



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: SAM HARRIS, P.G.M.

THE OBJECTIVE OF FREEMASONRY

“FREEMASONRY is an ancient and honourable institution. Ancient as having existed from time im-memorial and honourable as tending in every particular so to rend all men who will conform to its precepts. No institution was ever established on better principles, nor were ever laid down more excellent rules and useful maxims than are inculcated in the several Masonic Lectures.”

“Freemasonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.”

“Freemasonry, however, is not only the most ancient but the most moral human institution that ever existed; as every character, every figure, and every emblem has a moral tendency and serves to inculcate the practice of virtue in all its genuine professors.”

Every Members will be quite familiar with one or more of the above definitions of Freemasonry. Let us then pause a little while to consider just what Freemasonry is trying to do—what is its objective?—and what is the method by which it hopes to obtain that objective?

The objective of Freemasonry is the creation of a certain type of character: the building of a basic structure of manhood according to a definite plan. It is not simply that we want to make men good, it is that we want to make men good for something—and if a man is going to be good for something, there must of necessity be certain fundamental elements in his character.

That character must be founded in a profound recognition of the Great Architect of the Universe, the foundation stone of all religions. We all have our own religious beliefs and opinions, and some of us are presumptuous enough to call these beliefs and opinions—knowledge—“We have but faith, we cannot know, for knowledge is of things we see.” But, after all, men are not made better by what they know but by what they inwardly feel.

The foundation of character is that sentiment of

reverential love which lies at the base of all religious life, which is good for anything—it is that basic principle which we try to inculcate at the altars of Freemasonry, and upon that foundation—shaped as it may be in accordance with each man’s inheritance, his environment and his intellectual capacity—he builds an edifice of conduct which is his character.

We try to teach men to be honest with all men, to be honourable in every deed, sincere in every word, honest, in the largest sense of the term, in every thought; we teach them to be kind we teach them to be clean of life; we teach them to be tolerant and sincere; and so I would remind you that it is our desire to build upon this foundation a life structure of moral materials—and constructed in accordance with the designs laid down on our trestle-board, which we commonly refer to as our principles.

There is always a temptation to depart from principles. It is one thing for a man to have imbedded in the very substrata of his nature the principle of honesty, the deep conviction that he must be honest with his God, honest with mankind and with himself. It is another thing to believe in the Maxim that, “Honesty is the best policy.” If that is so far as he goes, there may, and most probably will, come a time in his experience when he will very seriously ask himself whether just now, honesty is the best policy; whether by a little deviation he cannot greatly enhance, either his own interests or the interests of those that are dear to him. That way! Danger lies. We may not, on peril of disaster, depart from principle, the design laid down on our trestle board of Freemasonry.

We know that in the material and technical aspects of life there are principles of the sciences upon which all things must be based and governed. We may not depart from them without sure disaster.

We may not even know why they are so. We may not, of our own knowledge be able to prove them, but experience has proved them to us, and in these departments of life we would not think of departing from those material principles. So also in the moral

life there are principles which are just as universal, just as compelling and just as dangerous as any of those known to the scientist, and we depart from them at the same cost.

Truth and toleration are two other qualities of Masonic character which we must have—they are very closely allied—the ability to respect other people's opinions, the ability to disagree without quarreling, or as it is sometimes aptly put, the ability to agree to disagree. We may have different political views, why should we personally quarrel about them? So again with religion, In past years men have slaughtered one another over points of doctrine, but why should men holding different views of the Grand Architect of the Universe forget that they all love and revere Him and try to serve Him.

So with the other differences that divide men. The solvent of Toleration recognizes that each one has a perfect inalienable right to form his own opinion and to hold it tenaciously. It demands mutual respect for each other's feelings, mutual regard for each other's rights, mutual desire for each other's welfare and mutual regret for each other's misfortune. That, Brethren, is the type of men that Freemasonry is trying to create. What then is the course by which these objectives are to be attained?

It is the work of individual upon chosen individuals, the contact of spirits, of souls, of minds and of personalities.

It is the leaven that leavens the whole, not a mold into which the lump is thrown in order to make a loaf of a certain size and shape and weight.

It is that spiritual force which has to do with the individual man in his individual capacity.

And lastly, it is the choosing and testing of men who are able to understand and willing to follow the principles of Freemasonry. That is the method by which the objective of Freemasonry is to be attained.

Freemasonry is not simply a delightful and splendid possession. It is a matter of giving not getting. It is a mission, a duty, an opportunity to be open only to those who are capable of rising to the level of that opportunity. It is something that men are not only to enjoy but to use for the betterment of themselves and to the benefit of their fellow men.

Centuries ago the torch of Freemasonry was lighted at the altar fire, and through the ages that torch has been handed on from hand to hand. It has been handed on that it may give light to men, by carrying the single torch into the dark places. It is the individual torch, of your life and mine, making a great light which shines from our fraternity as a whole.

