



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

Can the Worshipful Master provide more work for the Brethren?

MASONIC work consists primarily of the understanding and application of Masonic tenets and principles. This is the essential part of the Masonry, the essence of its life, its growth and its undying vitality. It is this which makes Masonry a potent force for good in the world, and without it the whole brotherhood would fall into a state of comparative uselessness and decay. From this source branch out all other forms of Masonic activities, the chief of which is perhaps the conduct of the ritualistic work of the various degrees, the whole purpose of which is to impress upon the mind of the new recruit to our brotherhood these same principles and tenets, and fix in his mind their inseparable association with our order.

Thence we come to the matters of lesser, though still of substantial importance . . . the conduct of the business of the Lodge, and its more superficial fraternal exemplifications on the social plane.

I believe that in the consideration of the distribution of work we must first clear up in our minds this matter of what work consists of and which are the functions of our Lodge which lay claim to priority.

The Worshipful Master of the Lodge, being charged with the ruling and governing of the Lodge, and by virtue of his place of honor and authority, has great influence on the manner in which the brethren exert themselves in the various avenues of endeavor, and in his hands lie the opportunity to at least give general direction to the course, the progress and the development of Masonry.

May I liken a Mason to a butterfly. From the time the egg is laid and becomes fertile (the time when the decision is made to unite with the worldwide fraternity of Masons) until the fully fledged Mason has donned his wings as a Past Master of the Lodge, he must like the butterfly pass through many stages, each of these stages being separate and distinct, and each of these stages one in which the sitting Master of the Lodge can greatly influence his

future Masonry. My allegory to butterflies must be completed with the urgent suggestion that the fully fledged Mason does not fall into the error of this insect, which, after it has attained maturity takes nourishment only for the purpose of sustaining life, not growth.

The Worshipful Master's first contact with the new candidate should, I believe, take place before he is for the first time admitted within the sacred precincts of the Lodge room. It is then that the Worshipful Master should approach him, and give whatever explanations are possible, that he may understand clearly the principles and purposes of Masonry, its objects and its requirements. He may even go so far as to explain the fact that there are shortcomings in its practise. Thus he will lay in the mind of the coming Brother a solid foundation on which the superstructure of Masonry can be built.

After the candidate has received his first degree and is entitled to the name of Mason, the work may commence in earnest, and this is without question a critical time in the life of the new Brother. Having regard, of course, to the great difficulty that may be experienced by some in memorizing, the Worshipful Master should require that each candidate learn his obligation, secret work and questions thoroughly. It should be impressed on him that careless workmanship cannot build good Masonry, and that he is expected to use care and precision in all that he does in connection with the Lodge. Furthermore at this stage and all through the degrees the work should be learned by word of mouth. Not only is this in keeping with the constituted rules of our order, but it instills in the new candidate a respect for the way in which things are done that he would not entertain if the coaching brethren rely on "of course I am not supposed to let you know this exists, but it will make it a lot easier for you . . . only don't look at the latter part . . . yet." This form of sloppiness which must start a candidate off on a sloppy Masonic career.

Finally he is raised to the sublime degree

and the new member is entitled to afford admonition and instruction to his brethren in the inferior degrees. Here the problem becomes more complicated. What type of work can the Master delegate to the new Brother in Masonry? From the point of ritualistic work there are first the three charges. These are not extremely difficult to learn and are available legally to all Brethren in printed form. There is no reason why each member should not learn one, two or all of these charges while he is marking time awaiting an opening in the chairs. It is not at all necessary to have these given by older Brethren, and they are ideal for testing the wings of the fledgling Mason.

However, there are many things which can be given to the new Mason to do which will make him feel that he is a real cog in the works, and that will develop and hold his interest in Masonry. With his obligations and the questions fresh in his memory he should be admirably fitted for the coaching of the candidates who follow him. In thus doing he will be able to forward them encouragement and further fix in his own mind the things that he has learned. He can be given work in connection with the social affairs of the Lodge under the direction of the Junior Warden. He can also work on the various active committees which may be appointed from time to time by the Lodge and thus gain a further insight into its workings, and greater interest in its welfare.

I am firmly convinced that it is possible to err greatly in the appointment of committees on character and other working committees, in confining these duties too closely to a certain limited active group. The Master should always be on the search for talent and not allow an attitude to develop in the Lodge which infers that unless you have been a Mason for twenty years you are not really qualified to undertake responsibility.

When the time comes for the new Mason to embark on his career as an officer of the Lodge the problem of fitting something constructive and useful for him to do is greatly lessened. As he passes through the various minor offices the quality of his conduct, of his work will be very largely decided by the tone of the work of the Lodge in general. If all the officers of the Lodge make a practise of handling their particular assignments in the workmanlike manner it may well be expected that the new Brethren will follow suit. While it is the duty of the older Brethren to admonish the younger, I feel that sarcasm, whether spoken or inferred has no place in the Lodge, and is highly unprofitable. The Worshipful Master should not be too hesitant in urging the Brethren to handle their parts well, but if necessary to stimulate an officer's effort it should be done with carefully chosen and judicious words, and should be done by the Worshipful Master or the Direc-

tor of Ceremonies alone, not by a general pecking from other members of the Lodge.

