



Grand Lodge Bulletin

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The Influence of Dedicated Lives

*"Look to this day,
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course lie all the verities and
realities of your existence;
The bliss of Growth; the Glory of Action;
The splendor of Beauty.
For yesterday is already a dream,
And tomorrow is only a vision;
But today, well-lived, makes every yesterday
a dream of happiness, and every
Tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day."*

There are, on the North American Continent today, over Four Million Freemasons, all of whom have been dedicated to the Masonic Way of Life. If all members were but true to their Obligations and the teachings of our Order, what a powerful influence for good would be generated. Freemasonry has come down to us through the ages, laden with examples of great and devoted souls who have, in their own day and generation, exerted an enormous impact on the lives of those who followed them.

Few of us pause to consider the tremendous part which influence plays in our daily lives. Let us consider what the influence of a few dedicated lives has meant in the drama of world development.

We think first of Jesus, the Founder of Christianity. He has wielded a greater influence in human affairs than any other. Apart from the Divinity of Christ, He was unique as a reformer. His birth was contrary to the laws of life—His death contrary to the laws of death. He had no cornfields or fisheries but He could spread a table for five thousand and have bread and fish to spare. He walked on no beautiful carpets or velvet rugs, but walked on the waters of the Sea of Galilee and they supported Him. Religious leaders of His day rejected His way of life, one of His Disciples betrayed Him, one denied Him and, at His trial, all forsook Him and fled. On perjured evidence He was convicted and crucified. When He died few men mourned but all nature honored Him. A black crepe hung over the sun and many trembled for their sins; the earth beneath them shook under the load. Corruption could not get

hold of His body. The soil that had been reddened with His blood could not claim His dust.

For only three short years He preached His gospel. He wrote no book, established no church, had no monetary backing. But, after Nineteen Hundred years, He is the central character of human history, the Pivot around which the events of the ages revolve, and the greatest example of the influence of a dedicated Life.

Hiram Abiff, whose legend and symbolism are so well known to all Masons and whom multiplied millions of Freemasons all over the world have figuratively represented, symbolizes, in a dimmer way, the influence of a dedicated life.

We think, too, of Joseph—sold by his brothers into slavery—as one of the outstanding examples in all recorded history of the influence of a dedicated life. His rise to greatness through the influence of the Brotherhood (Masonic) is fascinatingly related by Parker in his Book, "Table in the Wilderness." The story tells of Joseph's rise from slavery to be Prime Minister of Egypt, one of the greatest nations of that day. In one passage from the Book, Joseph utters these words: "The spirit of this Brotherhood should be as the spirit of a strong man, neither cast down by calamity nor elated by success. We should remember that ours is a struggle and a march toward Light, that the only worthwhile conquest is the conquest of mind over mind. This fraternity is dedicated to economize the blind force of the people through the annihilation of apathy and ignorance, poverty, and the degradation which comes of ages-old servitude to a system invoked and perpetuated by the tyrants of the past and present and made possible by the indolence and the stolid ignorance of the people themselves! Know you that this chasm of ignorance and human indolence cannot be bridged in a single generation—nor yet ten generations."

The influence of Joseph's dedicated life on the events of that period and in world history is unique.

We are all familiar with the dedicated life of David Livingstone, who fought the slave trade and braved vast dangers to win Africa for Christianity.

Today's great epic is being wrought by the prodigious labours and hardships, in that dark Continent, of Albert Schweitzer. Yet, when asked to name the greatest man alive, he replied: "The greatest man in the world is some unknown person who lives only for other people."

Abraham Lincoln is another outstanding example of a dedicated life. He determined to free the slaves and, although martyred before his work was completed, he lives as the Great Emancipator and one dedicated to a noble purpose.

Sir Richard Grenfell of Labrador dedicated his life to the welfare of the people of that rugged coast and his influence lives today in the hospitals and halls of mercy he established for those in need.

Last summer, on a visit to the East, I saw the influence of dedicated lives in a remarkable family. The father and mother lived on a small, stony farm and eked out an existence by hard and toilsome work. They considered their children their greatest asset and resolved, if possible, each would be well-educated and equipped to take his place in the world. By careful saving they were able to give their six boys an education. The boys, themselves, worked diligently during their school and college years to provide funds for their tuition, and the scholarships they won also helped financially. The mother and father cheerfully denied themselves material comforts to educate their family. Before the task was finished, the father was called Home but the mother, with indomitable courage and determination, carried on to attain the goal set for their sons, with the result that, today, two are ministers of the gospel, one is a college professor, two are successful in the business world and the other is on the old homestead carrying forward the traditions of his parents and active in church and community life. The mother has now been called to her Reward but the influence of these godly and dedicated parents will live on in the lives of their six sturdy sons. The sons, in their various field of endeavour, will be exerting the same influence for good which they learned in their humble home, at their parents' knees.

"Their children shall rise up and call them blessed."