The future of our great Fraternity lies in a

return to the faith of our fathers, bringing the wisdom of the past to the service of the present, teaching the truth that makes men free, showing in our private lives and public service what Freemasonry means and the kind of citizen it produces. In short to make of Freemasonry today, on a large scale what it was in former times on a small scale, and order of men, initiated, sworn and trained to make liberty, justice and truth prevail.

IT IS ONLY MEN OF GOODWILL THAT CAN BRING GOOD WILL TO MEN.

M.W. Bro. W. H. Jackson,
Past Grand Master, Alberta.

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THE CALM GEOMETRY OF LIFE

Masonry is moral idealism, by which is meant no vague and filmy dream, but a life-like portrait seen in advance of what men and society should be. Ideals, so far from being mere visions, are the most accurate results reached by means of the most painstaking calculation. It stands much in their favor that they came not from the brains of the evil, but from the intellects that are greatest. The greatest minds of each age have pleaded for liberty because only the great minds can paint in advance the portrait of a free people. Many nations are now in the mire, lacking minds great enough to grasp a lofty ideal. Instead of being a mere romance, an ideal is the long mathematical calculation of a mind as logical as Euclid. Idealism is not the misusings of a visionary; it is the calm geometry of life. Masonry is moral idealism!

—The Builder

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THE VOICE OF ALBERT PIKE

Reason is at fault when it deals with the Infinite. There we must revere and believe. Notwithstanding the calamities of the virtuous, the miseries of the deserving, the propriety of tyrants and the murder of martyrs, we must believe that there is a wise, just, merciful and loving God, and intelligence and a Providence, supreme over all, and caring for the minutest things and events.

Be faithful to your friends; for true friendship is of a nature not only to survive through all of the vicissitudes of life, but to continue through an endless duration; only to stand the shock of conflicting opinions, and the roar of a revolution that shakes the world, but to last when the heavens are no more, and to spring fresh from the ruins of the universe.

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Those who trust to chance must abide by the results of chance. They have no legitimate complaint against anyone but themselves.

Calvin Coolidge.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH AND HARMONY

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity!

Harmony is the basis of all great achievement, the foundation stone of major importance in all human progress, whether it be individual progress or collective progress.

Without harmony, collective effort may constitute co-operation, but it will lack the power which harmony provides through co-ordination of effort.

One of the major differences between men who make valuable contributions to mankind and those who merely take up space in the world, is that some have received definite inspiration. All the individual successes which endure have had their beginning through the good influence of some other individual.

The desire to be great, to be recognized and to have personal power is a healthy desire; but the desire to co-operate for mutual benefit is of higher order.

Harmony is the medium through which one may procure the full benefit of the experience, training, education, specialized knowledge, and native ability of others, just as completely as if their minds were one's own. Modern writers advocate this as a recent psychological discovery. Yet, the oldest teachings of Masonry have brought down to us the statement that harmony is the strength and support of all good institutions.

We consider the building of King Solomon's Temple as being led by the alliance of three minds, blended in a spirit of perfect harmony, and co-operating for the attainment of a definite purpose.

Such an alliance stimulates each individual mind with a high degree of inspiration and creates that state of mind known as faith.

Faith is the ruling element of our lives. It is faith that gives us whatever strength we have and leads us to the accomplishment of all we do. And faith results from the willingness to co-operate with others.

True faith indicates a willingness to wait until the Temple is entirely completed; to follow through to the end with full confidence that we shall reap our just rewards, individually as well as collectively.

It is important that Masonry should serve as an organized body, but it is even more important that there should be individual attention to personal development.

The fundamental purpose of our Institution is to train its members to the full perception of the significance of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Freemasonry has an exalted mission to perform on earth; the mission of mercy, kindness and good will toward men. Progress in this development can come only from the renewed interest of the individual. The real secrets of Masonry can be realized only in a man's own heart, and perfect realization is governed by his own conduct and habits of mind.

The individual Mason must determine for himself whether or not he will seek more knowledge, using the little knowledge which he already has to

open the vast stores of wisdom preserved for those who are diligent.

Bros. V. M. Burrows M.P.S.

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A SACRED TRUST

Masonry had its origin in response to a demand of human nature for a community or fraternity wherein the welfare of a Brother was to be a moving cause. Everyone who has come into this community has done so of his own free will and accord, professing a trust in God and a love for his Brother, and his avowed purpose only was advancement of the welfare of his fellowman. In coming thus freely into the fraternity he has yielded his individual will, in certain respects, to the government of the majority, or to the government of the Craft, in such manner as its laws and usages prescribe. In doing this he has trusted to the good faith and the combined wisdom of his Brethren. He has placed in their hands in certain instances his honour and reputation. A trust more sacred could be reposed in no one.

The Freemason, England.

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LIFE'S GREATEST JOY

Have you ever helped another?
 Ever earned a grateful smile?
 Ever asked a weary brother
 In to ride with you a mile?
 Have you ever given freely
 Of your riches and your worth?
 If you haven't then you've really
 Missed the greatest joy on earth.

