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Volume 1

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Paul Revere
Unknown

“Listen my children, and you shall hear of the midnight ride of Paul Revere—”

These opening lines of Longfellow’s poem, and the thrilling story which follows, have fascinated us for many years. History has recorded the details of the famous ride, and the incidents connected with it; but Masons know little about Paul Revere that arouses enthusiasm. It is my purpose tonight to bring out the important facts regarding him, and to how the setting which brings our patriot brother closer to us.

The forefathers of Paul Revere were Huguenots, that brave sect of French Protestants who for many years defied Rome and the King of France. The Huguenots maintained their identity and churches in spite of edicts and persecutions. In 1549, six of their villages were completely destroyed and the inhabitants driven out, ravaged and murdered at the behest of the King. On August 24, 1572, the Huguenots were the victims of one of the most despicable massacres that ever took place – the Massacre of St. Bartholomew – in which more than six thousand of them were sought out in Paris and murdered in a human hunt lasting three days. The waters of the seine ran red with blood; the bodies of the victims were so numerous that the current was unable to carry them away; and for many miles the banks of the river were covered with their remains. When the news of the massacre reached Rome a three day’s celebration was ordered by the ecclesiastical authorities. King Charles of France, who, together with his mother, had been influenced by Church leaders to order the massacre, was congratulated on the service thus performed for the Holy Roman Church.

The persecutions to which the Huguenots were subjected caused more than four hundred thousand French to leave the country and settle elsewhere. Among those who fled was Simon de Revoire, who moved to the Island of Guernsey in the English Channel. Simon’s brother Isaac, being a man with a large family, stayed on in a remote part of France, later sending one of his sons, Apollo de Revoire, to his Uncle Simon, at the age of thirteen. After a time his uncle sent the nephew to Boston, where he was apprenticed to a goldsmith. Here he learned the secrets of the trade, and after a visit to Guernsey, he returned to America with the intention of making this country his home. His first step was to change his name to one more easily pronounced by his English speaking neighbors, and he was henceforth known as Mr. Paul Revere.

Establishing himself in business as a gold and silversmith, Revere married Miss Deborah Hitchborn in 1729. Twelve children were born of this union. The Paul Revere we are discussing tonight was the third of these, born January 8, 1735.

We learn that Revere received his education at the famous old “North Grammar School” kept by Master John Tileson, who taught school in Boston for eighty years. He was especially famed for his skill in penmanship. Doubtless we have here the foundation for one of Revere’s later activities – engraved lettering.

Young Paul Revere followed in his father’s footsteps as a Gold and Silversmith. Specimens of his work are still treasured to this day in some old New England families, and give ample evidence of his artistic skill.
Inspired by long experience in embellishing the articles manufactured by him, Revere undertook the art of engraving on copper, with marked success. Books of the 17th and 18th centuries show that this was a popular form of illustrating. Many of Revere’s pictures were political caricatures and cartoons; and among the best of his works is an engraving depicting the Boston Massacre, which was extensively copied in Europe. He also designed bookplates, and in later years furnished the engravings from which Masonic certificates were made.

The outbreak of the French and Indian Wars in 1756 prompted him to enlist in the British Colonial service. Commissioned a second lieutenant of artillery by Governor Sterling, he participated in the expedition against Crown Point under the command of General John Winslow. Here he received the military training which enabled him to give excellent service in later years as major, lieutenant – colonel, and colonel of artillery in the armed forces of Massachusetts.

Upon his return from military service, Revere was married in 1757 to Miss Sarah Orne of Boston. Seven children were born of this union. After sixteen years of wedded life, the faithful wife died, leaving Revere a widower at 38 with a large family on his hands, a business to look after and political events engrossing his attention. To quote Revere, he found his household “In sore need of a mother,” and within a short time after the death of his first wife and infant child, he married Miss Rachel Walker, ten years his junior. Eight children were added to the six of his first marriage.

The Stamp Act of 1765 was one of the causes of the American Revolution. This act provided for a tax on certain articles imported by the colonies. The imposition of this tax was not so objectionable in itself to the colonists as the fact that they had no voice in the matter. This right, they felt, belonged to them under the Magna Charta, the foundation of English Liberty. The opponents of the act formed themselves into bands known as the Sons of Liberty. Meetings were conducted with great secrecy, those in Boston being ultimately held at the Green Dragon tavern. It is of more than passing interest to note that St. Andrew’s Lodge, many of whose members participated in the stirring events of the Revolution, purchased this tavern March 31, 1864.

Among the Massachusetts leaders of the Sons of Liberty were Samuel Adams and John Hancock, to whom Revere attached himself. Not gifted with speech, as were his associates, he nevertheless reached the public through his clever cartoons on political events of the day. He also carried secret dispatches to the leaders of the Sons of Liberty in New York and Philadelphia; and his unquestioned integrity and excellent memory served the Colonists well when written word could not be safely conveyed.

In 1766 the Stamp Act was repealed, except as to tea, and this served to quiet matters somewhat for a time; but the determination of King George III to force the tea tax upon his colonists made them all the more determined to resist the measure. Cargoes of tea were shipped and landed under protest. Merchants throughout the colonies agreed not to handle the commodity, and very little was sold, such as did trickle into the channels of trade being handled by Troy shopkeepers.

The arrival of the Dartmouth on November 28, 1773, caused the Sons of Liberty to call a mass meeting which was attended by over seven thousand people. Resolutions were passed urging that the tea not be landed, and that it be sent back to England in the same ships. Guards were placed to make sure that the tea was not brought in surreptitiously. Another meeting was called on the 30th, at which the officers of two additional ships which had arrived in the meantime were made to promise that they would leave the harbor without unloading their tea cargoes. Governor Hutchinson, however, interfered with this solution of the problem by forbidding the issuance of clearance papers until the cargoes should be discharged. The rest of the story has been recorded in history’s pages. A group of patriots, disguised as Mohawk Indians, boarded the vessels, and destroyed three hundred and forty-two chests of tea valued at $90,000.

It has been asserted by many writers that the Freemasons of the colony had a large part in the destruction of the tea cargoes. Definite information is not available, but contemporaneous records of unimpeachable character lead us to believe that there is some truth in the assertions. The records of Saint Andrew’s Lodge, of which Paul Revere was a member, show that on the night of November 30th, 1773 – the night for the annual
election of officers – only seven members were present. No election was held, and the presence of only seven members given as the reason according to the entries in the lodge minutes.

As a result of the Tea Party, laws were passed in Parliament closing the port of Boston. These measures only served to inflame the people. Revere was soon in the saddle again, carrying messages to enlist the support of the southern provinces in behalf of Massachusetts. The Massachusetts House of Representatives reorganized under the name of the “Provincial Congress” and voted to enroll twelve thousand Minute Men. Revere made further trips south, and in December 1773, carried news north to Portsmouth, N.H., that the importation of military stores had been forbidden by Parliament, and that a large garrison was coming to occupy Fort William and Mary at the entrance to the harbor. The Sons of Liberty thereupon surprised the fort and removed upwards of one hundred barrels of powder and fifteen cannon.

Governor Gage of Massachusetts became alarmed at these aggressive acts of the colonists. Outlying stores of gunpowder and arms were called in, and every precaution taken to guard against further surprises. The Sons of Liberty soon learned that the British were preparing for action. On April 18, 1775, Dr. Joseph Warren, Grand Master of Massachusetts, who was to give his life for his country two months later at the battle of Bunker Hill, learned that troops were gathering on Boston Common. Fearing for the safety of Samuel Adams and John Hancock, Warren sent for Revere and begged him to go to Lexington to warn these men. Revere had been to Lexington a few days before, and gravely doubted the possibility of getting through the lines in event the enemy should form, had arranged, by a show of lanterns, to indicate the route taken by the British. Revere then made the ride which has preserved his name to posterity, as graphically told with certain poetic license by Longfellow.* (At this point the rendition of Longfellow’s poem by a competent dramatic reader would be effective.)

Paul Revere’s ride, however, was not the end of his activities in the patriot cause. After the British had evacuated Boston, being harassed by Washington’s troops, it was found that the cannon had been disabled by the removal of the carriages. Revere invented a new type, and the guns were again placed in commission.

In July 1776, Revere was commissioned an officer in a new regiment raised for the defense of the town and harbor of Boston. His important duties and services ultimately won him the rank of colonel of artillery. Adverse conditions made his position a difficult one, but he steadfastly fulfilled his duties and made the best of a bad situation. In 1779 he participated in a expedition against the British in what is now Maine. Through mismanagement on the part of some military and naval commanders, the expedition was a failure, and the soldiers made their way back to Boston in scattered groups.

In addition to his military service, Revere was called upon in 1775 to engrave the currency of the Colony of Massachusetts. In 1776 he engaged in the manufacture of gunpowder, sorely needed by the American Forces, and was employed to oversee the casting of cannon.

The war services of Paul Revere did not conclude his service to the new nation. He contributed to the economic welfare of his community by establishing an iron foundry, and in 1792 began casting church bells, many of which are still in existence. A “Hardware” store – as jeweler’s shops were called in those days – established by him in 1783, enabled him to dispose of the silverware which he continued to manufacture. He invented a process for treating copper which enabled him to hammer and roll it while hot, a process of great value in shipbuilding. In 1800 he established a foundry for rolling copper in large sheets. This was such an important industry that the government of the United States loaned him $10,000, to be repaid in the form of sheet copper. This was the first copper rolling mill in the country, and dispensed with the necessity which had existed before of importing this commodity from England. Robert Fulton’s steam engines were equipped with copper boilers made from Revere’s plates. Revere also covered the bottom of the Frigate “Constitution” – better known as “Old Ironsides” – with sheet copper. The business was incorporated in 1828 as the Revere Copper Company, and is still conducted in Canton, Mass.

Revere’s life, and the services he rendered to the country, are sufficient in themselves to endear him to every patriotic American. Yet, we, as Masons, can claim

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a still closer tie. Paul Revere was made a Mason in Saint Andrew’s Lodge on September 4, 1760, being the first Entered Apprentice to receive that work in this body. In 1770 he became its Master; in 1783, when St. Andrew’s Lodge was divided on the question of remaining under the Grand Lodge of Scotland, from which body it had received its Charter dated November 30, 1756; or affiliating with the new Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, he was one of the twenty-three who voted to withdraw from the old relationship. A new lodge was formed in September 1784, under the name of Rising States Lodge, and Revere was elected its Master. He made the jewels for this lodge, and engraved and printed certificates of membership and notices. He served as Grand Master of Massachusetts from 1795 to 1797, inclusive, assisting Governor Samuel Adams in laying the cornerstone of the Massachusetts State House, July 4, 1795, on which occasion he delivered a stirring address.