Every Brother should, if he holds an office in the Lodge, be able to conduct his office through the three entire degrees with reasonable accuracy and without undue hesitation, thus making the ceremonies more effective and understandable to the candidate, and stimulating those coming up to office by setting an example which will lead them to efficiency. I believe that all officers should be given the privilege, and in fact urged, to conduct their own work, without exception of the Worshipful Master, who, while he should be capable of handling any part of his duties in full, should make a practise of having a number of Worshipful Brethren take part in each degree. This not only relieves the burden borne by the Worshipful Master, but tends to make the degree more interesting to the candidate. Moreover, this provides an excellent opportunity for the Worshipful Master to arrange the work for the Past Master, who may feel a little "Out of it" and have a tendency to lose interest in the Lodge, and fail to keep up the work they labored so hard to learn when they were raised to the chair. More than that it provides an opportunity for them to be called upon to learn any parts of the work they failed to learn before assuming the rank of Past Master. I might add that a Past Master being called upon to learn new parts of the Work, and being re-acquainted with the difficulties experienced in getting them into proper shape, might be somewhat more sympathetically inclined to the novices and their troubles.

The keeping of the Historical Register of the Lodge is another channel through which the efforts of some members not occupying one of the chairs of the Lodge may be profitably used. Historical Registers are all too frequently neglected or kept in a desultory manner, which reduces their value and interest. Well kept they will provide interesting reading in later years.

The suggestions which I have given are generally my own, gained through observation over a period of years, and I give them to you, not in any sense of authority or of finality, but merely as a starting point from which you may think and discuss. It has been truly said that nothing is stationary, either it is progressing or it is retrogressing. This surely is true of a Mason and his Masonry. If he is busy and interested he will continue to grow. If he is idle his interest will flag and Masonic growth slow down and perhaps stop altogether.

Obviously the best means for prevention of this situation and for the development of new talent which must be developed to carry on the work of our order in the future, is by avoiding as far as possible the situation where the work of the Lodge whether it be in the conduct of business or in the exemplification of the ritual, is left in the hands of the few, and by distribut-

ing it widely as possible . . . at the same time requiring and urging that the highest standards are maintained at all times.

W. Bro. L. D'Albertanson, P.M.,
Buffalo Park Lodge No. 44, Alberta.

THE MISSION OF MASONRY

The mission of Masonry we say is to make good men better. We welcome to our midst good men and true men, who we believe after careful scrutiny to be men of good morals and sound judgment; men who we can look on as brothers and who we feel we can rely on to act toward each of us as a brother should. Thus our fraternity is a great world wide brotherhood of men bound together in a bond of service to one another, for the idea of brotherhood immediately involves service. If we are to be brothers in the truest sense of the term then we must be ready and willing to render comfort and consolation to our brother Mason in his time of trouble and difficulty as well as to rejoice with him in his time of prosperity and success.

This in itself is good, but one's duty as a Mason must not end there but must go out beyond the circle of our own fraternity and be concerned not only in the betterment of those of our own circle but of the lot of all mankind.

In that grand play — The Merchant of Venice — Shakespeare tells of three caskets between which the suitors of the hand of the fair Portia must choose. The first of these of gold bore the inscription "Who chooseth me shall get what many men desire". The second of silver, "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves", but of the third of lead. "Who chooseth me must hazard all he hath." So it is with Masonry. The aspirant that seeks admission to our portals with the sole object in mind of what he can get for himself will reap only disappointment and it were better he had gone elsewhere, but he who comes willingly to spend and be spent in service to his fellowman both within and without our hallowed precincts will find rich reward.

To paraphrase slightly an old saying, somewhere in this world there is a remarkable house. It is remarkable because it contains only one room, a room so vast the eye cannot see from one side to the other. It is the room of opportunity or we might say the room of masonic opportunity.

M.W. Bro. W. F. Empey,
Past Grand Master, Alberta.

SYMBOLISM OF THE CUBE

The cube is the symbol of perfection because its six surfaces, eight edges, and all its angles are equal; and also because it is the most perfect example of staple equilibrium. The altar is supposed to be a cube, the Lodge in its shape is supposed to be a double cube, representing the combined perfections of material and spiritual existence.

Selected

NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY

Within the past few years there are many signs which point to an increasing desire on the part of many Lodges to secure cheap publicity by having inserted in newspapers, lists of officers elected or write-ups of social happenings. Individuals break into print with matter which had better be left unsaid. Freemasonry was never intended to be a popular institution in the common meaning of that word, but in response to the clamor of some brother, "What is Freemasonry doing?" we find publicity courted, not shunned, for fear our time honored fraternity will not receive due credit or the public forget our existence.

Constantly we hear the cry that this order and that order are doing something we never attempted, and that we must mend our ways and become up-to-date, or in other words — advertise. Can we not in some way bring our brethren to realize that the purpose of Freemasonry is to teach the individual to do these things, and that being accomplished Masonry has attained its objective. Must we forsooth join in parades and publish our doings in order to let the world know where we stand, and that almost every movement for the betterment of each community, no matter under what name organized, is headed and fostered by Masons. That in short is all the public need to know and all they should know.

