



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: Sam Harris, P.G.M.

The Purpose and Plan of Masonry

*"Who loves not knowledge?
Who shall rail against her?
A Higher Hand must make her mild
If all be not in vain."—TENNYSON.*

The founders of Masonry realized the power and importance of spiritual life in human affairs. The Masonic Order was instituted to bring together men who believed in Jehovah, the God of righteousness, so that by study and association they might know what to believe concerning God of righteousness, so that best to express that belief in everyday life. Belief in God put into practice become the Higher Hand which gives material things their proper place, and raises manhood to its highest level. The purpose of Masonry should not be regarded as secret. Masons attend Church in a body, and when on parade, carry the Bible at the head of the column.

The Lodge is the unit in the Masonic plan of organized Masonry. The charter, the constitution, the by-laws, the ritual, the lectures, the examinations and the obligations are all part of the plan to consummate the purpose of Masonry.

The Masonic Lodge differs from most other fraternal orders in that a new Lodge must be composed entirely of M.M. in good standing. These charter members establish the throne of King Solomon, and then elect one of their number to occupy that throne as the humble representative of King Solomon. This throne becomes the heart and centre of all Masonic activities. The throne of Solomon, known outside of Masonry as the throne of David, has always been the symbol of God's Kingdom. At the time of Solomon, it was the throne of the Nation Israel. Upon the death of Solomon, Israel divided into two nations,—Israel and Judah. A few generations later, these two nations were conquered and taken into captivity.

We can understand how the individual could privately continue in the proper relationship with God even under captivity, but anything national in character requiring public meetings, was quite impossible. Under such circumstances, the worshippers of Jehovah were driven to the extremity of devising a secret system of words, signs and symbols by which they could identify each other, and carry on a limited amount of communication. This system was taken in part

from Temple worship, and in part from the Trade Guilds, which had for generations concealed and transmitted the secrets of their arts and building trades. It was from these guilds that they took the word 'Mason'. So complete and successful was the system devised that it has been copied by native tribes in Africa, Indians in North America, Chinese, Underworld gangsters in large cities, and all over the world by military and political groups. They have taken our signs and symbols, and in some cases, our ritual, but without the Masonic purpose and the Great Light, all is in vain.

Following the captivity of the worshippers of Jehovah, their history is badly broken, but is still the subject of considerable research. In 1717, the separate Lodges in Great Britain joined together, formed a Grand Lodge, and secured a Government Charter. Since that time, the history of Masonry is an open book.

The member who gets the vision of the Masonic purpose as being Spiritual and Eternal, and the plan as being national and physical, will find his Masonry vital and dynamic, bringing him personal freedom, desire to be charitable, and harmony with all that is right and righteous. The member whose vision takes in only the Masonic plan will naturally desire his Lodge to become a Service Club so that something worth while may be accomplished in a physical way. Such efforts usually end in resolutions, divisions, assessments and dissatisfied minorities. The Masonic Order lays down a few basic principles to which all members must subscribe. Beyond these, but in keeping with them, the individual is given full freedom to determine his own creed, economic and political theories.

The Masonic plan has succeeded in establishing the Throne of King Solomon in every nation throughout the world where there is a moderate amount of freedom. There is scarcely a town of importance in the Christian nations that does not have a Masonic Lodge working in support of law and order, and by example inspiring morality and brotherly love. Worthy as this influence may be, it is a mere incident in the Masonic

purpose. The purpose of Masonry cannot be understood until one realizes that the Throne of Solomon must at all times be occupied by an elected member of the Lodge from the day it is established up to and until the Word which is lost, returns to occupy that throne, and bring all the Lodges into one Grand Lodge, from which to give the world government, judgment, justice and peace. At no time in history has there been so little peace or security for nations or individuals as there is today. "Men cry, 'peace, peace', but there is no peace."