Has a thrill of pride possessed you?
 Have you felt your pulses run,
 As a weaker brother blessed you
 For some good that you had done?
 Have you seen eyes start to glisten
 That were sad before you came?
 If you haven't stop and listen —
 You have missed life's finest game.

The Wisconsin Freemason.

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MASON

A man whose word is his bond.

A man whose ear is open to hear the cry of distress, whose eye penetrates sham and deceit, whose feet are swift to run errands of mercy, and whose hand supports the failing brother.

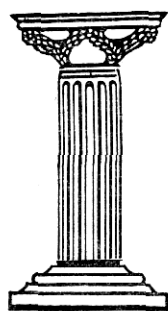
A man who eschews evil, and clings to the good.

A man subject to the faults and foibles of human nature, but whose desire is to do good and to show mercy.

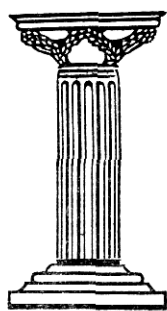
Masonic News, Wenatchee, Wash.

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In all affairs of life, courtesies of the smallest character are the ones which strike deepest.



Between the Pillars



CHALLENGES UNLIMITED

There seems to be a growing acceptance of Masonry as an adjunct to life rather than as a governing way of life. Far too many of us think of ourselves as members of the fraternity and from it seek and expect little more than the prestige, contacts and social benefits to be obtained from membership. These doubtless do and will enjoy fellowship and brotherhood with other men of like character, but so long as this remains their primary interest in the Craft Masonry will find them weak instruments with which to improve mankind's estate.

It is not contended that Masonry should function as a militant, organized force, designed to control and direct the thinking and action of its members. The thinking of Masons may be as diverse as the individuals themselves. Masonry asks only that each shall arrive at decisions governed by his concept of the eternal, basic truths revealed to him in the light obtained through Masonic instruction. It is inevitable that when problems are approached in this manner there will not be great diversity in the solutions found. Confusion and complexity are the offspring of selfishness, while simplicity and justice are the fruit of truth and honor.

Life is a great river made up from the rivulets rising in our souls and surging on into the vast unknown ocean of time. Rivers always will be exactly what the small rills bring them. Some bring precious nuggets and flakes of gold. Others bring the priceless soil to impoverish the life from whence it come. Still others bring nothing but worthless mud and sand. When all are mixed we have that mighty stream called human life. Today we find it far from being the peaceful, useful stream that it should be. It is too often a muddy raging torrent, bursting all bounds and flooding the land with devastating ruthlessness.

Too long we have tried to halt the floods by controlling the river but neglected the rivulets from when come all the waters. If each of those were kept in due bounds and the springs made pure, we would have little trouble with the great river.

This is the true function of Masonry. It makes no attempt to subdue the angry river of life, but it

does teach each man how to rule the single stream for which he is responsible.

Does it seem harsh criticism to imply that many Masons are not so doing? Are we not today viewing the wreckage left by the last great flood? And are not the thunderheads of another storm even now gathering over the head waters? In whom do they put their trust? In God? No. Rather it is in "dams for the river," in armies, planes, rockets and super bombs. They trust in man-made devices that never sustained that faith, treaties, agreements, armistices and pacts filled with loopholes for the selfish. There can be and is all manner of subterfuge and evasion in armistices and treaties made to protect the power of nations and the greedy ambitions of their people.

This is the state of the world today and although Masonry can not hope to change the course of the world, it can do much in that direction by setting a good example.

This means that true humility should be the watchword, that every activity and effort should conform to the light and principles received in the degrees. It means that every act should be measured by the square of virtue and that all men should meet on the level.

It means too, that great consideration should be given to those who are elected to office. Are they equipped for the position? Do they know the by-laws and how much authority they have when presiding over their liberations and how much knowledge and effort is required to be worthy of leadership? There seems to be a decided trend these days for leaders to be ruled by others rather than to rule—themselves. No doubt, some in office are not capable of leadership and need to be guided all along the way—how did they get into office in the first place? Fortunately the average man, if he is at all conversant with the laws and regulations of his organization, should be capable of presiding over these deliberations according to his dictates and not according to what he is told to do.

From these facts it becomes clear that the full power of our teaching is not applied, but the breakdown can not be wholly charged to those who occupy responsible places in the nation or organizations. If every Mason in his daily life reflected the truth he has been given, the effects would soon be felt and seen in all phases of collective life. Herein lies a serious challenge to every Mason and herein lies the opportunity for every Mason to react to his own honor, to the welfare of the Craft, and to the betterment of his fellow men.

We have unlimited challenges offered to us during the course of our lifetime but the one that offers an opportunity for doing good and living an upright and righteous life seems to be the most worthwhile of all and should be given much consideration. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Shall we accept this challenge?

Bro. M. A. Stillwaugh,
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