



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

What Masonry Can Contribute to the Solution of the Problems

That the World is in disorder needs no emphasis from me for the evidences of it are on every hand, **SOCIALLY, ECONOMICALLY and POLITICALLY**. We live in an era of the **GREATEST UNREST**, unrest that in many **FIELDS OF LIVING** borders on Chaos. Over us all continuously hang dark clouds of Fear and Uncertainty and no man can foretell what the **CONDITION OF LIVING** may be tomorrow. In such an age **MASONRY MUST JUSTIFY ITSELF** by making some direct contribution to the easing of the burdens and the solving of the problems that mankind must face. What that Contribution may be is a matter of the greatest concern to all free peoples. There is **ONE ANSWER** which is frequently given and which must be considered, it is that **MASONRY CAN HELP** in the present situation by undertaking certain projects of practical aid. It is pointed out that there are orphans who need shelter, there are hungry who need food, there are cripples who need surgical and medical attention and it is claimed that **MASONRY** can do much to help in the present situation by devoting **ITS** attention to such as these.

One has every sympathy for all such undertakings but one is convinced that valuable as they are and proper to every man of **HUMANITARIAN SPIRIT** and **GENUINE GOODWILL**, they do not represent the major contribution that **MASONRY** can make. Every Grand Lodge provides for these obvious and local needs.

On beyond them however there is a far greater one, and it appears to me that no matter what **MASONRY** and **MASONS** may do along such lines as these, their greatest significance in the present situation will not have been attained until they have gone on to make this larger final contribution.

And if one asks what that may be, the Answer lies in discovering the answer to another question. What is it that has failed

the world and brought about its present miseries? It is not Science that has failed us for Science has done for men incredible things — harnessing the lightnings, probing the secrets of the uppermost stars and laying open to the hand of man powers hitherto undreamed of. If Science had its unhindered way man might well have been happier today that at any time in his previous history. Neither is it the **INVENTIVE GENIUS** of the **HUMAN SPIRIT** that has failed us, that inventive genius has done its full part making possible man's travel through the air at a speed that outruns the swiftest of the birds enabling him to send a sob, or a sigh clear round the earth in a **SPLIT SECOND** and making available to him an infinite variety of mechanical devices for factory, office and home, which so lighten his labours as to open up hitherto undreamed of **VISTAS OF LEISURE** and **ENJOYMENT**. If the **INVENTIVE GENIUS** of the **HUMAN SPIRIT** had had its unhindered way man might well have been happier today than ever yet he has been.

NO — it is not these that have failed us, the failure is elsewhere, it is in the **REALM OF MAN'S OWN SOUL**. The plain truth which stares us in the face today is that man's development in the field of **CHARACTER** has failed to keep up with the development of his power and his skill, and therein lies the **TRAGEDY OF OUR PRESENT WORLD**. Mr. H. G. Wells in his latest book speaks of the amazing achievements of our mechanized age and as he does so his thoughts turn back to a pure high-minded lovely girl whose story is told on the pages of the **OLD TESTAMENT** and with that thought in mind he writes a sentence which reads something like this "**DOUBTLESS**, in our mechanical age we have improved on the **SICKLE** that **RUTH** held in her hand when she reaped the grain in the corner of Boaz's field, but by **GEORGE**, we hav'nt much improved on **RUTH**."

THERE, you have exactly the problem of

the world today, man's failure to achieve development in the field of CHARACTER, paralleling his development in the field of science and power, the result is, that power undreamed of has come into the hands of a generation that is MORALLY and SPIRITUALLY incapable of using it well. There is where FAILURE has come and that is the INNERMOST PROBLEM of the WORLD today.

Just how serious and tragic a situation is can be seen by glancing almost anywhere in history. The GREAT MASTERS OF HISTORY are forever pointing the MORAL. GIBBONS in his "DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE" traces the crumbling of that vast organization, not to the overpowering onslaughts of a stronger foe from without but to a gradual deterioration of MORAL CHARACTER within which in the end made ROME incapable of resisting foes whom earlier she would have laughed at. ARNOLD TOYNBEE in our own day has traced the RISE AND FALL OF CIVILIZATION pointing out that in every case of history these begin in primitive power and achievement but collapse when the inner vigour departs by which they are able to withstand the successive challenges which they must meet. JOHN RUSKIN in one of his flaming passages puts his finger squarely on what he feels to be the REAL CAUSE of the FALL OF VENICE which, for a brief period in the Middle Ages dominated the whole of Europe in glittering splendour. "The ancient curse was upon her, the curse of the cities of the plain pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness. By the inner burning of her own passions as fatal as the fiery rain of SODOM and GOMORRAH, she was consumed from her place among the nations and her ashes are choking the channels of the DEAD SALT SEA." THUS the voices of all the Masters of History cry in our ears proclaiming the TRAGEDY of a SITUATION in which CHARACTER fails to keep pace with development on other lines. THUS they preach to us the Old, Old Truth that the persistence of a Nation, or a Civilization turns in the last Analysis upon the quality of its CITIZENSHIP. WHAT IS then this GREATEST CONTRIBUTION that MASONRY can make to the solution of the problems of the world? The ANSWER surely is obvious, its greatest contribution is MASONS, Men of high character and NOBLE SOUL who, going out into every field of human living will carry into every CONTACT both PERSONAL and SOCIAL, the HIGH IDEALISMS which they WITHIN OUR HALLS have learned.