His charities were quiet and unostentatious. He founded the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association in 1795, and served as its president from its founding until 1799, when he declined any further office, although continuing his interest.

His domestic life was peaceful and happy. The death of his second wife in 1815 left him a lonely old man. He himself “passed out with the tide” on May 10, 1818, and was buried in Granary Burial Ground where his old friends, Hancock and Adams, had preceded him.

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Quiet, unassuming, without great gifts as an orator or statesman, he nevertheless engraved his name on that which is far more enduring than the metals of his Craft – the pages of his country’s history and the hearts of his country’s citizens. Behind him was the martyrdom of his Huguenot ancestors; around him was the inspiration of Freemasonry’s ideals; within his vision of the future was a great representative government of a free people wherein religious liberty should be both a fundamental principle and an inalienable right. And so he served with the talent that he had in the humbler spheres of everyday life as well as in the greater and more spectacular crisis in the life of his commonwealth. Unselfish service was his ambition and his watchword, his biography and his epitaph. Freemasonry and America honor most the Paul reveres of the nation, who from day to day, in every time of history and walk of life, thoughtfully and patriotically serve mankind.

If, however, we are to come to the fullest possible realization of what the life of a man like Paul Revere means to his country and to his Fraternity, we must go further than a mere personal estimate. No matter how effective his life may be in arousing our pride and stimulating our efforts, we must still take one more step. It will not do merely to judge a life like his according to the standards of this day. We must realize the results of his work in the light of the conditions which he faced.

I wonder if we can visualize the Colonial period of this country’s history? The scattered settlements, the log cabins grouped about stockades out in the wilderness, the wide distances separating the towns and villages, and the uninhabited, waste districts between; the bridle paths over the mountains, the narrow, almost impassable roads with the lumbering stage coaches passing up and down at irregular and infrequent intervals; a time when it cost a shilling and more to carry a letter; a country without telegraph, without typewriter, without railroad – and a people who could not even dream of such things as these.

Even so the picture is not complete. We must picture a country possessed of very few schools, and what schools that were open, were open only to the sons of the rich. Intelligence and idealism were impossible for the poor boy, except as he learned them at the family altar. The minds of the common people were on the same low, deadly level which prevailed among the lower classes of Europe. Under such circumstances can we not see how the superior mind would revolt against these sordid conditions? First would come the passion for liberty, and following that, an intense determination that these conditions must be bettered.

Then we are able to recreate the influence of the ancestry of a man like Revere? Many a long evening was spent around an open fireplace, with perhaps a tallow dip candle or two burning dimly on the mantle, while the head of the household told of the tragedy of his flight from the persecutions inflicted upon his people. What would the effect of such a recital be upon a youth like Paul Revere? Can we realize how these
Paul Revere

traditions would influence his mind, how his boyish imagination would be kindled and how his appreciation of the liberty which the Colonists were trying to work out for themselves in the new world would grow into a veritable passion for freedom? As he grew older he would see the stalwart pioneers around him trying to plant here a new type of civilization, an institution which would insure to every man the utmost of personal liberty which he could expect without infringing upon the rights of others. Can we not see how a youth raised in this atmosphere would be inspired with a desire to promote and further the development of these institutions? With stories of murder and oppression of his people firing his youthful imagination, can we not see that as he grew into manhood his mind would be quickened? Can we not understand how any example of oppression, however slight, would arouse the fighting instincts, and tyrannical injustice become as it were a baptism of patriotism, dedicated to the new home which his troubled soul was finding in company with his fellow refugees?

We must also realize that an atmosphere very like this existed all through the colonies. It was justified, my brothers; these hardy pioneers had fled the Old World where free thought, free speech and free Conscience did not exist. They had come away with hideous memories of their friends and neighbors tortured and hung for the most trivial crimes. Years of tragedy had taught them the sacrifices that men make who stand up for what they believe, for opinion's sake.

It is only when we come to appreciate all of this background that we can understand the fierce resentment in the hearts of the colonial leaders when tea profiteers sought to impose their burdens of taxation, or religious bigots tried to fasten upon the minds of the people narrow ideas the trend of which would be to bring about a union of Church and State. We must picture Paul Revere as one of the central figures in a great drama like this, staged in a wilderness, with enemies both within and without; if we could appreciate what the service of the colonial pioneer really was. To us in our modern day the accomplishment of these fearless men may not loom so large, but in their day and time they performed wonders when they gave their passion for liberty and brotherhood free reign and started in to establish a government by, for and of the people.

Well may we ask, how could they do it? What gave them their breadth of vision? And it is in this primitive setting that we find the answer. The forces of necessity drove them, persecution was behind them and if they did not build their new Temple of Liberty aight, persecution and failure lay before them. In the face of a need like this, they won; they accomplished great things for humanity. They planted the seeds of brotherhood in the fallow ground of a new homeland and we, who are their posterity, are reaping the reward.

This is which places upon us the responsibility for doing in our day what they did in theirs. The conditions, which we have to meet, are different from theirs. The problems, which we have to solve under the complex conditions of modern civilization, would look hopeless to them. My Brethren, they would be hopeless to us did we not have their examples before us and were we not familiar with the principles which they applied to their problems in those tempestuous days. We have the same principle, we have the same Masonic atmosphere of brotherhood and we have an even greater opportunity than they had to put these principles into practice and make them live among men today. Ours is the task to maintain the freedom of speech and conscience which they established for us and to see to it that Freemasonry, grown now to a fraternity of men far greater in number than all the people who lived in the thirteen colonies, shall stand foursquare for law and order, for the right to think and worship as we please, and for the perpetuation of those priceless privileges which the Paul Revers of early America wrought out of their needs and the conditions which faced them, because they had the Masonic vision, the Masonic fervency and the Masonic zeal to build after the Masonic pattern.

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WHEN WE HEAR THE NAME OF WILLIAM Preston we are at once reminded of the Preston lectures in Freemasonry. It is to Preston that we are indebted for what was the basis of our Monitors of the present day. The story of his literary labors in the interest of the Craft, and how they aided in making Freemasonry one of the leading educational influences during the closing decades of the eighteenth century, is one of absorbing interest to every member of the Fraternity.

William Preston was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, August 7th (old style calendar, July 28th), 1742. His father was a "Writer to the Signet," a law agent peculiar to Scotland and formerly eligible to the bench, therefore a man of much educational standing. He naturally desired to give his son all the advantages which the schools of that day afforded, and young Preston's education was begun at an early age. He entered high school before he was six years old.

After the death of his father Preston withdrew from college and took employment as secretary to Thomas Ruddiman, the celebrated linguist, whose failing eyesight made it necessary for Preston to do much research work required by Ruddiman in his classical and linguistic studies. At the demise of Thomas Ruddiman, Preston became a printer in the establishment of Walter Ruddiman, a brother of Thomas, to whom he had been formerly apprenticed.

Evidence of Preston's literary ability was first shown when he compiled a catalog of Thomas Ruddiman's books. After working in the printing office for about a year, a desire to follow his literary inclinations prevailed and, well supplied with letters of introduction, he set out for London in 1760. One of these letters was addressed to William Strahan, the King's Printer, with whom Preston secured a position, remaining with Strahan and his son for many years.

Preston possessed an unquenchable desire for knowledge. As was common to the times in which he lived, "man worketh from sun to sun." The eight-hour day, if known at all, was a rarity, and Preston supplanted his earlier education by study after his twelve-hour working day was over. The critical skill exercised in his daily vocation caused literary men of the period to call upon him for assistance and advice. His close association with the intellectual men of his time was attested by the discovery after his death of autographed presentation copies of the works of Gibbon, Hume, Robertson, Blair, and others.

The exact date of Preston's initiation is not known, but it occurred in London in 1762 or 1763. It has been satisfactorily ascertained that his Mother Lodge was the one meeting at the White Hart Tavern in the Strand. This Lodge was formed by a number of Edinburgh Masons Sojourning in London, who, after being refused an application for a Charter by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, accepted a suggestion of the Scottish Grand Body that they apply to the ancient Grand Lodge of London. The Ancients granted a dispensation to these brethren on March 2nd, 1763, and it is claimed by one eighteenth century biographer that Preston was the second person initiated under that dispensation.

The minutes of the Athol (Ancient) Grand Lodge show that Lodge No. 111 was Constituted on or about April 20th, 1763, William Leslie, Charles Halden, and John Irwin being the Master and Wardens, and Preston's
name was listed as the twelfth among the twenty-two on the roll of membership.

It was not uncommon in those times (and the custom still prevails in England, Canada, and other countries, and among several Grand Jurisdictions in the United States) for Masons to belong to more than one Lodge, and Preston and some other members of his Mother Lodge also became members of a Lodge Chartered by the Moderns, which met at the Talbot Tavern in the Strand. These brethren prevailed upon the membership of Lodge No. 111, which in the meantime had moved its meeting place to the Half Moon Tavern, to apply to the Modern Grand Lodge for a Charter. Lord Blayney, then Grand Master, granted a Charter to the members of Lodge No. 111, which was Constituted a second time, on November 15th, 1764, taking the name Caledonian Lodge No. 325. This Lodge is still in existence, being No. 134 on the present registry of the United Grand Lodge of England.

The constitution of the new Caledonian Lodge was a noteworthy event because of the presence of many prominent Masons of the day. The ceremonies and addresses on this occasion made a deep impression upon Preston, being among the factors which induced him to make a serious study of Freemasonry. The desire to know more of the Fraternity, its origin and its teachings, was intensified when he was elected Worshipful Master, for, as he said: "When I first had the honor to be elected Master of a Lodge, I thought it proper to inform myself fully of the general rules of the Society, that I might be able to fulfill my own duty and officially enforce obedience in others. The methods which I adopted, with this view, excited in some of superficial knowledge an absolute dislike of what they considered innovations; and in others who were better informed, a jealousy of preeminence, which the principles of Masonry ought to have checked."

Preston entered into an extensive correspondence with Masons at home and abroad, extending his knowledge of Craft affairs and gathering the material which later found expression in his best known book, "Illustrations of Masonry." He delved into the most out of the way places in search of Masonic lore and wisdom, by which the Craft was greatly benefited. Preston was a frequent visitor to other Lodges. He was asked to visit the Lodge of Antiquity No. 1, one of the four Old Lodges which formed the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. On that occasion, June 15, 1774, he as elected a member of the Lodge and also Worshipful Master at the same meeting. This unusual action is additional evidence of the regard in which he was held by the Brethren of his day. While he had been Master of several other Lodges, he gave of his best in time and energy to the Lodge of Antiquity, which thrived greatly under his leadership.

