



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE FELLOWCRAFT DEGREE

Contemplate the intellectual faculties — trace them even to the Throne of God.

THE more one thinks of the degrees of Free-Masonry the more one is impressed by the soundness, the balance, the all embracing nature of its teachings and the need for a continuous study of all its philosophy.

Having been privileged to prepare and deliver a paper to the Conference of the Grand Masters of North America in 1953 on the "Philosophy of the First Degree," which was printed in the Proceedings of Grand Lodge and, having found a great deal of pleasure therein, I am now tempted to soliloquise on the subject of the philosophy of the Fellowcraft Degree.

It is very significant that one is found to be expecting to pass from the initiate or apprenticeship period by "help of God and the assistance of the Square." In the previous degree the help of God was taught in many ways and one of the great lessons was the exercise of that priceless virtue Charity which should be so exemplified that when a man is said to be a Mason the world at large may know that he is one to whom the burdened heart may pour forth its sorrow, to whom the distressed may prefer his suit, whose hand is guided by justice and whose heart is warmed by benevolence. In this connection I have always noted that it is the individual Mason who is exhorted to exercise Charity and there does not appear to be any place for Charitable Donations to be paid from the General Funds of the Lodge. There is a place for the brethren to contribute to a Benevolent Fund but this is for fraternal assistance. If the brethren wish to make a collective gift to a particular charity they are free to do so, provided the Masonic benevolence has been adequately taken care of; it should not be from the general funds.

When the incoming Fellowcraft expresses through his guide that, in addition to the help

of God, he will need the assistance of the Square, I wonder if he at that time has any idea of the significance of the Square in the whole Masonic structure and to the Masonic way of life. He had been told previously by the Worshipful Master that the Square was one of the three great lights and in explanation it was said that the Square "was to square our actions." No doubt the candidate had heard that the Square was the most typical symbol of Freemasonry as a whole, just like nine out of every ten, Mason or non Mason, would say.

What he would not perhaps be aware of is that the Square has been denominated by many learned writers on Freemasonry as the most important and vital symbol of the ancient Craft.

Mackey terms it "one of the most important and significant symbols." McBride said: "in Masonry, or building, the most dominant law is the law of the Square." Newton's words glow: "Very early the Square became an emblem of truth, justice and righteousness, and so it remains to this day, though countless ages have passed. Simple, familiar, eloquent, it brings from afar a sense of the wonder of the dawn, and it still teaches a lesson we find it hard to learn." Haywood speaks of: "its history, so varied and ancient, its use, so universal." Mackenzie: "An important emblem passed into universal acceptance." In his encyclopedia, Kenning copied Mackey's phrase. Klein reverently denominates it "The Great Symbol." First Kings, describing the Temple, states that "all the doors and the posts were square."

While we cannot say that the square is the oldest symbol in Freemasonry, we do know it is older than history.

Newton speaks of the oldest building known to man "—a prehistoric tomb found in the sands at Hieraconpolis, is already right-angled."

Confucious when recounting (481 B.C.) his own degrees of moral progress says that only at seventy-five years of age could he venture to follow the inclinations of his heart without fear of "transgressing the limits of the Square."

Truly we are with great men when we reflect upon the wisdom and reasoning powers of men who lived five thousand years ago, who knew the principles of geometry by which a square can be constructed.

Small wonder then that Freemasonry says a man needs the "assistance of the Square when it symbolizes (1) the conception of right-angledness — an angle of ninety-degrees (2) the builder's tool, one of our working tools, the Master's own immovable jewel (3) that quality of character which has made a "square man" synonymous not only with a member of our Fraternity, but with uprightness, honesty, dependability.

Honourable work is a feature of the Fellowcraft Degree and there is emphasized the need for study. The liberal arts are mentioned and recommended and one cannot help but get the idea that our predecessors aimed at the brethren being clear thinkers ready to take up leadership in any walk of life.

President Griswold of Yale University in an address on the Liberal Arts agrees that they tend to effectually polish and adorn the mind but states that there is a tendency to leave the fundamentals out; to teach men how to blow up the world but to leave out the instruction on how it should be governed.

Plutarch said in one of his writings "There are two sentences inscribed upon the Delphic oracle hugely accommodated to the uses of mans life; 'Know thyself' and 'nothing too much' and upon these all other precepts depend." Griswold says we have neglected the first precept in our national passion and aptitude for the second and that while it has carried us far it will carry us no further without the first. He says further "How may we know ourselves so that we know our weakness as well as our strength; so that we may understand the relationship between our cultural responsibilities and the political and military objectives to which we are committed; so that we may proclaim the virtues of American life in the universal language of humanity? The question leads straight to the liberal arts. These studies made their appearance in formal education in Greece more than two thousand years ago. Plato and Aristotle both recognized their vital role in the education of the ideal citizen. There is much misunderstanding as to the meaning of the term "liberal arts." It means, and has meant from the beginning, the arts or studies becoming to a free man. Their purpose in our educational system was well stated by John Stuart Mill when he said it was to make "capable and cultivated human beings . . . Men are men before they are lawyers or physicians

or manufacturers; and if you make them capable and sensible men, they will make themselves capable and sensible lawyers and physicians." Mill spoke these words in his inaugural address as Rector of St. Andrews University, Scotland.