The Lodge has heroically defended and maintained the Throne of Solomon and the ancient landmarks against war, and infidelity from without and materialism and modernism from within. Our present dilemma is caused by our failure to prepare the way for the return of the Word. This preparation cannot be done by Lodge nor delegates, but must be done by individual conviction and individual effort. The Lodge can make a candidate a member of the Lodge, but cannot make him a Mason. In like manner, the Lodge can establish the Throne of Solomon, but cannot prepare the way for the return of the lost word which is the real purpose of Masonry. The individual faith and action which will bring this about will fit the member and make him worthy of a place in the New Kingdom of Eternal life.

R.W.Bro. D. H. Galbraith,
P.D.D.G.M., Alberta.

FIDELITY TO TRUST

Indiscreet actions by members of the Craft, due to want of thought, are detrimental to its best interests. Brethren should be mindful of the trust reposed in them under their obligations. Every Mason should observe strictly the Constitutions of the Fraternity, and adhere to the ancient landmarks. If they would study the Constitutions and the ancient charges, there would be little cause to complain of violations, which are due, we are disposed to think, more to ignorance of our Constitutions and charges than a desire to offend against our laws, or to betray their trust. Craftsmen at least should be faithful to their own Brethren, regarding secret the proceedings of the Lodge rooms, or of any meeting of the Lodge of a business character. Whatever occurs in the Lodge when tiled, whether in connection with degrees, the admission of persons to our Order, or anything else, should be kept within the walls of the Lodge, and not carried outside. They should remember that they have a duty to their fellow members of the Craft by observing secrecy in all matters pertaining to the inner working of our Order. The spirit of charity, upon which Masons pride themselves, cannot be said to be practiced by those who fail to preserve silence in matters pertaining to the inner working of our Order. The spirit of charity, upon which Masons pride themselves, cannot be said to be practiced by those who fail to preserve silence in matters affecting the welfare of the Lodge.

Exchange.

SELF EXPRESSION

Can there be thought without words? Without entering into a field of discussion that has created volumes of reading material, let us say that it is difficult for us "to think of thought without words."

Our F. C. Degree teaches in terms of symbolism the value not only of communicating thought, but of adorning thought by means of rhetoric. But does it refer to speech alone?

In every act of life, spoken or not spoken, we communicate ourselves. We are part of all about us. We create favorable response by our manners, or lack of manners. We reveal ourselves by a smile, or handshake, frown, or shrug of the shoulder. Our eyes tell of hate and anger, love and kindness. The glance between husband and wife is a perfect sign of secrecy which the world cannot grasp.

The look of hopelessness on the face of a child, the innocent victim of war, oppression and hunger, can move us to charity as no words can do.

In times of death or sickness the expression of sympathy and understanding on the part of a friend and brother is readily communicated and understood.

The brother who cannot utter a profound prayer can touch the heart of another by his attitude of reverence.

Speech is a form of communication. But there are many ways of communicating ourselves to others. In our acts there is the beauty of a silent rhetoric.

Masonic Messenger.

THE SPRIG OF ACACIA

There is no symbol more interesting to the student that the sprig of acacia. It symbolizes Masonry's great doctrine—the immortality of the soul.

What a theme for any man to contemplate! Is it not the very essence of our mundane existence. We view with wonder and admiration the glorious works of the Great Architect; then with our various philosophies, we construct theories and hypotheses of the future; when we shall have passed beyond the veil.

It is given to each man to form his own ideas relative to his birth, death and future state. Some men are either too shallow or disinterested to form an opinion; others take for granted the theories set forth by great thinkers, while the third type will delve into this subject and mold his own conclusions which are to govern his entire way of living.

Selected.

Life is a school. The world is neither prison nor penitentiary, nor a place of ease, nor an amphitheatre for games and spectacle, but a place of instruction and discipline. Life is given for moral and spiritual training, and the entire course of the great school of life is an education for virtue, happiness and a future existence.

Albert Pike.

A VOICE FOR THE CANDIDATE

The initiate at the altar takes upon himself the most solemn and binding pledge known to man. But it is a great mistake to speak of it as "taking the oath." The Masonic obligation is not so called, and should not be so though of. The oath is a mere calling upon That Which is Holy to witness the truth and the sincerity of the protestation made. "So help me, God," is the most binding of oaths; no elaboration can make it stronger or more difficult to break.