He became an active member of the Grand Lodge, serving on its Hall Committee, a committee appointed in 1773 for the purpose of superintending the erection of the Masonic Hall which had been projected, and he was later appointed Deputy Grand Secretary under James Heseltine. In this capacity he revived the foreign and country correspondence of the Grand Lodge, an easy matter for him because of his extensive personal correspondence with Brethren outside of London.

In 1777 occurred an event, which was momentous in the Masonic affairs of the period. On account of the mock and satirical processions formed by rival societies the Modern Grand Lodge of England had forbidden its Lodges and Members to appear in public processions in regalia. The Lodge of Antiquity, on December 17th, 1777, resolved to attend church services in a body on St. John's Day, the following 27th, selecting St. Dunstan's Church, only a short distance across the street from where the Lodge met. Some of the members protested, saying it was contrary to Grand Lodge regulations, with the result that only ten attended, these donning gloves and aprons in the church vestry, and then entering to hear the sermon. At the conclusion of the services they returned to the Lodge without first removing their Masonic clothing. This action was cause for debate at the next meeting of the Lodge in which Preston expressed the opinion that the Lodge of Antiquity had never surrendered its privileges and prerogatives when it participated in the formation of the Grand Lodge in 1717, and held that it could parade as it did in 1694. The Grand Lodge, however, could not afford to overlook such an opinion, especially when expressed by the leading Masonic scholar of the day, and consequently Preston was expelled.

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Because of this action of the Grand Lodge of Moderns, the Lodge of Antiquity severed its connection with body, after dismissing from its membership three brethren who had made the original complaint against Preston, entered in relations with the revived Grand Lodge of All England at York, and formed what was known as the "Grand Lodge of England South of the River Trent." The controversy with the Grand Lodge of Moderns was settled in 1787, and Preston was reinstated, all his honors and dignities restored, whereupon he resumed his Masonic activities. He organized the Order of Harodim, a Society of Masonic Scholars, in which he taught his lectures and through this medium the lectures came to America and became the foundation for our Monitors.

To fully grasp the significance of Preston's labors we must understand the conditions in England at the time he lived. The seventeenth century had been one of marked differences of opinion on the subjects of government, religion and economic conditions. The eighteenth century, following the accession of Prince George of Hanover to the throne of England as King George I, witnessed an era of peace and prosperity in that country. With the exception of the wars against the French and later the Revolution in America, England met no obstacles in her conquests of trade. The strife of the opening years of the century calmed down, and the people became adjusted to their new conditions. It became a period of formalism. Literature, which thrived under the patronage of the wealthy, partook of an ancient classical nature, spirit being subordinated to form and style. Detailed perfection of form was insisted upon in every activity, and undoubtedly the insistence for a letter-perfect ritualism, still so apparent in Freemasonry, had its origin in the closing years of the eighteenth century.

While the well-to-do classes lived in comfort and ease, the laboring and farming classes had not yet entirely emerged from the adverse conditions confronting them for so many decades. True, the cessation of wars, and the development of domestic and foreign trade also had an influence in the circles not actively participating in the new development. A spirit of freedom and independence continued to express itself. Public education as we know it today, however, did not then exist. The schools were for the children of the wealthy only, being conducted by private interests and requiring the payment of tuition beyond the purse of the common people. Yet, education was eagerly sought. Knowledge was looked upon as the key, which would unlock the door to intellectual and spiritual independence. While Preston began his schooling at an early age, even with his excellent start he extended his education only by diligent work and the burning of much midnight oil. Imbued with the spirit of the day, he was anxious to place the available knowledge of the times before his fellow men. Therefore, when he discovered a vast body of traditional and historical lore in the old documents of the Craft, he naturally seized upon the opportunity of modernizing the ritual in such a way as to make accessible a rudimentary knowledge of the arts and sciences to the members of the Fraternity.

From 1765 to 1772 Preston engaged in personal research and correspondence with Freemasons at home and abroad, endeavoring to learn all he could about Freemasonry and the arts it encouraged. These efforts bore fruit in the form of his first book, entitled: "Illustrations of Masonry," published in 1772. He had taken the old lectures and work of Freemasonry, revised them and placed them in such form as to receive the approval of the leading members of the Craft. Encouraged by their favorable reception and sanctioned by the Grand Lodge, Preston employed, at his own expense, lecturers to travel throughout the kingdom and place the lectures before the lodges. New editions of his book were demanded, and up to the present time it has gone through twenty editions in England, six in America, and several more in various European languages.

After his death, on April 1st, 1818, it was found that Preston had provided a fund of three hundred pounds sterling in British Consuls (British Government Securities, the word being abbreviated from "Consolidated Annuities"), the interest from this fund to be set aside for the delivery of the Preston lectures once each year. The appointment of a Lecturer was left to the Grand Master. These lectures were abandoned about 1860, chiefly for the reason that they had been superseded by the lectures of Hemming in the approved work of the United Grand Lodge of England, when that body was formed by the reunion of the Ancient and Moderns.
in 1813. The Preston work still survives, however, in the United States, although greatly modified by such American ritualists as Webb, Cross, Barney and others.

Had Preston not attained Masonic eminence through his efforts in other fields, his work in revising the lectures alone would entitle him to the plaudits and gratitude of the Craft. Considering these old lectures in the light of our present day knowledge, and granting that they might be corrected and revised, it must be remembered that Preston’s work was a tremendous step forward when we consider the spirit and conditions of his day. He was one of the first men to influence a change from the social and convivial standards which prevailed in the old lodges, and to make them centers for more practical and enduring efforts. His own progress in the Craft is an illustration of its democracy, and an illustration of the equality of opportunity existing for those who will apply themselves to the problems confronting the Fraternity in our own times. From a position as the youngest Entered Apprentice standing in the North East corner of his lodge, he progressed step by step until he reached a place where he was recognized as the foremost Masonic Scholar of his generation. While he did not wear the purple of the Modern Grand Lodge in its highest stations, his contemporaries who had that honor have been forgotten, while the name of William Preston is still preeminent in the annals of Freemasonry.

Equality of opportunity, as Freemasonry stands for it, means equality of opportunity for service. The honors of office are not the Masonic test of service. He who contributes to the Mason’s search for light, light that will enable the Craftsman to more intelligently and efficiently serve his God, his Country, his Neighbor, his Family and Himself is rendering the most enduring quality of service. This was true in Preston’s time. It is equally true in ours. Fortunate is the lodge that has a modern Preston in its membership, who seeks to lead the Craft in its clearer understanding of the symbolism and teachings of Freemasonry to the end that Freemasons of today may sustain in the high standard of effective and unselfish service to mankind which has characterized and distinguished the Fraternity in the generations and ages gone.

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FROM DAY TO DAY, FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION, the Great Architect of the Universe draws upon his Trestleboard the designs for the slowly-rising Temple of civilization. Mankind are his workmen, and Freemasons, by training and equipment, should be Master Workmen, capable of the highest character of workmanship and the greatest degree of loyalty and understanding of all who toil upon the Temple or contribute of their means and leadership to its completion.

As the Temple arises, as the magnificence and beauty of the structure become more apparent and as the number of workmen increases, numerous and perplexing problems develop, especially as to the mutual relationships and rewards of those in authority and those who toil. Envy of and ambition for power, impatience, selfish greed for quick rewards, enter into the minds and shape the motives of men, making them forget that no one class can build the Temple without the other; that honest workmen seek and receive rewards only for work well done, and the contention and strife always result in tragedy – and in a roll call of the workmen inevitably discloses and condemns the contentious and unfaithful.

There is today a great confusion in and about our modern Temple of Industry, and out of it problems present themselves which can only be solved in the light and spirit of fundamental truth: The spirit and intent of Freemasonry have ever been directed to the search for truth and its applications to those problems which continually affect the welfare of mankind. It is, therefore, entirely within the scope of Masonic thought and present day Masonic service to turn our attention, as men and Masons, to the immediate and very acute problem of the relationship between Capitol and Labor, between the man who toils with his hands and the man who toils with the problems of investment and organized production. Not only is it consistent with the spirit of Freemasonry that we study the problems that confront us in this field of human endeavor, but it is imperative that we make our contribution to the righteous solution of those problems.

As a Fraternity we are not strangers to the field in which these problems are found, and in which they must be solved. No organization is more logically equipped to discuss the questions involved in the relationships of Capitol and Labor than is Freemasonry, for we are a fraternity which, from its ancient beginning, and all through the succeeding centuries, has exalted the supreme value of constructive industry.

We are historically equipped to discuss the problem, for in the fact of our origin and in the symbolism of our degrees we are builders. We are not concerned with the time honored scholastic controversy as to the accurate link between brethren of the three-fold covenant of today and the ancients. It should be sufficient that, whether our descent can be traced without a break or not, we are inseparably the descendants in tradition, in much of form, and in more of the spirit of men who were toilers and whose whole fellowship and scheme of fraternal association was based on toil. Essential Freemasonry began in Solomon’s day in a unique, efficient, and fine-spirited industrial organization. That tradition was embodied in the remarkable record of the Craftsmen’s guilds and the companies of Cathedral builders who so united faith and imagination with skill as to give us those majestic edifices which some one
has fitly described as being “Music, frozen into stone.” In modern times our ranks have known men who labored physically as well as men whose industry was real though they were workers with the stuff of mind and heart. Few are the Freemasons who have not known at some time what it means to labor operatively as well as speculatively. Such men as Washington, Franklin, Marshall, and all our statesmen and public servants, were toilers whose mental and moral industry laid well the stones in our Temple of human freedom and happiness.

We are committed to the thoughtful consideration of the social phases of industry by reason of our idealism and our fraternal philosophy. Our body of truth and our program of ideals are both defined and set forth in the terms and symbols of the toiler; for the material uses of the gauge, the mallet, the square, level, plumb, compass, and trowel bring to us a practical social, moral and spiritual message.

Nor is it too much to say that we are compelled to the consideration of this theme by reason of our own present fraternal ambition and aspiration; for no field of human accomplishment demands so clearly and insistently a program of constructive thinking and real service as does that of Industry. By the memory of our past and by the need of our present we are called to the attainment of better and happier social relationships. That attainment is the goal of all fraternal effort and the lack of it the cause of all strife in the social and industrial scheme of things.