*M.W. Bro. Ven. Arch. S. H. Middleton, D.D.,
Past Grand Master, Alberta.*

Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has many; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.

—Charles Dickens.

THE BLACK BALL

The question which has received marked attention from Masonic writers seems to be the use and abuse of the black ball. Nearly every Masonic journal that comes to hand gives expression of opinion, either original or endorsed. There is one consideration that should not be overlooked. The black ball is indispensable, and the unanimous ballot should obtain. Were it otherwise, the Masonic lodge would be but a rendezvous for unprincipled schemers and pothouse politicians, a club for high rollers and "jolly good fellows." The black ball is necessary to protect the lodge from the presence of undesirable material, and it should be, and generally is, used for that wise and salutary purpose. Every member of the lodge has an undeniable right to a choice of ballot, and having that choice, he should exercise his right to cast his ballot according to the dictates of his own conscience. The black ball may sometimes be cast through spite or malice, but the instances are rare. Who shall decide as to a brother's motives? From an experience of nearly forty years of devotion to Masonry, the writer ventures the assertion that where one good man has been rejected through sheer malice, many unprincipled applicants have been admitted through neglect of duty. When a black ball has been cast, the wise and broad-minded brother remains silent while the superficial brother makes haste to denounce the act—a verification of the old adage: "Still water runs deep, but babbling brooks are noisy."

There are those who seem to think that injustice has been done to the applicant, and they do not hesitate to say so both in and out of the lodge room. In behalf of propriety and common sense the thumbscrews of condemnation should be promptly turned upon such effusive babbling. The applicant has the right of application only. All other rights are vested in the lodge and the brethren. The applicant seeks admission under the solemn avowal that he is unbiased by friends and uninfluenced by mercenary motives; that he desires to receive light and knowledge and to be serviceable to his fellow man. If the result of the investigation by the committee and the brethren proves that his life has been in accord with his pretensions, there will be little doubt as to the welcome that awaits him; but if the investigation be not satisfactory, his request will be kindly and politely denied.

Masonry is not gratifying the vanity of men who are anxious to display its emblems to the world in order that they may reap some supposed benefits. nor is it opening its door to those who wish to use the symbolic lodge as a gateway to so-called "higher degrees." Not a word uncomplimentary to Capitular, Templar or Scottish Masonry should be spoken. The lessons of their degrees are beautiful and impressive to him who has a corresponding re-

ceptivity. But a river can never rise above its source. The superstructure must always depend upon the foundation. The Blue Lodge is the source, the foundation of all, and to cherish its principles and protect its welfare should be the sweetest care of every good Mason. He may have received all the degrees that could be conferred on him, and have trodden the path that leads to sun-crowned heights, yet if he loves Masonry for the beautiful lessons that make good men wiser and better, he will turn to his Blue Lodge with a fondness akin to the love he cherishes for his own home.

"The bird that soars on highest wing
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing,
Sings in the shade when all things rest."

—*Courtesy of The Victorian Craftsman*

MASONIC HABITS

We are creatures of habit. Every move we make confirms us more strongly in the path of repetition. A general truth is found in the statement that learning is the process of being changed by experience. If a person has not been changed in his thinking and outlook by an experience, he has not learned. Even the lower animals gather something from the experiences of the day. The dog responds to the familiar voice of his master, and the wild animals can be taught tricks by endless trial and practice.

Habits help us in daily activities. Our first attempts at bicycle riding, at walking on a rail fence, at driving a car, ended up ludicrously, if not painfully. By some little practice we developed a measure of expertness. After continued experience we could proceed without thinking out each move. Habits of action were forming by continued effort, and the job followed through in a kind of second nature. Soon the slow, painful trials gave way to speedy, accurate movements. Habits were forming.

You, my brethren, have Masonic habits. They have been building up from the time you were made a Mason. They differ in some respects from those developed by others, and are not all of equal importance or strength. A little observation will reveal that some members rarely miss a communication. They are regular in attendance. This one habit of coming to lodge for each meeting has been thoroughly fixed. Others have a great desire to be well informed on Masonic history and interpretation. There are those who are always ready to help with floor work, on committees, on visitation. These are splendid habits.

Habits can be changed. The common adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," will bear revision. Slowly, sometimes painfully, old patterns of action can be made over. In lodge activities the stay-at-home can again find an interest in the fraternity and come back to meetings. Men can take themselves in hand and correct old habits.

What Masonic habits would you like to develop? Before answering that question it might be well to define some activities. Regularity in attendance is a physical matter. You are either present or absent. Being well prepared in the ritual, in fraternal history, etc., is another kind of preparedness. Then there are those fine, personal characteristics that we admire so much in Masons. Each one may choose the traits that he would like to develop.