The Masonic obligations are much, much more than mere oaths. They are the essence of Freemasonry; from them comes all that it is. Without them, Freemasonry is not.

As the obligation put knowledge within a man's heart which was not there before, they are symbols of wisdom. As they lay duties upon a man's heart which were not his before, they are symbols of Masonic responsibility. As they give to a man relations with other men he never knew before, they are symbols of mutuality. As they demand from him a compliance and a submission not required of him before, they are symbols of obedience. And as they are uplifting, inspiring, unselfish, sublime, they are symbols of spirituality, of man's yearning for God, and humility before Him.

Many a man walks through the degrees and sees the altar as a decorated piece of furniture with a book and two tools upon it. The same man hears in the obligation merely an oath of silence and a few phrases of altruistic promise. They are the men who see in the rainbow only a colored band, to whom the ocean is but water and the mountain peak but a pile of earth. On such as these the glory of God in nature and the mysteries of Freemasonry are wasted. The true Freemason looks upon the altar as the holy place of Freemasonry, as the source of all its wonder; and hears in the obligation not only the words, but the thunder of that Voice at which the most courageous must tremble, the most righteous bow in humility, the most independent be obedient.

To all true initiates the obligations are thus symbols of a glory unseen, of a majestic wisdom unheard.

From the Book "Foreign Countries",
By Carl H. Claudy, F.P.S.

MASONRY IN RUSSIA

Freemasonry was introduced into Russia early in the eighteenth century. There was an English Provincial Grand Master for Russia in 1731 and the first Lodge is supposed to have been established there in 1740. Masonry prospered in Russia under Catherine the Great from about 1762 to about 1794 and again under Alexander I from 1801 to 1822. Tolstoi has much to say about Freemasonry in his great story, "War and Peace," describes a Masonic Degree. Early in the present century there were several Lodges in Paris conferring the Masonic ritual in the Russian language. At present, Freemasonry is under the ban in Russia."

Desert Wind.

GREATEST OF LANDMARKS

Writes have devoted page after page to discussions of what constitutes a Masonic landmark. Some have reduced the number to only three of four. It is not our purpose to add confusion to confusion.

There are the intangibles which are the real supports of Masonry, call them what you will. Remove them and nothing is left. Increase them and nothing can ever destroy the spirit of Freemasonry.

Masonry is sentiment. Masonry is love. Masonry is personal honesty and integrity. Masonry is sacrifice. Masonry is self-improvement, Masonry is an expression of universal religion. Masonry is the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man in the lives of Masons. Masonry is respect for womankind. Masonry is the desire to be serviceable to our fellow creatures. Masonry is a system of morality which makes it possible for men to have liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Masonry is the making of the best life possible while on earth. Masonry proclaims the hope of immortality. Masonry is the concern that Masons have for children bereft of parents; for children whose bodies are twisted; for children who seek an education; for children who seek LOVE. Masonry is men who try to elevate themselves morally and spiritually, and who ever walk humbly with their God.

Are not these after all the real landmarks of Masonry? Let us make them landmarks of today as well as ancient landmarks. The yearning of man to grow heavenward is as old as time.

Masonic Messenger.

GOETHE SAID IT

Goethe, a great Mason, said that talent may develop in solitude, but character is created in society. It is the fruit of fellowship. Genius may shine aloof and alone, like a star, but goodness is social, and it takes two men and God to make a Brother. We are tied together, seeking that truth which none may learn for another, and none may learn alone. If evil men can drag us down, good men can lift us up. No one of us is strong enough not to need the companionship of good men and the consecrations of great ideals. Here lies perhaps the deepest meaning and value of Masonry; it is a fellowship of men seeking goodness, and to yield ourselves to its influence, to be drawn into its spirit and quest, is to be made better than ourselves.

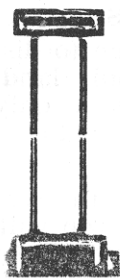
Exchange.