If all this be true, then what possible message can Freemasonry bring to all men in these days of complicated industrial and social anxieties? It is recognized that Freemasonry has a wealth of truth to draw upon and that the Institution is qualified to voice many essentials which seem altogether applicable.

In the first place Freemasonry must declare without qualification that there is a solution for the problem. Holding the principles which we hold as a Fraternity, we must steadfastly assert the possibility of a solution and as steadfastly we must be dedicated to the attainment of that solution. We must be practical and aggressive idealists. We must be constructive and persistent optimists. We must proclaim the possibility of better things in the domain of human relationship. We are challenged by the supine pessimism of those who assert that industrial conditions can never be otherwise than contentious. They take the attitude of tolerant cynicism, and would have us believe that strife is the normalcy of industrial conditions. They argue for inevitability of friction in the world of production, even as sixty years ago men argued that slavery might be regulated but never wiped out. But pessimism and the tolerant and smiling sneer of the cynic have no real place in the program of forward-moving Freemasonry. The spirit of Freemasonry asserts that industrial quarrels can find the norm of peace. As individuals we may hinder or delay the solution, or we may aid its speedy and happy attainment, but the right adjustment between the man who toils at the top and the man who toils at the bottom will and must come. To deny this is to deny the very hope upon which fraternalism is founded, for we are in existence that we may organize and make effective that “society of friends and brother among whom no contention should ever exist, save that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree.” To assert or surrender to the contrary is to discourage the chief effort and to deny the chief objective of our idealism. If a right solution is not possible and attainable, then Freemasonry in the domain of fraternalism is erected upon a false premise and is pursuing the mockery of a foolish dream.

"It is in the power of Freemasonry, secondly, to point out the way which leads to the solution of the difficulties between Capitol and Labor." We may not be wise enough to authoritatively prophecy the exact form of the final solution. When evolved – and it will be evolved, not created – it will be the cumulative product of many minds and the program of a unified and sympathetic wealth of wisdom. We may be confident, however, of the direction in which the solution may be found, and much of the certainty of our conviction we owe to the lessons learned at the Altar of our Fraternal Covenant. We can best express that conviction first in its negative form.

A right social and industrial relationship and a lasting industrial peace will not be attained by the enforced ignorance of the toiler. Many there are who assert that the demands of the organized laborer are due to the fact that he is over-educated. Few utter the doctrine aloud,
but secretly they recognize that the more ignorant the mass of men the more supine and quiescent they remain under social and political inequity. They are right as to ignorance being a state which tends to that sort of peace which is founded upon crushed souls, stunted intellects, and brute surrender to the crack of some industrially autocratic whip, which results from the abject darkness of ignorance. Freemasonry cries out: “This is no solution! ‘Ye Shall Know The Truth, and the Truth Shall Make You Free!’ We seek that high and holy peace which arises from the equitable agreement of free men—men who are free in speech, in faith and in franchise!”

Nor will our problem be solved by the erection of some experimental and untried system of human government. The faults which we seek to remedy are not found in the mechanical arrangement of government. We challenge our Bolshevist neighbor with the statement that the faulty operation of the plumbing is not remedied by burning down the house. Political, social, and industrial wrongs will not be corrected by the destruction of constituted authority and the substitution of untried and fanatical experiments. A sure remedy is possible under our present government and with the right use and direction of our present essential and time-proven institutions.

In still another direction will we vainly seek peace. It will not be found upon the road to violence. Peace will not be obtained by the use of force or compulsion as a working tool in the hand of either party to our present industrial situation. It will not come by ignoring public interest, by murder, sabotage, boycotting, or intimidation of free men on the one hand; nor by punitive legislation, the employment of troops and armed guards, the threatening flash of bayonets, or the imposition of judicial mandate on the other hand. Grant that these may now seem to be the inevitable incidents on the present abnormal and strained status of society; but surely any intelligence can perceive that victories thus gained and a peace thus established are both alike but temporary. One does not cure some surface eruption by a surface medication. That may suffice for the moment to arrest the breaking out. To permanently cure you must seek and treat the hidden point of focal infection.

When we turn, then, to the source of controversy and hateful dissention we enter the realm of the moral and spiritual; and we find that “our process of cure is a process of education. We shall achieve industrial peace only by education.” Not education of just one side but of both sides. Not education of a part of the man but education of the whole of the man. Not merely or even principally an education of the minds of men, but supremely an education of the hearts of men. Our only hope is the creation of a right spirit in the very life of the race; and that is more largely a matter of the heart than of the head.

We recall an ancient legend that delineates the pitiful and sordid folly of some discontented workmen. Three of them plunged into the degradation of crime and the shame of violence, not because they were not skilled workmen, not for any lack, so far as we know, of some portion of “Brains,” but chiefly because their spirit was wrong. Their attitude was wrong. Their hearts were wrong. They had not the vision of sanctity, the dignity and the true reward for workmanship. They were working not for the joy of work and its productive result, but solely for the wage they proposed to demand. They came asking a full days wage for only a partial return. The Temple was not finished, but they must be paid, whether or no; and, dominated by their passion for personal advantage and reward, they plunged into the black darkness of crime and treachery. When the roll was called it was found that there were twelve others who did not follow the three into that awful experience because they were workmen who suddenly had a vision of the real meaning of it all. They recanted not only because of some cold calculation of intellect but because the right spirit entered into their hearts. A something deep within them responded to the appeal of loyalty. The high call of faith and duty did not sound within their ears in vain; and they remained loyal to the leadership of one who was not merely a King but a Brother and who led them out into a larger, finer, and more splendid service. They redeemed themselves by the new spirit in which they took up their task.

If the hearts of men are right, then in the ultimate social and industrial formula true justice and a real fraternity will be dominant factors. Not some shallow and empty conception of justice and fraternity, not a mere
The Roll Call

THe gesture of affection, but a great, deep passion in the hearts of men for equity and happy fellowship. What we most need is a real spirit of toleration, a spirit of toleration which, while not nullifying the right to personal opinion and conviction, yet shall save us from being so intent upon personal advantage as to lose sight of our love for the person and the rights of our brother. Such a conception of fraternity disseminated among all men will aid us to love each other more than we do our several social, economic, religious or political doctrines. In that spirit we shall find readjustment, and the resultant details of wages, hours, organization and privileges will inevitably be sound. We are in no danger from men who disagree in judgment, but we may well fear an antagonism of hearts marked by hate and evil or selfish motive.

The achievement of this ideal will be accomplished only when the rule of love shall hold its sway over us. Not an empty imitation of affection or a mere pose, but a love which is first of all a reverent affection for and trust in God who is Father of us all and the resultant consciousness of our kinship with all mankind. Though the centuries Freemasonry has been one of the potent factors in keeping bright in human hearts that Light of Love, that Beacon of Brotherhood, which long ago issued forth from the Great Heart of Creation. It is now the supreme privilege of every Freemason to hold that flame of hope high and unextinguished. At this very “Tide in the affairs of men” we are passing through dark days of strife and perplexity in our industrial and social world, but in the fundamentals of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man we have light enough to see us through the shadows. A great soul once caught the vision of the real source of true optimism and courage when he cried out:

If I Stoop,
Into a dark, tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God’s lamp
Close to my heart; its splendor soon or late
Shall pierce the gloom; I shall emerge somewhere.

Let us repeat that verse in the plural form, and thus epitomize the optimism that must be ours:

If we Stoop,
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; we press God’s lamp
Close to our hearts; its splendor soon or late
Shall pierce the gloom; we shall emerge somewhere.

The point of that emergence is hidden as yet in the silent mystery of human destiny, but if we will courageously hold up God’s lamp of love and brotherhood, we are justified in the assurance that mankind will eventually emerge into a social order which shall know not only a “Living” but a “Loving” wage; a social order where the public well-being and the common prosperity shall be based upon the sure foundation of a sacred public trust and an exalted sense of unselfish service.

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Volume 1, Number 3, March 1923
Our Public Schools
Unknown

Fellow Stockholders:
We are going to discuss, for a few moments, the
greatest business enterprise in which you and I
are jointly engaged. It is practically a new business, hav-
ing been in existence, in a nation-wide way, only about
seventy-five years. The world knew nothing about this
business a hundred years ago, and some of our colonial
fathers scoffed at it as something which, if it could be
attained, was not worth the having. As a business, let us
analyze it for ourselves, carefully.

A careful analysis is justified. For this business is one
which has greater capital invested than any other en-
terprise in America. Tremendous amounts of real es-
tate are owned. Great buildings house the shops. There
are officers in every city and town in the country. An
army of directors and workers is employed. Upon this
business is spent the majority of our peace-time taxes.
Into its factories goes the most precious material that
our nation yields. Out of it comes a product, the value
of which far exceeds our production of foodstuffs and
manufactures combined.

This business, Fellow Stockholders, is the American
Public School System.

The product of this “factory” is the education of
our children – your boys and girls, and mine. Upon
this product depends the future of America. We, as
a people, invest more money in it than in anything
else in which we are interested. The system is a cor-
poration – and you and I own and operate it. When
we consider that the high school enrollment jumped
from 915,000 to 1,645,000 in eight years, and that only
a little more than seventy-five years ago there were
no high schools in this entire world, we begin to
understand how gigantic an enterprise it is, and how
rapidly it is growing.

It is from these points of view that we want to dis-
cuss the public school system. Your child goes through
the public school – how does he come out? You pay
more actual dollars and cents for the maintenance and
upbuilding of the public school than you do for any
other peace work that you are interested in as a taxpay-
er – what dividends do you get back? Your child is grad-
uated from your high school – and what sort of a job
does he get? More important still, what kind of a job
does he hunt for?

We have the right of any stockholder to see what we
are getting for our money. We are going to give cred-
it for every bit of constructive work that enters into
the product. We are going to charge every item which
properly belongs on the debit side of the ledger. We
are not going to admit that our efforts have been vain,
these seventy-five years. We are not going to indict the
management, except as we shall find ourselves wanting.

Let us begin our survey.

The community in which we live has invested thou-
sands, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of
dollars, in our “plant.” Yet that plant is idle more than
three-fourths of the time. We admit that it should be
idle a part of the time – perhaps a little more than half.
But when the plant operates on a thirty hour a week
schedule for only thirty-six weeks, is it just to say – as
stockholders – that the idle time is out of proportion to
the working hours?

We are not saying that the children and their teach-
ers should put in eight hours a day, twelve months in the
year. We are talking about our “plant” – the buildings.
Are we using them efficiently? Someone may say that they are specially constructed, that they are not adaptable to the production of other things. Are we so sure? Could they not be so adapted?