Albert Pike, the most eminent Masonic writer of modern times, makes these profound observations on the influence radiating beyond the limited sphere of this life. "The true Mason labors for the benefit of others and for the advancement and improvement of his race. Most men desire to leave some work behind them that may outlast their own day and brief generation. The rudest unlettered husbandman, conscious of his inferiority, the widowed mother, giving her life-blood to those who pay only for the work of her workworn hands, will toil and stint themselves to educate their children that they may take a higher station in the world — such are the world's greatest benefactors. In his influences that survive him, man

becomes immortal. The thoughts and actions of the past control the destiny of the living!"

And to quote from the Egyptian Book of the Dead: "Then shall the judge of the dead answer; Let this soul pass on; he lives upon truth. He has made his delight in doing what is good to men, and what is pleasing to God. He has given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty and clothes to the naked. His lips are pure and his hands are pure. His heart weighs right in the balance. He fought on earth the battle of the good, even as his Father the Lord of the invisible world, had commanded him. He loved his father, he honored his mother; he loved his brethren. He never preferred the great man to him of low condition. He was a wise man; his soul loved God. He was a brother to the great, and a father to the humble; and he never was a mischief-maker. Such as these shall find grace in the eyes of the great God."

And what of the influence of Freemasonry in the world today? Freemasonry is dedicated to the Higher Way of Life and, as Freemasons, our great aim is to establish a world order in which all mankind shall be free. As Freemasons, one of our great missions is to be happy ourselves and to convey this happiness to others. This can best be accomplished by doing good to others and dedicating our lives as an influence for good.

As we have ended another year, may we go forward, with confidence, influenced by the great lives of the past and dedicated to demonstrating, in our daily lives, the philosophies of our beloved Fraternity. May we utter, with humility, this fervent prayer:

"Great Architect of the Universe, remind us that every path down which benediction has come to our souls has a cross at its beginning, and is marked with the footprints of those who have laboured there."

Save us from our petulant and irritable demands for personal recognition. Send us forth with greater unselfishness to leave this world a sweeter, more decent and brotherly place.

Grant to discouraged souls the vision of high aims worth living for. May this world be lifted to finer living in family and business life, to nobler statesmanship, to better dreams of world peace and human brotherhood."

Amen.

and at Eventide, may we ask, in the words of the late Peter Marshall, Chaplain of the United States Senate, "Oh God, treat me tomorrow as I have treated others today."

Who can estimate the influence of a dedicated life?

—Howard B. Macdonald, P.G.M.

Moral courage is obeying one's conscience and doing what one believes to be right, in face of a hostile majority. Moral cowardice is stifling one's conscience, and doing what is less than right in order to win other people's favor.

THE TRUE PURPOSE OF MASONRY

It is a well known fact that we are living today in a greatly troubled and unsettled world. Intense feelings of hatred and bitterness are prevalent among men and nations, the result of which at the moment are unpredictable. Civilization is at the cross-road simply because men have not learned to live together in peace and harmony. It is certain that these conditions must not be permitted to continue to exist. A remedy must be found, or civilization is doomed.

In our humble opinion here is an opportunity for Masonry to render a great service to a sorely troubled world. This, of course, will not be an easy task to be accomplished by mankind alone; there must be unlimited faith in the Supreme Architect of the Universe. Without His power to aid mankind in this great effort, the result can be nothing but failure.

In considering the part Masonry may be able to play in such a tremendously important assignment, there is much to be done. First of all, the millions of members of our ancient and honorable Craft must learn what Masonry really is, and reach a fuller realization of the true meaning of the wonderful lessons taught within the tiled recesses of the lodge.

Many of our leaders today are stressing only the importance of learning the ritualistic work and to be thereby enabled to render a letter-perfect recital of same as the degrees are being conferred. That is all well and good, but our efforts must not stop there. We need to give the candidate something whereby he may get the true picture of what Masonry is, what relation the work has to it.

With all respect to our lecturers and teachers, the idea is far too prevalent that the work is the main thing in Masonry. The Craft must be disabused of this idea. They must be taught that the work is not an object but only a means of teaching the true principles of Masonry. If the degrees are not conferred so that the candidate and those who are looking on will not give thought to the manner in which it is done, but rather look beyond to what that work teaches, the ceremony is an utter failure.

In looking beyond the floor work and getting the true vision as to what Masonry is striving to teach, our beloved Craft can become a far greater power for good in the world than ever before.

At the moment, the world is in need of what we strive to teach. When these lessons are learned, and the lives of all members of the Craft are charted by the desire that all men shall dwell together as brothers, the world will note the great changes in those lives. It is then they may fully realize the futility of forcing their fellowmen to do their bidding in an ungodly thirst for power. Hatred may then be replaced by love, and men of all races and creeds may come to know the beauty of living together in a peaceful world.

—Courtesy Wisconsin Freemason.

At the ceremony of the Dedication of the Temple, King Solomon spoke these words:

"Lord God of Israel there is no God like Thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their heart. Who has kept with Thy servant David my father that Thou promised him. Thou hast fulfilled it with Thine hand, as it is this day. Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded. Yet have Thou respect unto the prayer of Thy servant, which he prayeth before Thee today. That Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which Thou said, My name shall be there. And harken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant, and Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place, and when Thou hearest forgive."