Every brother upon his initiation is supposed to have read to him that clause in our Lodge by-laws which forbids the imparting to the profane of any information concerning what takes place in the Lodge, but it would appear as though, to many, this article has become a dead letter.

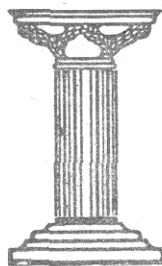
Legislation will not cure all our ills and no great harm has been done so far, but this is a liberty which may develop into license, and I would strongly urge that no information or matter for newspaper publication touching Freemasonry or concerning our Lodge or Grand Lodge activities be given out by any member until the same has been approved by our Grand Master or Grand Secretary.

M.W. Bro. Jas. S. MacEwing, P.G.M.,
in Masonry in Manitoba.

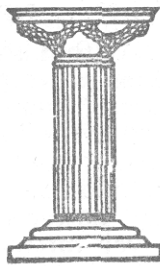
each forgot his own weakness and went and worked his fragment of the world's salvation.

Here we find an inherent strength in our Fraternity, as we inspire men to do what they ought and what they can for others and, thereby, for themselves. Every day, the power that is not used is failing from us. "Every day the God whose voice speaks through all the inevitable necessities of our moral life is saying of the men who keep their talents wrapped up in napkins — "Take the talent from him.' "

M.W. Melvin M. Johnson,
Past Grand Master, Massachusetts.



Between the Pillars



FREEMASONRY, A MORAL PHILOSOPHY

He who fully understands Freemasonry knows that it is a moral philosophy, and not a religion. In the sense in which we make the contrast, a philosophy is a system of the principles which underlie or motivate human conduct, and a religion is a system of faith and worship.

Each man has a philosophy of life whether he knows it or not. By no means do all men have such a religion.

Religion involves the acceptance of a code of morality, usually to be found in the book which, to that religion, is the Volume of the Sacred Law.

Philosophy does not necessarily accept any code of moral law. The King on his throne, the President in the White House, the Judge on the bench, each has his philosophy of life. So also do the priest, the soldier, and every other man, whether he be a saint or villain.

Freemasonry teaches a system of moral philosophy which is both ordained and pragmatic. It is to be found in our Volume of the Sacred Law. It is also that which thoughtful men have found best suited for their own highest welfare, individually and collectively.

Moral laws can not be contacted by the senses; they cannot be measured in kilowatts or feet or pounds; they cannot be mixed in test tubes or examined by microscopes; but Freemasonry teaches that they are just as sure, just as certain, just as inflexible as the laws which we call scientific or mathematical. Moreover, their disregard has material consequences, serious to men, catastrophic to nations.

This philosophy which our Rite teaches is not that of a hermit or the recluse. It is a philosophy of living the daily contacts of man with man and nation with nation, in great affairs and small. It is a philosophy which recognizes that life is not an affair of secret isolation but one filled with push and pull for the essence of life is struggle. Within our bodies, the health-giving agencies and the strength-producing use of tissue are constantly fighting the bacteria and agencies of waste. Without, all life that is worth living is a struggle.

"When the fight goes out of a man or a nation, then decadence sets in, and the end is in

sight. That is why the numerous altruistic panaceas for all of life's evils are basically unsound." The overwhelming benevolence which would take from the "Haves" the product of their labor and give it indiscriminately to the "have-nots," which would destroy the incentive for work and increase the incitement to sloth, "which would offer us security and freedom from care in every step of our lives from infancy to senility, either through governmental or group action, is patently absurd."

The philosophy of Freemasonry, as developed and taught in our Rite, has for its cornerstone that which for a little more than nineteen centuries has been known as the "New Law." Consequently, our philosophy includes the comforting of those who are in trouble and the relieving of their necessities, even if they are crushed and enfeebled by a carking sense of their own insignificance. It does not extend, however, to the coddling of the lazy or to him who, having even a single talent deliberately refuses to use it to meet the call of duty to his country and his fellows.

He who proclaimed the "New Law" condemned to outer darkness one who was so slipshod and cowardly that he did not use the talent which he had. How much more then should we, as the followers of the teachings of such an exemplar, seek to implant a new spirit of responsibility in him who with deliberation refuses the call of altruism or patriotism. Our philosophy charges us to relieve him who strives and yet fails, but exonerates us from responsibility to help him who can but will not help himself.

"Do well unto him that is lowly, but give not to the ungodly; hold back thy bread, and give it not unto him, lest he overmaster thee thereby." (Eccl. 12:5). "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." (Prov. 18:9). "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not." (Prov. 21:25-6).

It is only by waking up men of inefficient and slothful lives by an inspiration to real service that the world can make trustworthy growth. The world will grow better and richer, economically and spiritually, not so much by the magnificent achievements of the highly-gifted few as by the patient faithfulness of the one-talented many.

Most men who really realize the necessity of altruistic service then go and do with all their might what must be done. Moses, Luther, Cromwell, each one of them dallied with the corners of his napkin and almost folded up his talent in it; but the call was too strong, and