Then let us consider the managers, superintendents, and foreman. They are the faculty. Assuming that they are proficient, how about the way we handle them? Would you permit half or more of your foreman and responsible officers to shift from one plant to another every year? Would you expect them to be satisfied and happy in an environment where they were unable to become acquainted with their neighbors until the year was up, or practically so? Would you care to have a business in which all your skilled operatives were changing every three years? Yet this is what happens to your teachers. A large percentage of them shift from place to place at the end of the school year; they know little of the community in which they teach until the school year is ended. Does this kind of organization develop proficiency?

The recent War brought out the woeful lack of even the most elementary education in many young men of draft age. The percentage of illiteracy was found to be disgracefully high. Our government had to spend billions in training young men to understand and obey orders. We paid an immense price to give elementary education to these adults. Is it sound business sense to allow the next generation to come out of the schools as ignorant as these adults?

As good as our public school system is, we find that there is a tremendous economic waste in its administration. Viewed from a business standpoint, can we afford to let this go on? The Public School system ought in any balanced scheme of things to link up very definitely, not only with “Higher Education,” but with the home, business, and community life. Failing in this, there is an economic waste. The percentage of business and professional failures is an index of our school system. The percentage of failures is too high.

No self-respecting citizen, no stockholder in this great corporation of ours, needs to be told that the ideals of educated men and women must more and more be made the ideals of all our people. This is what we ought to mean when we speak of “Americanism.” No thinking man or woman owning a share in this “Company” can fail to realize that the cost of education is a productive expenditure of money, that it will pay enormous dividends, and that in no sense of the word is it a charity.

It needs no argument to prove that the Public School is “not” a place where political, religious or educational “Axes” are to be ground! There should be no argument to prove that every one of us must understand and appreciate the value of the public service rendered by teachers. They should know us, and mix with us, and acquire a practical knowledge of the problems of life which we face, and which our children must face. And it is infinitely more important that we know the teachers into whose care we entrust our children. It is worthwhile, from a dollar and cents standpoint, for us to cultivate them, entertain them in our homes and make them feel that they are being relied upon, and that they can rely upon us.

We have spoken of “Americanism.” What does it mean? What should it mean to our children? From this standpoint what are the real needs of the Public School?

“Americanism” means Equality of Opportunity.” We live in no feudal age. There are no Barons or Lords of the Manor who hold us as chattels. Each man and woman is a human soul, entitled to a fair chance. Inevitably we are bound to each other by the ties of brotherhood, and the future of our America depends upon the growing of every boy and girl into a healthy, happy, competent manhood and womanhood, able to cope with the conditions that a citizen must face. Our Public School system should fit children to take advantage of their opportunities, and so make of themselves all that ambition and thrift and character may hope to attain.

Universal education, more than anything else, must be the goal of our republic. Upon this rest the foundations of government, for only through intelligent citizens can our government continue in the years to come.

The ban of factory production is returned goods – goods which have been improperly manufactured and are sent back to be worked over. Do we realize that there can be returned goods in our schools? Have we ever stopped to think that it costs as much to put a child through the same grade twice as it does to put two children through once? Everything which helps the child
to learn quickly is real economy. Only if a child is healthy will he do the required work. Otherwise he will hold back his classmates as well as himself. Health becomes the greatest possible economy and if there were no other grounds for asking that supervision of health be exercised over all children, this would be enough.

Our Public Schools can succeed only in proportion to the cooperation which they receive from the community. We have spoken of effective organization. If this is demanded by the community, we shall get the worth of our money. If a community demands teachers who believe in public education at State expense, the demand will be supplied. If the people of a community are determined that American ideals shall be instilled into the minds of their children, rather than the vaporings of foreign agitators, the schools in that community will have truly American teachers.

In return for all this, the community must do its part. We must give the teacher a place among us. He or she must feel at home with us because they come into our homes. It is necessary for the teacher to know the home background of the child if intelligent direction is to be given. We cannot expect wholehearted work without some measure of appreciation.

How long since you have attended any school activities? The enterprises which the teacher promotes in order to show the child how to work with other children, fit him for the part he is going to play in mature activity, and are as important as the work of the classroom. The success of these enterprises depends upon your support, not only from the standpoint of the money which is spent, but because the child will have faith in this instruction and will believe in its importance if we, as parents, show him that we also believe. These enterprises are the links in the chain which the teacher offers as a tie between the school and the community. The community must not lose hold of its end of the chain.

As individuals we have three ways in which we can become a constructive force for the betterment of the public Schools.

We can do it as voters, supporting measures which benefit the Public Schools, and voting against the measures which are opposed to their welfare.

We can do it by making our lives touch the lives of those directly connected with the schools. This does not mean working through a committee or an association. It means finding out for ourselves what the schools are doing. It means becoming acquainted with, and learning to know, the aspirations and the abilities of the teachers who guide the destinies of our children during school hours.

Finally, we can give our support as parents. The child is a healthy animal as a rule, and has very little natural desire for an education. We must show him that the way to success in the world lies down the long road of education. We must make this road reasonably attractive. We must show him the education is his greatest asset.

The Public School which brings together the children of the rich and the poor alike is the one great agency which makes for a responsible citizenship. Our children must know that the right to go to a Public School has been fought for. They must know what it costs in terms of money and sacrifice. We must realize that on the organization and influence of our Public School system depends on the perpetuity of our Republic.
Outside of the home and the House of God there is nothing in this world more beautiful than the Spirit of Masonry. Gentle, gracious, and wise; its mission is to form mankind into a great redemptive brotherhood, a league of noble and free men enlisted in the radiant enterprise of working out in time the love and will of the Eternal. Who is sufficient to describe a spirit so benign? With what words may one ever hope to capture and detain that which belongs of right to the genius of poetry and song, by whose magic those elusive and impalpable realities find embodiment and voice?

With picture, parable, and stately drama; Masonry appeals to lovers of beauty bringing poetry and symbol to the aid of philosophy and are to the service of character. Broad and tolerant in its teachings it appeals to men of intellect, equally by the depths of its faith and its pleas for liberty of thought — helping them to think things through to a more satisfying and hopeful vision of the meaning of life and the mystery of the world. But its profoundest appeal, more eloquent than all others, is to the deep heart of man out of which are the issues of life and destiny. When all is said, it is as a man thinketh in his heart whether life be worthwhile or not, and whether he is a helper or a curse to his race.

Here lies the tragedy of our race:
Not that men are poor;
All men know something of poverty.
Not that men are wicked;
Who can claim to be good?
Not that all men are ignorant;
Who can boast that he is wise?
But that men are strangers!

Masonry if Friendship — friendship, first, with the great Companion, of whom our own hearts tell us, who is always nearer to us than we are to ourselves, and whose inspiration and help is the greatest fact of human experience. To be in harmony with his purposes, to be open to His suggestions, to be conscious of fellowship with Him — this is Masonry on its God-ward side. Then, turning man-ward, friendship sums it all up. To be friends with all men, however they may differ from us in creed, color, or condition; to fill every human relation with the spirit of friendship; is there anything more or better than this that the wisest and best men can hope to do? Such is the Spirit of Masonry; such is its ideal, and if to realize it all at once is denied us, surely it means much to see it, love it, and labor to make it come true.

Nor is the spirit of friendship a mere sentiment held by a sympathetic, and therefore unstable, fraternity, which would dissolve the concrete features of humanity into a vague blur of misty emotion. No; it has its roots in a profound philosophy which sees that the universe is friendly, and that men must learn to be friends if they would live as befits the world in which they live, as well as their own origin and destiny. For, since God is the life of all that was, is, and is to be; and since we are all born into the world by one high wisdom and one vast love, we are brothers to the last man of us, forever! For better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, and even after death do part, all men are held together by ties of spiritual kinship, sons of one eternal friend. Upon this fact human fraternity rests, and it is the basis of the plea of Masonry, not only for freedom, but also for friendship among men.

Thus friendship, so far from being a mush of
concessions, is in fact the constructive genius of the universe. Love is ever the Builder, and those who have done most to establish the City of God on earth have been the men who loved their fellow men. Once you let this spirit prevail, the wrangling sects will be lost in the great league of those who love in the service of those who suffer. No man will then revile the faith in which his neighbor finds help for today and hope for the morrow; pity will smite him mute, and love will teach him that God is found in many ways, by those who seek him with honest hearts. Once you let this spirit rule in the realm of trade the law of the jungle will cease, and men will strive to build a social order in which all men may have the opportunity “To Live, and to Live Well,” as Aristotle defined the purpose of society. Here is the basis of that magical stability aimed at by the earliest artists when they sought to build for eternity, by imitating on earth the House of God.

Our human history, saturated with blood and blistered with tears, is the story of man making friends with man. Society has evolved from a feud into a friendship by the slow growth of love and the welding of man, first to his kin, and then to his kind. The first man who walked in the red dawn of time lived every man for himself, his heart a sanctuary of suspicions, every man feeling that every other man was his foe, and therefore his prey. So there was war, strife and bloodshed. Slowly there came to the savage a gleam of the truth that it is better to help than to hurt, and he organized clans and tribes. But the tribes were divided by rivers and mountains, and the men on one side of the river felt that the men on the other side were their enemies. Again there was war, pillage, and sorrow. Great empires arose and met in the shock of conflict, leaving trails of skeletons across the earth. Then came the great roads, reaching out with their stony clutch and bringing the ends of the earth together. Men met, mingled, passed and repassed; and learned that human nature is much the same everywhere, with hopes and fears in common. Still there were many things to divide and estrange men from each other, and the earth was full of bitterness. Not satisfied with natural barriers, men erected high walls of sect and caste, to exclude their fellows, and the men of one sect were sure that the men of all other sects were wrong – and doomed to be lost. Thus, when real mountains no longer separated man from man, mountains were made out of molehills – mountains of immemorial misunderstanding not yet moved into the sea!

Barriers of race, of creed, of caste, of training and interest separate men today, as if some malign genius were bent on keeping man from his fellows, begetting suspicion, uncharitableness, and hate. Still there is war, waste, and woe! Yet all the while men have been unfriendly, and, therefore unjust and cruel, only because they are unacquainted. Amidst feud, faction, and folly, Masonry, the oldest and most widely spread order, toils in behalf of friendship, uniting men upon the only basis upon which they can ever meet with dignity. Each lodge is an oasis of equality and goodwill in a desert of strife, working to weld mankind into a great league of sympathy and service, which, by the terms of our definition seeks to exhibit even now on a small scale. At its Altar men meet as man to man, without vanity and without pretense, without fear and without reproach; as tourists crossing the Alps tie themselves together so that if one slips, all may hold him up. No tongue can tell the meaning of such a ministry, no pen can trace the influence in melting the hardness of the world into pity and gladness.

