journey. Success is not measured by what a man has laid up, but by the difficulties he has overcome.

—Selected.

CHARACTER

Character is the capacity to conduct one's self with restraint in time of prosperity and with courage and tenacity when things do not go well.

Extract from a letter written by M.W. Bro. Dr. Peter Pilkey, P.G.M., to his Brethren of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. It is to be regretted that Brother Pilkey has found it necessary to resign as Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba on account of ill health.

"Many years ago a good friend of mine paid me a visit. We spent two or three happy days together. In many respects our lives had one feature in common. Both of us were young and both of us were still undergraduates in the University of Hard Knocks. He has long since ended the journey of life but he has left many happy memories with me. As we chatted one day in my study, our conversation drifted to the poet Browning. Among other things my friend said this:

"The foundation of Browning's philosophy of life were—the glory of the imperfect, the divinity of struggle, the supremacy of love, and the certainty of God." My friend was not at that time a member of a Masonic Lodge and I thought he had expressed in his own way the great principles of our noble craft. Time does not permit me to amplify the statement made by my friend. It deserves some thought and understanding.

"There is, unfortunately, a growing tendency in a number of our constituent lodges to forget the purposes for which we exist and to make every effort in making members instead of making Free Masons. Let us not forget that we are builders. Too often our building efforts are focused on the building of statistics. We must build a temple in our own lives and at the same time build a cathedral in which our fellow-man may find his place. We accept the tenets and principles of Free Masonry. We make allegiance to these principles our way of life and in the building of our own life's temple we demonstrate to our community and to our generation the worthwhileness of our way of life and thereby contribute to the building of the cathedral of friendship, in which all men and nations will find their peace and satisfaction. Is not such a cathedral just what our troubled world needs?

"If this is true then may the Great Architect of the Universe crown every honest endeavour to this end.

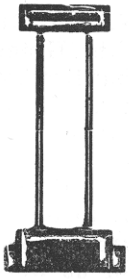
"Again let me say 'thank you' in all sincerity for all the kindness you have shown me and for all that it has meant to me in difficult and lonely days, as well as the co-operation given on all occasions. My beloved brethren, to one and all 'Au Revoir'."

—S.H.

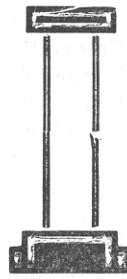
LODGES DISSOLVED

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP)—The interior ministry announced Monday night that Hungary's freemason lodges have been dissolved. The dissolution was carried out earlier Monday. The announcement called the lodges "the meeting places of the enemies of the people's democratic (Communist) republic, of capitalist elements, and of the adherents of western imperialism."

It's a wise man who never repeats his mistakes—to others.



Between the Pillars



THE HEALING POWER OF CHARITY

All men, Masons along with the rest, seem to be living in the grip of a fever. Fevers are disagreeable and destructive. The victims suffer headaches, they burn, sometimes they chill, they waste away and often have hallucinations in which the sane, normal world appears changed into some fantastic, unreal and awful thing. The presence of fever is a serious condition. Yet, fever itself is not a disease. It is a symptom or manifestation of some hidden illness. Fever is an effect, not a cause.

The type of fever under discussion here is not physical. Fever means elevated temperature. That, in a sense, can happen to the mental and spiritual nature of man as well as to his bodily structure. And the same law seems to hold. Abnormal temperature in the mental and spiritual faculties is also an effect, not a cause. Therefore, as in a physical case, to effect a cure we must look for and treat the cause. Unless that is found and eliminated the fever will recur.

There are many causes of fevers in the physical body but infection seems to be the most common one. Likewise there are many causes of mental and spiritual high temperature but here again an infection appears to be the most common. The basic cause seems to be an infection known as suspicion. As one type of bacteria may cause many different illnesses in the body just so this germ of suspicion shows up in a wide range of soul sickness. It may produce hate, anger, bitterness, jealousy, prejudice, injustice and scores of other forms of evil. It produces illusions, hallucinations, distorted views; it causes lies, slanders, destroys the tissue of confidence, faith and loyalty. It sets brother against brother, nation against nation until it brings on the madness of conflict and destruction.

Just as there are now specific remedies for the causes of most physical fevers so also is there one for this one gnawing at our souls. It is positive in its action; an abundant supply is available; and it doesn't cost a cent. No hospital or doctor is needed. The patient can treat himself when ever he needs it or wherever he is. The dosage doesn't have to be measured and the more of it he takes the better off he will be.

The name of this marvelous specific is Charity. Liberal use of it will reduce fever like magic by killing off the suspicion germs that so easily get into our systems and multiply with amazing rapidity.

Probably most of us know about this remarkable remedy but perhaps too many of us have not discovered how widely it may be used with great benefit. It is customary to think of charity as the act of relieving need by the giving of money or goods. But

that is only one kind of charity. There are many others. One of the most important has to do with our thinking. Thought is the food on which the germs of suspicion feed. Once let suspicion get rooted in the thought and it will flourish. When the poison it generates seeps into the mind all sorts of evil imaginings may develop with nothing at all to support them. In time the mind becomes warped, twisted, bitter and unwilling to accept the truth.

Exercising charity does not mean closing the eyes to evil or wrong doing. Charity in thought means that we comprehend the temptations, weaknesses and failures seen round about us and which sometimes affect ourselves, but do not permit such knowledge to warp our minds and lead us into harsh judgments unsupported by either truth or justice. It means persistent recognition of the inherent value of a soul, marking out for us a course of sympathy, kindness and effort to dissolve the dispute or remove the cause of doubt.

There has been and is, unfortunately, serious grounds for suspicion among men and nations. But has the policy of always accepting these as truth and proceeding to prepare defences or retaliation brought us any nearer to peace and happiness? Suspicion feeds upon itself. It so distorts the mind that eventually its victim can see evil intentions in every act or suggestion a fellow man makes. Thus we move in a never ending atmosphere of alertness to guard against our brother, our fellow man, instead of seeking in all ways to reconcile our views so that we may labor with him in peace and tranquility.

Charity of thought, of judgement, of opinion has a mighty power of healing. It may be betrayed occasionally, but the betrayer can have no pleasure or profit in it. Nor will the one betrayed suffer any great loss. The work that made each of us a Mason taught these principles. Charitable thought is one of the secrets of Masonic living. Master it, live it, demonstrate its virtue and we shall do much to aid and comfort a world wherein the greatest need is faith and confidence.

—Masonic Chronicler.

GOOD WILL

The most precious thing anyone can have is the good will of others. It is something as fragile as an orchid, and as beautiful. It is more precious than a gold nugget, and as hard to find. It is as powerful as a great turbine, and as hard to build. It is as wonderful as youth, and as hard to keep. It is an intangible something, this good will of others, yet more to be desired than much gold. It is the measure of a man's success and determines his usefulness in this life.

Be not anxious about tomorrow. Do today's duty, fight today's temptations; and do not weaken or distract yourself by looking forward to things which you cannot see, and could not understand if you saw them.—Charles Kingsley.

Master Masons too often measure their progress by the degrees they receive, rather than the degree with which they throw their influence into applied Masonic teachings.—Exchange.