FIRST GRAND MASTER

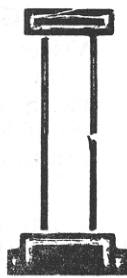
The first grand master of Masons in the United States was Henry Price, grand master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

Square & Compass, Indiana.

Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others, cannot keep it from themselves.—J. M. Barrie.



Between the Pillars



TIME OF PREPARATION

There are many thoughtful students of Masonry who feel the weakest part of the entire structure is the approach to it. No doubt that has always been true but to many observers the weakness seems to be accentuated in our modern times.

By the "approach" we here mean that period of time between the candidate's application and his appearance to receive the degrees. In past generations when life and living were much more simple than now, when there was time for consideration, contemplation and study the approach to Masonry was much slower and more thoughtful than it is now. In those days Masonry enjoyed a unique position among the organizations of men. As a brotherhood, a fraternity, it stood as the apex, the absolute top among all of the orders then in existence. No man approached Masonry lightly. It was a serious step. To be accepted into membership meant a great deal and represented the studied approval of a group known the world around for strict observance of morality, honesty, justice, charity and genuine brotherhood. To be known as a Mason meant that the most searching investigation had revealed no reason why a man should not be one and at the same time had proved his value as a building stone fit for use in the Temple. To be rejected was something much more serious than disappointment; rejection was tragic. Therefore most men did considerable soul-searching before ever they asked for a petition.

The tremendous expansion of knowledge and the vast changes in human life that have developed through and because of that knowledge, has altered the picture. In the simpler days of the past there was not the clashing competition for time and attention that exists now. Social, fraternal, commercial and civic organizations were by far fewer in numbers than we have now. Attendance was better and interest was keener. This was especially true of Masonry wherein men found the basic principles that helped them form philosophies of life, a source of combined strength and frequently a solution of their problems.

During the past half century that situation has been changing and has so changed that Masonry has been crowded out of its dominant leadership, has lost much of its meaning to members, has become more and more subordinated as an influence in public and community

life. The result is that what too many candidates see now is but the reflected glory of a brilliant past, a past that is somehow venerated and therefore desirable as an asset if it can be obtained. To many, of course, the first three degrees are merely a door through which they must pass to reach the so-called higher degrees where pleasant and frequently valuable acquaintances may be made.

Students of the present condition of Freemasonry sometimes feel that these attitudes continuing from year to year serve to increase the rate of erosion. Because we get too few candidates who approach the Craft in a spirit of real appreciation and from a sense of genuine need for the instruction and fellowship of their brethren the power, beauty and glory of the fraternity is being lost. Certain it is an attendance record of between 10 and 15% indicates something is wrong.

It has been suggested that much more could be done for the prospective candidate if a different procedure were followed during the days of waiting, or the time of preparation for his forthcoming initiation. As it is, no man knows what to expect. Some able Masons believe he should be better informed. He should be given to understand what he approaches is not merely a formal ritual that all candidates must pass through before he can be enrolled as a member, but is instead his definite acceptance of and approval of a way of life. Nor is he about to do this by himself and in secret, but openly before all the brethren present. There, before them, he will make certain statements, perform certain acts and listen to solemn instruction. None of this is frivolous, light or meaningless. Here he is aligning himself with the highest principles, the best thought, the deepest insight dealing with human life that has ever been brought forth. When he has received the three degrees he will stand before his brethren and the world as committed to these principles.

If something of this concept of what he is about to enter could be impressed upon each petitioner for the degrees it is possible fewer of them would go through with it. But of this we can be sure, those who did would make better Masons and in time some of our lost wisdom, strength and beauty might be regained.

Editor, Masonic Chornicler.

The world is blessed most by men who do things, and not by those who merely talk about them.

Selected.

Fear is lack of faith. Lack of faith is ignorance. Fear can only be cured by vision.

Selected.

The highest wisdom is continual cheerfulness; such a state, like the region above the moon is always clear and serene.

—Montaigne.