The Spirit of Masonry! He who would describe that spirit must be a poet, a musician, and a seer – a master of melodies, echoes, and long far-sounding cadences. Now, as always, it toils to make man better, to refine his thought and purify his sympathy, to broaden his outlook, to lift his altitude, to establish in amplitude and resoluteness his life in all its relations. All its great history, its vast accumulations of tradition, its simple faith and its solemn rites, its freedom and its friendship are dedicated to the high moral ideal, seeking to tame the tiger in man, and bring his wild passions into obedience to the will of God. It has no other mission than to exalt and ennoble humanity, to bring light out of darkness, beauty out of angularity; to make every hard-won inheritance more secure, every sanctuary more sacred, every hope more radiant!

The Spirit of Masonry! Aye, when that spirit has its way upon earth, as at last it surely will, society will be a
vast communion of kindness and justice, business a system of human service, law a rule of beneficence; home will be more holy, the laughter of childhood more joyous, and the temple of prayer mortised and tenanted in a simple faith. Evil, injustice, bigotry, greed, and every vile and slimy thing that defiles and defames humanity will skulk into the dark, unable to bear the light of a just, wiser, more merciful order. Industry will be upright, education prophetic, and religion not a shadow, but a real Presence, when man has become acquainted with man and has learned to worship God by serving his fellows. When Masonry is victorious every tyranny will fall, every Bastille crumble, and man will be not only unfettered in mind and hand, but free of heart to walk erect in the light and liberty of the truth.

Toward a great friendship, long foreseen by Masonic faith, the world is slowly moving, amid difficulties and delays, reactions and reconstructions. Though long deferred, of the day, which will surely arrive, when nations will be reverent in the use of freedom, just in the exercise of power, humane in the practice of wisdom; when no man will ride over the rights of his fellows; when no woman will be made forlorn, no little child wretched by bigotry or greed, Masonry has ever been a prophet. Nor will she ever be content until all the threads of human fellowship are woven into one mystic cord of friendship, encircling the earth and holding the race in unity of spirit and the bonds of peace; as in the will of God it is one in the origin and end. Having outlived empires and philosophies, having seen generations appear and vanish, it will yet live to see the travail of its soul, and be satisfied –

When the War Drum throbs no longer,
And the Battle Flags are furled;
In the Parliament of man,
The Federation of the World.

Manifester, since love is the law of life, if men are to be won from hate to love, if those who doubt and deny are to be wooed to faith, if the race is ever to be led and lifted into a life of service, it must be by the fine art of Friendship. Inasmuch as this is the purpose of Masonry, its mission determines the method not less than the spirit of its labor. Earnestly it endeavors to bring men – first the individual man, and then, so far as is possible, those who are united with him – to love one another, while holding aloft, in picture and dream, that Temple of character which is the noblest labor of life to build in the midst of the years, and which will outlast time and death. Thus it seeks to reach the lonely inner life of man where the real battles are fought, and where the issues of destiny are decided, now with shouts of victory, now with sobs of defeat. What a ministry to a young man who enters its Temple in the morning of life, when the dew of heaven is upon his days and the birds are singing in his heart!

From the wise lore of the East Max Muller translated a parable which tells how the Gods, having stolen from man his divinity, met in council to discuss where they should hide it. One suggested that it be carried to the other side of the earth and buried; but, it was pointed out that man is a great wanderer, and that he might find the lost treasure on the other side of the earth. Another proposed that it be dropped into the depths of the sea; but, the same fear was expressed – that man, in his insatiable curiosity, might dive deep enough to find even there. Finally, after a space of silence, the oldest and wisest of the Gods said: “Hide it in man himself, as that is the last place he will ever think to look for it.” And so it was agreed, all seeing at once the subtle and wise strategy. Man did wander the earth, for ages, seeking in all places high and low, far and near, before he thought to look within himself for the divinity he sought. At last, slowly, dimly, he began to realize that what he thought was far off, hidden in the “The Pathos of Distance, is nearer than the breath he breathes, even in his own heart.”

Here lies the great secret of Masonry – that it makes a man aware of that divinity within him, where from his whole life takes its beauty and meaning, and inspires him to follow and obey it. Once a man learns this deep secret, life is new, and the old world is a valley all dewy to the dawn with a lark song over it. There never was a truer saying than, the religion of a man is the chief fact concerning him. By religion is meant not the creed to which a man will subscribe, or otherwise give his assent; not that necessarily; often not that at all – since
we see men of all degrees of worth and worthlessness signing all kinds of creeds. No; the religion of a man is that which he practically believes, lays to heart, acts upon, and thereby knows concerning this mysterious universe and his duty and destiny in it. That is in all cases the primary thing in him, and creatively determines all the rest; that is his religion. It is, then, of vital importance what faith, what vision, what conception of life a man lays to heart, and acts upon.

At the bottom, a man is what his thinking is, thoughts being the artists who give color to our days. Optimists and pessimists live in the same world, walk under the same sky, and observe the same facts. Skeptics and believers look up at the same great stars – the stars that shone in Eden and will flash again in Paradise. Clearly the difference between them is a difference not of fact, but of faith – of insight, outlook, and point of view – a difference of inner attitude and habit of thought with regard to the worth and use of life. By the same taken, ant influence which reaches and alters that inner habit and bias of mind, and changes it from doubt to faith, from fear to courage, from despair to sunburst hope, has wrought the most benign ministry which a mortal may enjoy. Every man has a train of thought on which he rides when he is alone; and the worth of his life to himself and others, as well as its happiness, depend upon the direction in which that train is going, the baggage it carries, and the country through which it travels. If, then, Masonry can put that inner train of thought on the right track, freight it with precious treasure, and start it on the way to the City of God, what other or higher ministry can it render to a man? And that is what it dies for any man who will listen to it, love it, and lay its truth to heart.

High, Fine, Ineffably rich and beautiful are the faith and vision which Masonry gives to those who foregather at its Altar, bringing to them in picture, parable, and symbol the lofty and pure truth wrought out through ages of experience, tested by time, and found to be valid for the conduct of life. By such teaching, if they have the heart to heed it, men become wise, learning how to be both brave and gentle, faithful, and free; how to renounce superstition and retain faith; how to keep a fine poise of reason between falsehood of extremes; how to accept the joys of life with glee, and endure its ills with patient valor; how to look upon the folly of man and not forget his nobility – in short, how to live cleanly, kindly, open-eyed and unafraid in a sane world, sweet of heart and full of hope. Who so lays this lucid and profound wisdom to heart, and lives by it, will have little regret, and nothing to fear, when the evening shadows fall. Happy the young man who in the morning of his years makes it his guide, philosopher, and friend.

Such is the ideal of Masonry, and fidelity to all that is holy demands that we give ourselves to it, trusting the power of truth, the reality of love, and the sovereign worth of character. For only as we incarnate that ideal in real life and activity does it become real tangible, and effective. God works for man through man and seldom, if at all, in any other way. He asks for our voices to speak His Truth, for our hands to do his work here below – sweet voices and clean hands to make liberty and love prevail over injustice and hate. Not all of us can be learned or famous, but each of us can be loyal and true of heart, undefiled by evil, undaunted by error, faithful and helpful to our fellow souls. Life is a capacity for the highest – an eager incessant quest of truth; a noble utility, a lofty honor, a wise freedom, a genuine service – that through us the Spirit of Masonry may grow and be glorified.

When is a man a Mason? When he can look out over the rivers, the hills, and the far horizon with a profound sense of his own littleness in the vast scheme of things, and yet have faith, hope, and courage – which is the root of every virtue. When he knows that down in his heart every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic, and as lonely as himself; and seeks to know, to forgive and to love his fellow man. When he knows how to sympathize with men in their sorrows, yea, even in their sins – knowing that each man fights a hard fight against many odds. When he has learned how to make friends and to keep them, and above all how to keep friends with himself. When he loves flowers, can hunt the birds without a gun, and feels the thrill of an old forgotten joy when he hears the laugh of a little child. When he can be happy and high-minded amid the meaner drudgeries of life. When star-crowned trees, and the glint of sunlight on the flowing waters, subdue him like the thought of one
much loved and long dead. When no voice of distress reaches his ears in vain, and no hands seeks his aid without response. When he finds good in every faith that helps any man to lay hold of divine things and sees majestic meanings in life, whatever the name of that faith may be. When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something beyond mud, and into the face of the most forlorn fellow mortal and see something beyond sin. When he knows how to pray, how to love, and how to hope. When he has kept faith with himself, with his fellow man, with his God; in his hand a sword for evil, in his heart a bit of a song – glad to live, but not afraid to die! Such a man has found the only real secret of Masonry, and the one which it is trying to give to all the world.
Robert Burns
Unknown

Freemasonry has no greater name than Robert Burns. If there are those who question his investiture as Poet Laureate of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, owing to the absence of certain documentary evidence, no one denies that he was, and is, the greatest poet of Freemasonry, the singer alike of its faith and its friendship, its philosophy and its fun, its passion and its prophecy. Nay, more; he was the Laureate, of the hopes and dreams of the lowly of every land.

Higher tribute there is none for any man than to say, justly, that the world is gentler and more joyous for his having lived; and that may be truly said of Robert Burns, whose very name is an emblem of pity, joy, and the magnetism of Brotherly Love. It is therefore that men love Burns, as much for his weakness as for his strength, and all the more because he was such an unveneered human being. It is given to but few men thus to live in the hearts of their fellows; and today, from Ayr to Sidney, from Chicago to Calcutta, the memory of Burns is not only a fragrance, but a living force uniting men of many lands into a fellowship of Liberty Justice and Charity. “The Memory of Burns!” cried Emerson, “I am afraid Heaven and earth have taken too good care of it to leave anything to say. The west winds are murmuring it. Open the windows behind you and hearken to the incoming tide, what the waves say of it. The doves perching on the eaves of a stone chapel opposite may know something of it. The Memory of Burns — every man's, every boy's, every girl's head carries snatches of his songs, and they say them by heart; and what is strangest of all, never learned them from a book, but from mouth to mouth. They are the property and the solace of mankind!”

