



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

IN TUNE WITH THE MASTERS

Having recently celebrated the Eighth Anniversary of the formation of the United Nations, it is of interest to recall that at the first and memorable meeting held in San Francisco in 1945, Molotov, as Representative of the Soviet Union, gave his solemn promise there would be no further acts of aggression by his country. But, alas, since then, the tentacles of the Kremlin have reached out so far that while, only eight short years ago, the Communists had Two Hundred Million people under their domination, today the destiny of Eight Hundred Million is subject to their whim. Therefore, no matter what promises are made, it must be taken for granted that the ultimate goal of Communism is the domination of the entire world.

From the earliest dawn of civilization to the immediate present, two active and opposing psychological forces have been—and still are—engaged in a seemingly irreconcilable conflict over the status and legitimate function of Individual Intelligence in its relation to humanity as an aggregate organism.

These two great forces stand opposed to each other upon the vital and fundamental problem of man's rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities as an Individual Being.

That inspiring Book, "The Great Message (The Philosophy of Individual Life)" by J. E. Richardson, traces through the annals of recorded history the gigantic struggle constantly being waged between good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error, and stresses the vital part Freemasonry, both Ancient and Modern, has played in keeping alive the noble principles and philosophies of freedom of thought and action.

Indeed, nothing less vital ever could have become an issue of such transcendent importance as to inspire the segregation of humanity

into two such powerful, organized, opposing forces. Moreover, perhaps the only fundamental principle of human life great enough, deep enough, broad enough and vital enough to incite humanity to a conflict of such extraordinary proportions and of so irrepressible a nature, is the sublime principle of Individual Liberty.

As might readily be anticipated, the motives which inspire these two powerful organic forces to align themselves on opposite sides of the struggle for Individual Liberty are equally different in character and wholly irreconcilable.

One of these has been inspired to action by the most unselfish service for humanity; the other has been moved by the spirit of human greed and the desire for power.

The one has exemplified the spirit of altruism; the other that of the most inordinate egoism.

The one has sought to liberate men from the bondage of ignorance, superstition and fear; the other has cunningly played upon these infantile elements of human nature to bind them the more securely to its cause.

The one has striven through the potency and influence of knowledge to break the shackles of unjust physical bondage, debasing spiritual domination, stultifying intellectual suppression, unwholesome moral oppression, enervating religious dependence and destructive psychical subjection; the other has sought, through the pliable influence of ignorance, to bind these chains yet more securely about the Souls of men, that it may the more easily and surely use them as the passive or willing instruments of its ambition, vanity and greed.

The one has sought to accomplish its mission of emancipation by the natural unfolding of the Individual Intelligence through the

expansive power of a broad, liberal and non-sectarian education, until men might be able to see, understand and appreciate the fact that individual human liberty—physical, spiritual, intellectual, moral, religious and psychical—is an inalienable and paramount duty of every intelligent Soul; the other has persistently and consistently opposed the development of any and all forms of education intended to liberate mankind from the bondage of superstition and fear—upon which alone it must depend for the successful enforcement of its assumed authority over them.

The one has been impelled to its task of liberation by the unerring consciousness that a knowledge of the truth alone can ever make men free, and that they thus be made free before they can hope to find individual happiness, here and hereafter; the other, in like manner, has been impelled to its struggle against intellectual, moral and religious liberty by the same unerring consciousness that such liberty, if permitted, would inevitably shatter its assumed authority over men and free them from its dominating power.

The one points out a straight and narrow path, directed by the philosophies of Freemasonry, whereby the individual who wills may bring his life, by his own personal effort, into perfect alignment with Nature's Constructive Principle, in all the departments of his being—the inevitable results of which are the development within himself of an awakened consciousness of spiritual things and an independent, personal and scientific demonstration of the continuity of individual life; the other points out an easy, subtle and seductive way whereby the individual who will submit his life to its domination and unquestionably abide by its authority, has the comforting assurance that he may thus evade the Law of Personal Responsibility and shift its consequences and its burdens from his Soul to the soulless organization of which he is a member.

It is also clearly shown that the Great Masters of the Ages, who left the sublime influence of their lives and teachings upon the world, were indeed the Founders of the Masonic Philosophy of Life. Melchizedek, to whom Abraham in his day and generation paid tribute, was one of the greatest of these Masters. Despite his great importance as a High Priest who established the Priestly Order in his own name, the Master Melchizedek gave the world no detailed account of his life and work but it was, rather, by his influence on those associated with him that he left his imprint on his day, which has been reflected down through the Ages. The very fact that Jesus was made "an High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek forever" (read Hebrews, Chapters 6 and 7) proves the esteem and reverence in which the Master Melchizedek was held. This, too, shows that Jesus was a follower of the Great Masters.

There is much to indicate that He spent years in study with them, preceding His public evangel. The fact that the Christian tenets and the philosophies of Freemasonry are synonymous in their teachings also shows that Jesus was impelled by the same beneficence and altruistic motives and purposes as those of the Great Masters who preceded Him.