I wonder how many of our Brethren know just where in our V. of S.L. is found that story.

At a recent Dedication of a Sacred Edifice in Eastern Canada, the words were used. I imagine the Freemasons present were strangely moved.

However beautiful, or humble, our own Temple Lodge Room may be, our ancient Ritual will ever stir us, when properly rendered. Let us see to it that its fine wording is given the best possible rendering. This can only be done by careful study of every sentence with diligent rehearsals until the best is accomplished. Rehearsals rightly conducted can be mighty interesting.

Recall the many majestic cathedrals, and other fine structures, in the old world and the new, all possible by man's use of God given talents.

Or the words in Bryant's Forest Hymn:

*"The groves were God's first Temples,
Ere man learned to hew the shaft or lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them.
Ere man learned to hew the lofty vaults
To gather and roll back the sound of anthems."*

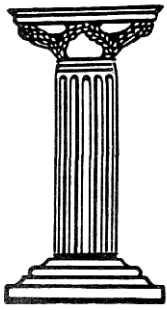
—R.W. Bro. F. F. W. Lowle,
Past Grand Registrar, Alberta.

Some people make mistakes and some hesitate until the opportunity is gone. Of the two the world owes by far more to the former. The people who never make mistakes have done very little indeed toward the progress of the world.

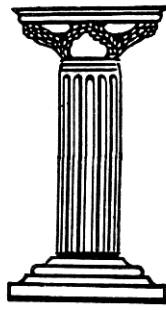
—Exchange.

Ⓚ Masonry is regarded as universal because it is broad and tolerant. Any man of any church or creed, who professes a belief in the three landmarks—the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man and the Immortality of the Soul—is eligible for Masonry, so far as religion is concerned.

Ⓚ To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.



Between the Pillars



DOES MASONRY NEED TO BE MODERNIZED?

It is not too unusual to hear some Brother make the suggestion that Freemasonry should be modernized. In these days of great advances in such things as technology and atomic power, awful agency of destruction or greatest discovery of the ages for the advancement of mankind, it may not be odd that some suggest Freemasonry should be revamped to meet changing conditions. Well, what would we change?

We require a Book of the Law upon our altars. We couldn't modernize in such a manner as to do away with that requirement.

Our rituals contain many supplications to the Great Architect of the Universe. In these days when man seems bent upon the annihilation of civilization, we need the guidance and help of a Supreme Power more than ever.

We believe in some form of immortality. Freemasonry certainly isn't going to suggest that we spend a few moments here and then cease to be.

Discussion of denominational religion is barred from our assemblies. We are not going to remove those bars and permit the development of private piques and quarrels.

Discussion of partisan politics is barred in our assemblies. Letting down the bars would interfere with the harmony we must have when assembled as Freemasons.

We meet upon the level in our assemblies. Were it otherwise our teachings would be meaningless.

Our rituals are based upon a centuries-old legend. None that would adequately take its place has ever been suggested.

Our membership is composed wholly and completely of free-born men and of lawful age. If anyone has dreamed of changing that requirement, he has not been vocal.

Freemasonry teaches good citizenship and the dignity of man. Freemasonry is not alone in teaching those things, but it is not going to relinquish its leadership.

The tenets and virtues of Freemasonry include Faith, Hope and Charity; Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and

Justice. No one has offered anything else equal to these.

Those called to high office in Freemasonry must have proved their ability to conduct such office. Freemasonry would disintegrate if inexperienced members were called to rule the ancient Craft.

We do not solicit membership, and becoming a member requires a considerable period of time. Hundreds of organizations which sought mass membership by means of hastily-conferred rituals have passed from the scene during the period that Freemasonry has moved serenely and slowly along its way, growing in strength and usefulness with disappearing centuries.

Freemasonry uses archaic language. Isn't that something that distinguishes it as Freemasonry? What modernized words could improve Freemasonry beyond what it has been for centuries?

Who presumes to suggest he could improve upon the quaint poesy of our rituals, given us by such Brethren as Preston, Oliver and Webb?

Well, what could we change to make Freemasonry fit better into a modern world? What changes could we make without rending the fabric?

Freemasonry's ritual is based upon truths that have existed from the beginning of time without amendment. Aren't they as new now as they were when the world was without form and void? Will they not still be new when our Brethren gather thousands of years hence to use the same ritual that we use today? Maybe Brethren of those years will get new lessons from our age-old symbols and allegories, just as we today are or should be doing, but there will be no changes in those symbols and allegories.

If we are passing on to our Brethren of the distant future the fabric that will enable them to make Freemasonry of their days the same vibrant force in the mental, moral and spiritual world that it is today, isn't Freemasonry today actually thousands of years ahead of its time, rather than in need of modernization to make it harmonize with new conditions?

What could we change?

—Brother Elbert Bede,
Editor, Oregon Freemason.

"The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop, at a late or early hour. Now is the only time you own; live, love, toil with a will; place no faith in tomorrow, for the Clock may then be still."

He who sacrifices his conscience to ambition burns a picture to obtain the ashes.

For five minutes at the close of each day, think of lost opportunities to help somebody. You will miss fewer chances tomorrow.