In a tiny two-roomed cottage, clay-built and thatched-roofed, on the banks of the Doon, in the district of Kyle, two miles south of the town of Ayr, in Scotland, Robert Burns was born on January 25th, 1759. It was a peasant home, such as he afterward described in “The Cottar’s Saturday Night,” in which poverty was consecrated by piety, where the father was a priest of faith and the mother a guardian angel of the holy things of life. So far from as schools were concerned, his education was limited to grammar, writing and arithmetic. Later he picked up a little Latin, a smattering of French, and some knowledge of English and classic poets. But he knew the Book of Nature, leaf by leaf, and the strange scroll of the Human Heart, as only the swift insight of genius can read them.

At the age of twenty-two Burns was initiated into the Mysteries of Freemasonry, in St. David’s Lodge at Tarbolton, July 4th, 1781. Lockhart says that he was introduced to the Lodge by John Rankine. The minute recording his initiation reads: “Sederunt for July 4th. Robert Burns in Lochly was entered an Apprentice. Jo Norman, Master.” The second and third degrees were conferred on the same evening, in the month of October following his initiation. Six years later he was made a Knights Templar as well as a Royal Arch Mason in Eyemouth, as under the old Regime the two were always...
given together. By this time he had won some fame as a poet, and the higher degrees were given him in token both of his fame as a poet and his enthusiasm as a Mason.

On July 27th, 1784, Burns was elected Depute Master of St. James Lodge, Tarbolton, a position which he held until St. John's Day 1788.

He was made an honorary member of St. John Lodge No. 22, Kilmaronock, on October 26th, 1786. Major William Parker, the Master of St. John Lodge, became a great friend of Burns, and subscribed for thirty-five copies of the first edition of his poems. He is the "Willie" in the song "Ye Sons of Auld Killie" (a contraction of Kilmaronock) composed and sung by Burns on the occasion of his admission as an honorary member of St. John Lodge:

"Ye Sons of Auld Killie, assembled by Willie,
To follow the noble vocation;
Your thrifty old mother has scarce such another,
To sit in that honored station.

I've little to say, but only to pray,
As praying's the ton of your fashion;
A prayer from the muse, you may well excuse,
"Tis seldom her favorite passion.

Ye powers who preside, o'er the wind and the tide,
Who mark each element's border;
Who formed this frame with beneficent aim,
Whose sovereign statute is order;

Within this dear mansion may wayward contention,
Or withered envy ne'er enter;
May secrecy round be the mystical bound,
And Brotherly Love be the center."

The minutes of this meeting concluded as follows:

"Robert Burns, Poet, from Mauchline, a member of St. James, Tarbolton, was made an Honorary Member of this Lodge."

"(Sgd.) Will Parker."

This was the first Lodge to distinguish Burns with the designation "Poet," and to honor him with honorary membership.

Besides being a faithful and enthusiastic attendant upon the meetings of his own Lodge, Burns was a frequent visitor at Lodge when away from home. It is said that, with a very few exceptions, all his patrons and acquaintances were members of the Fraternity.

Burns is described at this time as nearly five feet ten inches in height, and of a form agile as well as strong; his high forehead shaded with black, curling hair, his eyes large, dark, full of bright intelligence, his face vividly expressive. His careless dress and untaught manners gave an impression of coarseness at first, but this was forgotten in the charm of his personality, and his face in repose had a calm thoughtfulness akin to melancholy.

Full of fun and fire, affable and the best of good company, his superior mind did not make him supercilious, and he loved more than all else, a festival that was half frolic and a feast where joy and good will were guests.

Alas, drinking was a habit in the Scotland of those days, to a degree we can hardly imagine, as much in the Church as in the Lodge; and it made the bitter tragedy of Robert Burns. Truth obliges us to admit that his moral failure was early and pitiful, due alike to his environment and to a fatal frailty of which made him fitful, unstable, and a prey to every whim of fancy and of passion. It is an awful risk to be endowed with the genius of a Burns; it digs deep pitfalls for the man to whom it is given. Yet, if in his later years he was a degraded man of genius, he was never a man of degraded genius. The poison did not enter his song. Allan Cunningham was right when he said: "Few men had so much of the Poet in them, and few poets so much of the man; the man was probably less pure than he ought to have been, but the poet was pure and bright to the end."

So, and naturally so, men are willing to hide with a veil of charity the debris of character scattered along the starry path of Burns. On reading his poems Byron exclaimed: "What an antithetical mind! Tenderness, roughness, delicacy, coarseness, sentiments, sensuality; dirt and deity – all mixed up in one compound of inspired clay!" But that might pass for a description of mankind in general, and of Burns in particular. If Burns was a sinner he was in that akin to ourselves, as God
knows, a little good and a little bad, a little weak and a little strong, foolish when he thought he was wise, and wise, often, when he feared he was foolish. So we may give Burns the charity which he prayed for others:

Then at the balance let's be mute,
We can never adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

By the same token, no great poet whose name is linked with our Craft ever owed more to Freemasonry, or gave more to it. More intimately than any other he was identified with its life, its genius and its ideals. Its teachings moved his thought; its spirit inspired his song; its genius nurtured that love of freedom and Fraternity which he set to everlasting music. So much is this true, that it remains a marvel to this day how Shairp could have written a biography of Burns without once mentioning his membership in the Craft. In the gentle air of Freemasonry he found refuge from hardship and heaviness of spirit; and its fellowship served to shelter him from the poisoned arrows of petty bigots – men of a kind known in every age, whose hard-heartedness was clad in unctuous hypocrisy.

Surely, if ever of any one, it can be said of Robert Burns, that his soul goes marching on. He was the harbinger of the nineteenth century, the poet of the rights and reign of the common people, whom, it has been said, God must love because he made so many of them. The earth was fresh upon the tomb of George Washington when that century was born; it discovered Lincoln and buried him with infinite regret. But its triumphant melody first found voice in the songs of Robert Burns, as the Greek singer inspired Patriarch with the fire which kindled the Revival of Learning, and out of the inertia of the Middle Ages created modern times. So when Taine, the French critic, came to account for that age he found that its spirit “Broke First in the Scotch Peasant, Robert Burns.” – a man of all men most fitted to give it voice, because “scarcely ever was seen together more of misery and of talent.”

There are those who dream of a vague blur of cosmopolitanism, in which all local loyalties, all heroic national genius shall be merged and forgotten. Not so Robert Burns. He was distinctively a national poet, striking deep roots in his native soil, and, for that reason, touching a chord so haunting that it echoes forever. This at least is true; a man who is not deeply rooted somewhere – to whom one spot on earth is not a little dearer, and the sky over it a little bluer – will not be of much use anywhere. When Burns appeared the spirit of Scotland was a low ebb. Her people were crushed and her ancient fire almost quenched. Her scholars blushed if they used her dialect. It was at such a time that a God-Endowed singer took up his harp, inspired by the history of his people, the traditions of Wallace and Bruce stirring him like a passion, his soul attuned to the old ballads of love and daring, singing the simple life of his nation in its vivid and picturesque language. He struck with a delicate but strong hand the deep and noble feelings of his countrymen and somewhere upon his variegated robe of song will be found embroidered the life, the faith, the genius of his people. No wonder the men loved a poet, and make his home at once a throne of melody and a shrine of national glory.

Because he was so deeply rooted in the soil of his own land, because he was so sweetly, sadly, joyously – yea, and even sinfully – human, his spirit and appeal are universal, for the human heart beats everywhere the same, and by loyalty to the genius of our own country we best serve our race. His passion for liberty, his affirmation of the nobility of man, his sense if dignity of labor, his pictures of the pathos and the hard lot of the lowly, find response in every breast where beats the heart of a man. It is thus that all men love Burns, for it was he who taught, as few have taught since the Son of Man lodged with the fishermen by the sea, the brotherhood of man and the kinship of all breathing things. Such singers live as long as men love life, and their words become a part of the sacred scriptures of the human heart.

This is no time to deal in literary criticism – a dreary business at best, a dismal business at worst. It is by all agreed that Robert Burns was a lyric poet of the first order, if not the greatest songwriter of the world. Draw a line from Shakespeare to Browning, and he is
Robert Burns

one of the few minds tall enough to touch it. The qualities of Burns are simplicity, naturalness, vividness, fire, sweet-toned pathos, and rollicking humor – qualities rare enough, and still more rarely blended. His fame rests upon verses written swiftly, as men write letters, and upon songs as spontaneous, as artless, as lovely as the songs of birds. He sang of simple things, of the joys and woes and pieties of the common life, where sin be shadows virtue and the cup of death is pressed to the lips of love. He saw the world as God made it, woven of good and ill, of light and shadow, and his songs come home to rich and poor alike, a comfort and a consecration.

No wonder Burns was the best beloved poet of Lincoln, as much for his democracy as for his humor, his pathos, and his rich humanity. With him social rank was but a guinea stamp, a bit of tawdry tinsel alongside the native nobility of manhood. He honored a man for his worth, not for his wealth. For the snob, for the fop, he had genuine contempt. If he flayed the selfish pride of the rich, it was not from envy – just as truly did he scorn the poor man who, instead of standing erect, only cringes and whines. He told the poor man that it is no sin to be poor, but that it is a sin to be ashamed of it. He taught that honest poverty is not only nobler, but happier, than indolent or ill-gotten wealth. The Cotter’s dog and the Laird’s dog are very real dogs, as all admit, but their talk is something more than dog-philosophy. It is the old, old story of the high and the low, and it is like Burns to take the part of the under dog. Still, had the Cotter’s dog given way to self-pity, Burns would have been the first to kick him. He hated fawning, as he hated sham, and he knew that if toil is tragedy, labor is an honor and joy.

That which lives in Robert Burns, and will live while human nature is the same, is his love of justice, of honesty, of reality, his touch of pathos and melting sympathy, his demand for liberty, his faith in man and God – all uttered with simple speech and the golden voice of song. His poems were little jets of love and liberty and pity finding their way out through the fissures in the granite-like theology of his day. They came fresh from the heart of a man whom the death of a little bird set dreaming of the meaning of the world wherein life is woven of beauty, mystery and sorrow. A flower crushed in the budding, a field mouse turned out of his home by a plowshare, a wounded hare limping along the road to dusty death, or the memory of a tiny bird who sang for him in the days agone, touched him to tears, and made him feel the old hurt and heartache of the world.