We, in our day, as followers of Him and as adherents to the Masonic doctrine and, directed by the thoughts of the Great Masters of the Past, must carry on the age-old struggle against the domination of the evil forces that would control, not only the bodies, but the souls of men.

We are members of the oldest fraternal organization in the world. Its privileges, its philosophies and its Way of Life have been entrusted to our keeping and we are recreant to our duty if we fail to live up to the teachings of the past and to the responsibilities we have voluntarily assumed as members of the great Masonic Order.

In the teachings of Albert Pike, a more recent Master, we find these gems of wisdom. Be not discouraged that in our own time our labours appear to produce no fruit. It is our duty so to live that those who follow us will reap the benefit of our exertions. Ultimately truth will triumph. The age-old principles of Freemasonry must prevail. God controls the destiny of men and nations. It is our duty to work for the advancement and improvement of our race and for those who are to occupy the earth when we are gone; to project our influence far into the future and live beyond our time; to exert influence over the lives of men as yet unborn, to leave a glorious heritage of truth and light and liberty. This is the true office of a Freemason.

If we choose, we can be the instruments for a great spiritual victory over the forces of tyranny because our philosophies and our truths are directed by those age-old teachings of the Great Masters. Let us give not lip-service only to Freemasonry, but, by the dedication of our hearts and souls to the eternal struggle for good against evil, demonstrate our faith in the Great Masters of the Past. As a guide to our actions as we enter a new year, I suggest we endeavour to practise the following heart-searching Credo, which, if sincerely accepted by us as a Way of Life, would, I feel sure, be the solution to the problems confronting an anxious and bewildered world and would thus emulate the great Masters of the Past.

I Believe in an All-Wise and All-loving God, Who controls the destiny of men and nations, and that the highest fulfilment, greatest happiness and widest usefulness of the individual are to be found by living in harmony with His Will.

I Believe that all Freemasons should walk humbly, knowing our frailties and imperfections, but with a firm reliance on the Great Architect of the Universe for daily guidance and direction.

I Believe every individual has the right to life, liberty

and the pursuit of happiness, to equality before the law, and to complete freedom of conscience.

I Believe that every Freemason has a duty to perform to his home, to the community and to the nation in which he lives.

I Believe that every right implies a duty; every power an obligation; every possession a responsibility.

I Believe in the sacredness of a promise, that a man's word should be as good as his bond; that character is an essential value.

I Believe that the spreading of malicious gossip or half-truths is a betrayal of my obligation as a Freemason and a denial of a sacred trust.

I Believe that covetousness, jealousy, envy and hatred should have no place in our Masonic Way of Life.

I Believe that truth and justice are fundamental to an enduring social order; that the Golden Rule is the true corner-stone of a permanent domestic or international peace.

I Believe that, as a Freemason, my every-day actions should accord with these principles, and that my example should promote their adoption in public and international affairs.

I Believe that we are the tools in God's Hand for bringing about the long-sought-for day of peace and goodwill to all Mankind and the liberation of all those held in bondage by evil dictators.

As Freemasons, great privileges are ours but also grave responsibilities to ourselves and to our fellowman. Let us go forward, reverently and sincerely, in tune with the Great Masters of the Past, whose words of wisdom are as real today as they were centuries ago.

"God Give Us Men"

"God give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready
hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor and who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his flatteries without winking!
Tall men, sun-crowned, who will live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking
For, while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds
Their large professions and their little deeds,
Mingle in selfish strife — lo!
Freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land and waiting
Justice sleeps."

—H. B. Macdonald, P.G.M.

IN THE QUARRY

"Freemasonry appeals to me first by its fellowship; and next to the home and the House of God, it is the most blessed influence in my life. Its simple and profound faith, its wise and practical philosophy—uniting the wisdom—illumine my mind, as its genius of fraternity warms my heart. But still more, Masonry appeals to me as an agency for the organization of moral faith, practical brotherhood, and social idealism, the worth and power of which we have not yet realized . . . In a day when the brotherhood of the world is broken our ancient and noble Craft has an opportunity, the like of which is has never known before, to use its influence and power to spread that fraternal righteousness without which the future will be a dark as the past."

—Joseph Fort Newton.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU TELL A CANDIDATE?

Just what can you tell a candidate, or a prospective candidate, before initiation?

The question has exercised the minds of Freemasons for many, many years, it has led to many discussions, in lodge and out; many feel that if the proposer knows his candidate properly there is no need to tell him anything.

An answer to this question was printed in the "New Zealand Craftsman." It has much to recommend it, so it is reprinted here.

1. Freemasonry consists of a body of men banded together to preserve the secrets, customs and ceremonies handed down to them from time immemorial, and for the purpose of mutual, social and moral improvement. They also endeavor to cultivate and exhibit brotherly love, relief and truth, not only to one another, but to the world at large.

2. Freemasonry offers no pecuniary advantages whatever, nor does there exist any obligation nor implied understanding binding one Mason to deal with another nor to support him in any way in the ordinary business relations of life.

3. Freemasonry teaches us to remember our common origin; it also distinctly enjoins us to respect all social distinctions, so that while some must rule, others must obey and cheerfully accept their inferior positions.