The trivium (grammar, rhetoric, logic) and quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) of the medieval curriculum have broadened to include such studies as language, literature, philosophy, the fine arts and history. These subjects can and should be taught in a context that includes the sciences and social studies."

You will see that he pleads for the preservation of the teaching and study of the Liberal Arts and here again our Masonic teaching is recognized by the leaders of thought both ancient and modern.

Work to receive wages — entered apprentices in corn, wine and oil — fellowcrafts in specie — the better to be able to support oneself and those dependent upon one and to contribute more liberally to the relief of distressed brethren or their widows and orphans.

It would seem therefore that the principles behind the passing from the apprentice to the fellowcraft are to develop in a man the following virtuous characteristics:—

Character

Freemasonry's one great aim is teach development from within; that the individual must be made perfect in thinking of others; that in strengthening and improving the character of individuals it will benefit the whole community. Why does Freemasonry lay so much emphasis on individual character? Firstly, God weighs us by it; secondly, it is the only thing which survives death; thirdly, it measures our influence; and fourthly, it determines our destiny.

Reverence

Freemasonry is religious but is not a religion. How can a man be anything but reverent after passing through its degrees.

Industrious

Labor is the lot of men and a freemason is taught to labor for the benefit of those who are left behind as well as for the advancement and improvement of his race; that he who plants should not expect to gather in a lifetime.

Clear Thinker

A Freemason should be independent in his opinions; preferring duty to everything besides; of strict morals; submissive to law; devoted to humanity, his Country and his God.

Protector

He should seek the solace of his own distress by affording relief and consolation to his fellow creatures in the hour of their affliction.

Let me close with the following gem from Samuel Smiles:

"We learn wisdom from failure much more than success

We often discover what will do by finding out what will not do

And he who never made a mistake probably never made a discovery."

*M.W. Bro. Harry E. Howard, F.C.A.,
Past Grand Master, Alberta.*

MASONIC REFLECTIONS

The marvel of Freemasonry is that it grips and holds men the way it does, and it grips and holds men of all grades and degrees of knowledge and intelligence. The highest trained men — some of the most brilliant minds I have known have been gripped by Masonry, and those men are ardent and enthusiastic Masons. Others I have known are prepared to accept just anything that comes along and they are equally ardent, and perhaps more so than the others.

And why? Because Masonry offers something that every man can grasp and every man understand. The symbols which we use in Masonry are the facts of Masonry, and they have been chosen by those who have built up our system of Philosophy . . . And so there is room in Masonry for all, and Masonry is one of the grandest and widest and most intelligible systems of philosophy that was ever offered to them. At the same time it is designed for men by men. It is a man's Craft; it is a man's teaching, and whether you simply come into the Craft and accept the three degrees and wear an apron and attend Lodge occasionally, or whether your Masonry goes with you wherever you go and claims every thought and emotion of your body, there is something in it to teach you, to hold you, to lift you, to set your feet on the first rung of Jacob's ladder, to stay at your elbow and bring you through the Valley of the Shadow of Death to the Gates of the Grand Lodge Above.

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United Grand Lodge of New South Wales.*

THE TRAINING OF MASONS

Masons should never consider the acquisition of membership as of primary importance, because by tradition and example, based upon law and usage, one of the very fundamentals of Masonry is the prohibition against solicitation. Masonic influence in a community is not based primarily upon numbers, but rather it is represented by the quality of its leadership. The value of Masonic membership is gauged by the conduct, devotion and contribution of its individual members.

The fundamental function of the Lodge should be the training of its members in an understanding of the truths and ethical values of the fellowship. All of its ceremonies and rituals emphasize the proposition of inculcating the desire to become benevolent men, instructed in the social virtues of human relationship,

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things, but only for his special abilities in the field of mental achievements and for his capacity to best work and best agree among and with his fellowmen. We are ever striving toward the light and our progress has been steady. We do not despair amidst the chaos of present times, but with steadfast belief in the ultimate triumph of Truth, with confidence in our respect for humanity and with sympathy for and co-operation with all men of good will, we look to the future with assurance. May eventually the teachings of the Prince of Peace and the Harmony of the Universe prevail in widespread acceptance among all men.

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All brethren are reminded that Grand Lodge convenes in the Masonic Temple, Edmonton on Wednesday, June 9th next. A large attendance will be greatly appreciated by our Most Worshipful Grand Master.

Long ago it was the custom in Scotland, when one entered the lodge as an initiate, for the Master to appoint an "intender," as he was called: that is, a teacher to instruct him in the ritual and its meaning. What a pity that such a custom should have fallen into disuse.