Picture the ideal Mason. Perhaps you know some. There is some member in the lodge, perhaps several whom you would set up as a pattern. You unconsciously take that man as a guide and you try to emulate him in your activities. It is well to temper your thinking with the idea that all men are imperfect, meaning that perfection is away in the distance. Hold to the belief that old natures can be changed. You can become that ideal. Let us forget the superman for the moment. He is not to be found. But you can approach, perhaps overtake, your ideal. Here are some down-to-earth virtues — humility, good nature, industry, morality, brotherly love—and others. We can become well informed by continued effort. We can help in lodge activities. The most insignificant little job is important. No one has yet been perfect in the matter of a fraternal spirit, exemplary conduct, a tongue of good report. That much would be a good start for all of us.

Can you do it? The challenge is laid directly at the door of every Mason. He who would be a builder must be industrious. The good workman will become skilled. From there on, accurate dependable, fraternal accomplishment verges close onto the artistic.

*Bro. Robert W. Tarbell,
Wisconsin Freemason.*

SOFT JOBS

The fortunate man today, or any other day, for that matter, is the one who has a reasonably hard job and the ability and willingness to handle it. Soft jobs make soft men. Don't waste envy on the fellow with a soft job.

A DEFINITION

"Freemasonry is a moral order instituted by virtuous men, with the praiseworthy design of recalling to our remembrance the most sublime truths in the midst of the most innocent and social pleasures, founded on liberality, brotherly love, and charity."—From an Old Dutch Dictionary.

Go forth into the busy world and love it, interest yourself in its life, mingle kindly with its joys and sorrows, try to do what you can do for others, rather than what you can make them do for you, and you will know what it is to have a friend."

—*Selected*



Between the Pillars



MORALS

We are frequently reminded that Masonry is a moral science. Such being the case, Masons might meditate upon the fact that morality to be scientific implies more than appears to be the casual concept. One definition of morals is the practice and conduct of the individual toward God and his fellow men, and that practically covers the operation of the principle in worldly relations.

Those who have approached the three score and ten years of the earthly tenure, and have paused for a season of comparison between the social and political ideals, in the aggregate, of our day and time and that of the past generation must view with concern the balance sheet which discloses the assets and liabilities within the world corporation of today. It is true that within every dispensation there is a group of souls who do not seem to learn and grow mature from the lessons and experiences afforded within the earth school. They are the poor in basic principles, and they, the Master stated, we would always have with us.

But what of the moral attainments of the vast host who do or should know and practice morality in all its implications? With all due recognition to the minority who strive for political and social morality in public life today, we might blush with shame that our people countenance the acts of groups of individuals posing as our leaders during recent world relations. It is not individual name labels we deal with, but conditions and phases of morals expressed through these spiritual adolescents who conceive of expediency to acquire an end to be clever, even intelligent, if it be the pathway of selfish dominion.

The results of all problems are harmonious and true, provided the equations are based upon principle and truth. The calculus of recent years, as concerns world and domestic geometry, have proven the fruit of a misapplied morality to be chaos and fear. The principle of morals is immutable and demonstrates peace, plenty, and national as well as individual poise, when properly applied. The reverse is just as certain, whether the motive be a conscious and determined effort at selfish practices or motivated only from ignorance of life's fundamentals.

History is replete with the record of civilizations and their governments which have persisted in the abuse of moral science. No

political structure is more amenable to this plague than a republic. Its very laws of liberty open the whole structure of devastation by the forces of evil and protect them in the doing. These forces are ever alert to infiltrate under the white banner of altruism and progress until sufficiently entrenched to assume command.

All the dangers we see about us are not new; they have been exemplified in the history of former organized cultures, and the very lack of the science of morals has been the essence of their downfall. Why should these dangers and their authors be sequestered from public scrutiny and knowledge? Evil and evildoers are known by their works; in like manner are the righteous observed, but too often rendered impotent. Industry, labor and business are holy things, and the regulations governing them should likewise be holy.

At the opening of the Christian era, it seems to be of record that evil forces had assumed control, but that a great Economist and Teacher spoke His mind that all might hear, and pronounced a philippic directed at malefactors that has been unparalleled in our day and time.

His determination to maintain the high standards of a moral science caused His violent death. Are we to believe that our standards are the destructive practices of unkept promises, political deceits, and economic love of the dollar, rather than the love of accomplishment which produces its corresponding wealth? Are we to believe the science of morals condones the expenditure of seven times more of our earned increment on alcoholic stimulants than upon education, and all the fatal weaknesses incidental to the moral lapse?

The product of a world in turmoil would seem to display in all its sordid ramifications the false solution to problems upon which the Masonic moral science has not been applied. There is always opportunity to make use of correct morals in every phase of the life problem. That moment is now, and we should be about our business, at least within the ranks of the Masonic persuasion.

*Brother James K. Remick
in The New Age.*

A Mason is a Mason everywhere, and no matter what rock may have changed the channel of his voyage, he yet is a worker for good wherever his lot may be cast. No man has ever, even in life, escaped the evil he did, and men generally die as they have lived, "For as a man's thoughts are, so is he."

Be happy with what you have and are: be generous with both, and you won't have to hunt for happiness.

—Gladstone.