4. Freemasonry has certain charities, but it is not in any sense a benefit society, nor is it based upon calculations which would render this possible. The charities are solely for those who, having been in good circumstances, have been overtaken by misfortune and adversity.

5. Freemasonry distinctly teaches that man's first duty is to himself, his wife, his family and his connections, and no one should join the Order who cannot well afford to pay the initiation fees and subscription to his lodge, as well as to the Masonic charities, and this without detriment in any way to his comfort or to that of those who have any claim upon his support.

6. Freemasonry recognises no distinction of religion, but none should attempt to enter who have no religious belief, as faith in a Supreme Being must be expressed before any can be initiated, and prayers to Him form a frequent part of the ritual.

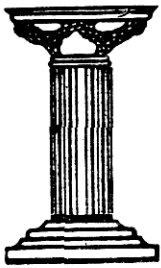
7. Freemasonry therefore demands that everyone before offering himself as a candidate should be well assured in his own mind:

That he is willing to express a belief in a Supreme Being.

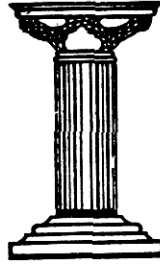
That he sincerely desires the intellectual and moral improvement of himself and his fellow creatures, and that he is willing to devote his time, his means, and his efforts in the promotion of brotherly love, relief and truth.

That he seeks no commercial or pecuniary advantages.

—Masonic Club Journal.



Between the Pillars



MASONIC ADVANCEMENT

Men act for various reasons. Some proceed rashly, others thoughtfully. The goal sought may be wealth, fame, power, happiness, whatever seems most important. The record of human adventure is endless. It may be helpful to discuss why we join a fraternity.

Why did you petition a Lodge of Masons? That question may have been put before you on numerous occasions. Every thoughtful Mason has dwelt on the matter, even before the first degree. If you cannot give a clear reason, how can you answer the honest inquirer who is seeking light on the subject? Did you join on impulse? What plan of thinking would you recommend for the prospective petitioner in order that he might come to a sound decision? We are appealed to differently. We reason by various processes. But through it all there are some common aspirations that make us brothers in the fraternity.

I knew a Mason. The initial urge to join a fraternity can be summed up in those four words. Over the years the matter has been discussed with many men, and often the answer is the same. Some Mason has been an ideal. We develop our ideals from observation. Somebody has lived an exemplary life, has been a stalwart citizen, has set a good pattern of conduct for others. His influence has spread outward in great circles. And many have profited because of his life. We cannot count them all, for their number is legion. Even as we profited by the good example of others, so do we owe the same service to those who follow us.

Masonic philosophy is of interest to the contemplative member. We differ individually in our understanding of these matters. Symbolism appeals to us from different angles. The historical significance, the central idea, the application to the present day—all these affect us differently. But if we arrive at a common understanding about the great lessons of the Craft and can put them to work in this, our day, then we are interpreting Masonry. Then we have a philosophy. We cannot escape the fundamental conception — “In the beginning God —.” It follows that good conduct is essential. All men are created by the same Supreme Architect, and this fact ushers in the idea of universal brotherhood. If I would become a builder, how would I proceed? Should I become

expert in the symbolism of the Craft, its history, its applications? We differ in our interpretation but the end point is a constructive programme.

A complete philosophy of Masonry unfolds to the earnest student. This means a study of the ultimate destiny of the race and of man's position in the universe. His approach to God is at the centre of it all. The fraternity in no way attempts to supplant any religious belief. Each member is left free to follow the dictates of his own conscience and to interpret the Great Light as he sees it. This leaves a Mason free to support any and all good intentions that have a beginning and ending in God. As a petitioner for the degrees, I was appealed to by this broad plan of understanding. Its constructiveness and stability impressed me.

Masonry calls the Craft to high service. Every noble act and every thoughtful, sympathetic approach to human problems are included in the programme of the builder. As an individual who wanted to be useful to my fellowmen, I wished to align myself with a programme of constructive activity such as opportunity to serve in a great movement. Earnest craftsmen, builders of the Temple, are an inspiration to all the brethren. The Temple walls are still rising. I would be a builder.

—Bro. Robert W. Tarbell in the Square & Compass.

MASONIC PRINCIPLES

1. To strive for a better understanding of the principles of Masonry as applied to the Lodge room and to everyday life.
2. To promote harmony and concord among the members, to seek wise counsel, to aid the needy, to comfort and visit the sick and infirm.
3. To remember that a single rose for the living is better than a costly wreath at the grave.
4. To realize that we, as Masons, need the friendly atmosphere of the Lodge. It promotes friendship, understanding and good will. Go to Lodge at least once each month.
5. To labor for the benefit of mankind, to remember our vows, to uphold the traditions of Masonry, to speak truthfully, to live gracefully, to act courteously.
6. To remember that, above all else, Charity is the chief virtue, for he whose heart is ruled by Charity will be honored and remembered when earthly monuments have crumbled into dust.

—L.R. in Masonic Bulletin, Ottumwa, Iowa.

Man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried.

—Henry David Thoreau.