The Philaethes.

and imprint indelibly upon the hearts and minds of its members their duty to propagate the ideals of the art.

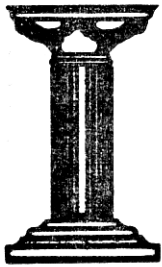
The success of a Masonic Lodge cannot be gauged by the measuring stick of its membership roll or by the accumulation of funds, "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesseth."

The chief concern of a Masonic Lodge should be the welfare and happiness and the development of its members. The activation of those high principles of human virtue that result in a fellowship so closely entwined together and so firmly dedicated to making alive the beauties of our ritual and the fundamental virtues that are taught at the altars of our symbolic Lodges.

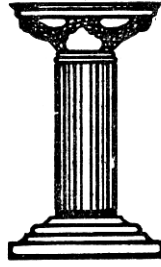
The value of a Masonic Lodge to the community in which it lives consists entirely in the operative art of Masonry as practiced through the influence of those whom it has helped to train into what we recognize as the Masonic character.

The most important function of a Masonic Lodge, therefore, is to train its members and keep them informed in the arts and history, philosophy and symbolism of Masonry and endeavor to make these the shining symbols of a Mason's life and conduct.

The Oklahoma Mason.



Between the Pillars



AN ESTABLISHED ORDER IN A CHANGING ERA

The increased use of mechanical tools, the progress of science, and the additional leisure brought to so many people, have during the past generation, made necessary a complete reconstruction of many of the basic ideas, which governed society prior to this time. The natural abilities of many men and women have found a remarkable opportunity under this new system to build industrial empires which, in many respects, bear strong resemblances to the old feudal systems of the medieval times, not all of which were tyrannical in nature, but of which the majority were joint efforts for mutual safety and advancement. However, where the leadership has been blind to the real needs of those led, where the leadership has been selfishly greedy at the expense of the majority of workers linked with them in their enterprise, there has, following the universal pattern from the beginning of time fostered by man's primitive fight to survive, festered, within those burdened beyond their capacity to bear, a boiling indignation which eventually exploded in organized revolution in one form or another. Out of these revolutions have come the greatest strides towards freedom.

The present trend of revolution, whether basically sound or not, is to substitute for these individual groups, which have carved out for themselves peculiar benefits by their own progress and leadership, a tempo of achievement geared to the strength and ability of the weakest member. There has arisen a fanatical concern for the welfare of the weak in society, for the weak in the family of nations, for those handicapped by heredity and geographic situation, and out of this concern the ambitious and selfish prototype of the medieval baron and the industrial overlord now insists that the care of the weak must be consigned to his direction and their progress and welfare entrusted to his control and authority.

Again, not all of these self-styled leaders imposing their own controls on the peoples of the world are damaging to the progress of the human race. Many of them are real leaders and advancing the present civilization beyond anything heretofore enjoyed. However, selfish greed and lust for power, on such scale as the world has never seen before, has been engendered by the new changed ideas of social re-

lationships, and has permitted the usurpation of dictatorial powers to the detriment of large groups in perhaps key positions in the world.

No one great organization, however noble its aims, however charitable its work, however enlightening its program—and we have many of these dedicated to progress and improvement — is entirely free from this stigma of abuses of authority, and in some cases criminal embezzlement of public property to private use. It has never been possible to produce any group of organized leaders entirely free from some taint. The exercise of authority and power over others brings with it too many opportunities for channeling for private benefit the use of the efforts of those governed or the confiscation of their property or freedoms. The greater the power, the greater its abuse.

Many great institutions have been founded in an endeavor to bring to the world a pattern of behavior which would make for the best in social relations, morally and materially. The patterns of the beliefs of some of these vary only in a slight degree from each other, and all were conceived to follow the highest ideals to which man can strive, as religions, ideologies and philosophies. Some realistically accept the challenge of the fight against evil in the world and, with all their efforts, are concerned in a gradual betterment, hoping eventually to reach their goals. Others rely on a system of antique superstitions and spiritual suppressions to maintain a status quo, which the leaders impose on their group by limiting their education within the confines of their own narrow beliefs and by commanding obedience to tenets, the existence of which was fostered by leaders determined that to a few alone were knowledge and authority to be available.

Freemasonry has its place in the structure of society today, as it has for so many ages gone by, and the teachings it inculcates are as old as the family of men. Freemasonry recommends to its votaries a search for the truths which are eternal, and in such search demands that they follow their highest ideals. Freemasonry endorses charity as the outcome of love, brotherhood of man as that excellent rule by which we can mutually take our appointed place in society, and the Fatherhood of God as acknowledging the Supreme Power and Authority of the Divine Creator, whose watchful care makes proper awards to those earnest in their search for Truth and faithful in the discharge of their duties. Freemasonry by its teachings tends to induce among its members a stern desire to support only those material projects, those systems of governing laws and bodies, those steps toward social freedom and advancement, which have as their foundation sound ideals and practical application to the problems they seek to solve. Freemasonry regards no man for his special privileges in material

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