The poems of Burns did not grow; they awoke complete. He was a child of the open air, and about all his songs there is an outdoor feeling – never a smell of the lamp. He saw nature with the swift glances of a child – saw beauty in the fold of clouds, in the slant of trees, in the lift and glint of flowing waters, in the immortal game of hide-and-seek played by sunbeams and shadows, in the mists trailing over the hills. The sigh of the wind in the forest filled him with a kind of wild, sad joy, and the tender face of a mountain daisy was like the thought of one much loved and long dead. The throb of his heart was warm in his words, and it was a heart in which he carried an alabaster box of pity. He had a sad life and soul of fire, the instincts of an angel in the midst of hard poverty; yet he lived with dash and daring, sometimes with folly, and, we must add, – else we do not know Burns – with a certain bubbling joyousness, despite his tragedy.

Such was the spirit of Robert Burns, a man passionate and piteous, compact of light and flame and loveliness, capable of withering scorn of wrong, quickly shifting from the ludicrous to the horrible in his fancy, poised between laughter and tears – and if by some art se could send his soul into all the dark places of the world, pity and joy would return to the common ways of man. His feet may have been in the furrow, but the nobility of manhood was in his heart, on his lips the voice of eternal melody, and in his face the light of the morning star. Long live the spirit of Robert Burns, Poet and Freemason! May it grow and glow to the confounding of all injustice, all unkindness!

He haunts his native land
As an immortal youth; his hand
Guides every plow.
His presence haunts this room tonight,
A form of mingled mist and light
From that far coast.

Volume 1, Number 6, June 1923
THE FAREWELL

To The Brethren Of St. James Lodge, Tarbolton*

Adieu! a heart-warm, fond adieu!
Dear Brothers of the Mystic Tie!
Ye favoured, ye enlighten'd few,
Companions of my social joy!
Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune's slidd'ry ba',
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I'll mind you still, tho' far awa'.

Oft have I met your social band
And spent the cheerful, festive night;
Oft honoured with supreme command,
Presided o'er the Sons of Light;
And by that Hieroglyphic Bright,
Which none but Craftsmen ever saw!
Strong Mem'ry on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes, when far awa'.

May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,
Unite you in the Grand Design,
Beneath th' Omniscient Eye above –
The glorious Architect Divine –
That you may keep th' Unerring Line,
Still rising by the Plummet's Law,
Till ORDER bright completely shine,
Shall be my pray'r when far awa'.

And you, FAREWELL! whose merits claim
Justly the Highest Badge to wear!
Heav'n bless your honour'd, noble NAME,
To Masonry and Scotia dear.
A last request permit me here,
When yearly ye assemble a,
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the Bard that's far awa'.

*Read to the members of St. James Lodge, Tarbolton, at a meeting of the lodge held on June 23, 1786. At this time Burns was preparing to leave Scotland for a voyage to Jamaica.
A
lbert Pike found Freemasonry in a log
cabin and left it in a Temple. He was the master
genius of Masonry in America, both as scholar
and artist. No other mind of equal power ever toiled so
long in the service of the Craft in the New World. No
other has left a nobler name in our annals.

A great American and a great Mason, the life of Pike
is a part of the romance of his country. Outside the
Craft he was known as a poet, journalist, soldier, jurist,
ator, and his ability in so many fields fills one with
amazement. Apart from the chief work of his life in Ma-
sonry, he merits honor as a philosopher and a scholar.
Indeed, he was one of the richest minds of his age, re-
sembling the sages of the ancient world in his appear-
ance and in the quality of his mind. Those who do not
know Masonry often think of him as a man whom his-
tory passed by and forgot.

Pike was born in Boston, Massachusetts, December
29, 1809, of a family in which are several famous names,
such as Nicholas Pike, author of the first arithmetic in
America, and the friend of Washington; and Zebulon
Pike, the explorer, who gave his name to Pike’s Peak.
His father, he tells us, was a shoemaker who worked
hard to give his children the benefit of an education;
his Mother a woman of great beauty, but somewhat
stern in her ideas of rearing a boy. As a child he saw
the festivities at the close of the War with Great Britain,
in 1815. When Albert Pike was four his father moved to
Newburyport, and there the boy grew up, attending
the schools of the town, and also the academy at Framing-
ham. At fourteen he was ready for the freshman class
at Harvard, but was unable to pay the tuition fees for
two years in advance, as was required at that time, and
proceeded to educate himself. Had he been admitted
to Harvard he would have been in the class of Oliver
Wendell Holmes.

As a lad, Albert Pike was sensitive, high-strung, con-
scious of power, very shy and easily depressed; but, am-
bitious and determined to make his place in the world.
Always a poet, while teaching school at Fairhaven he
wrote a series of poems called “Hymns to the Gods,”
which he afterward revised and sent to Christopher
North, editor of “Blackwood’s Magazine,” at Edinburg,
receiving in reply a letter hailing him as a truly great
poet. Had Pike given himself altogether to poetry he
would have been one of the greatest of American Poets;
but, he seemed not to care for such fame but only for
the joy, and sometimes the pain, of writing. Indeed, the
real story of his inner life may be traced in his poems,
volumes of which were published as early as 1813, in
honor of which event his friends gave him a reception.

In a little poem called “Fatasmia” he pictures himself
at that time as a pale-faced boy, wasted by much study,
reciting his poems to a crowded room. As his lips move
his eyes are fastened on the lovely face and starry eyes
of a girl to whom he dared not tell his love, because she
was rich and he was poor. No doubt this hopeless love
had much to do with his leaving New England to seek
his fortune in the West. Anyway, it made him so sore of
heart that the word God does not appear in his poetry
for several years. Another reason for going away was the
rather stern environment of New England, in which he
felt that he could never do and be his best. So, he sings:

Weary of fruitless toil he leaves his home,
To seek in other climes a fairer fate.
Pike left New England in March 1831, going first to Niagara, and thence, walking nearly all the way, to St. Louis. In August he joined a party of forty traders with ten covered wagons following the old Santa Fe Trail. He was a powerful man, six feet and two inches tall, finely formed, with dark eyes and fair skin, fleet of foot and sure of shot, able to endure hardship, and greatly admired by the Indians. He spent a year at Santa Fe, the unhappiest months of his life. Friendless, homesick, haunted by many memories, he poured out his soul in sad-hearted poems in which we see not only the desperate melancholy of the man but the vivid colors of the scenery and life round about him. Shelly was his ideal, Coleridge his inspiration but his own genius was more akin to Bryant than any other of our singers. What made him most forlorn is told in such lines as these:

Friends washed off by life's ebbing tide,
Like sands upon the shifting coasts,
The soul's first love another's bride;
And other melancholy though.

Happily, new scenes, new friends, and new adventures healed his heart, and a new note of joy is added to his rare power of describing the picturesque country in which he was a pilgrim. In 1832, with a trapping party, he went down the Pecos river into the Staked Plains, and then to the headwaters of the Brazos and Red Rivers. It was a perilous journey and he almost died of hunger and thirst, as he has told us in his poem, “Death in the Desert.” After walking five hundred miles he arrived at Fort Smith, Arkansas, friendless, without a dollar, and well-nigh naked. He was soon teaching school in a tiny log cabin near Van Buren, and, tired of wandering, his life began to take root and grow.

Again his pen was busy, writing verses for the “Little Rock Advocate,” as well as political articles under the pen name “Casca,” which attracted so much notice that Horace Greeley reprinted them in the New York Tribune. Soon the whole state was eager to know the genius who signed himself “Casca.” Robert Crittenden and Judge Turner rode through the wilderness and found the tall, handsome young man teaching in a log schoolhouse on Little Piney River. Charmed with his modesty and power, they invited him to go to Little Rock as assistant editor of the Advocate. Here ended the winter of his wanderings, and his brilliant summer began among friends who love him and inspired him to do his best.

Pike made an able editor, studying law at night, never sleeping more than five hours a day – which enabled him to do as much work as two men usually do. By 1835 he owned the Advocate, which contained some of his best writing. He delved deep into law, mastering its history, its philosophy; and, once admitted to the bar, his path to success was an open road. About this time we read a tender poem, “To Mary,” showing that other thoughts were busy in his mind. That same year he married Miss Mary Hamilton, a beautiful girl whom he met on a June day at the home of a friend. A few months later appeared this “Prose Sketches and Poems,” followed by a longer poem, bold, spirited, and scholarly, entitled “Ariel.” His friends printed his poems, for the most part, as he seemed deaf to the whispers of literary ambition.

In the War with Mexico Pike won fame for his valor in the field of Buena Vista, and he has enshrined that scene in a thrilling poem. After the war he took up the cause of the Indians, whose life and languages fascinated him and who, he felt, were being robbed of their rights. He carried their case to the Supreme Court, to whose Bar he was admitted in 1849, along with Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin. His speech in the case of the Senate Award to the Choctaws is famous, Webster passing high eulogy upon it. Judged by any test, Pike was a great orator, uniting learning with practical acumen, grace with power, and the imperious magnetism which only genius can command.

Pike was made a Master Mason in Western Star Lodge No. 1, Little Rock, Arkansas, July 1850; and the symbolism of the Craft fascinated him from the first, both as a poet and scholar. Everywhere he saw suggestions, dim intimations, half-revealed and half-concealed ideas which could not have had their origin among the common craft Masons of old. He set himself to study the Order, his enthusiasm keeping pace with his curiosity, in search of the real origin and meaning of its symbols. At last he found that Freemasonry is the Ancient Great Mysteries in disguise, its simple
emblems the repository of the highest wisdom of the Ancient World, to rescue and expound which became more and more his desire and passion. Here his words:

It began to shape itself to my intellectual vision into something imposing and majestic, solemnly mysterious and grand. It seemed to me like the Pyramids in the grandeur and loneliness, in whose yet undiscovered chambers may be hidden, for the enlightenment of the coming generations, the sacred books of the Egyptians, so long lost to the World; like the Sphinx, half-buried in the sands. In essence, Freemasonry is more ancient than any of the world’s living religions. So I came at last to see that its symbolism is its soul.

Thus a great poet saw Freemasonry and sought to renew the luster of its symbols of high and gentle wisdom, making it a great humanizing, educational, and spiritual force among men. He saw in it a faith deeper than all creeds, larger than all sects, which, if rediscovered, he believed, would enlighten the world. It was a worthy ambition for any man, and one which Pike, by the very quality of his genius, as well as his tastes, temper and habits of mind, seemed born to fulfill. All this beauty, be it noted, Pike found in the old Blue Lodge – he had not yet advanced to the higher degrees – and to the end of his life the Blue Lodge remained to him a wonder and a joy. There he found universal Masonry, all the higher grades being so many variations on its theme. He did not want Masonry to be a mere social club, but a power for the shaping of character and society.

So far Pike had not even heard of the Scottish Rite, to which he was to give so many years of service. He seems not to have heard of it until 1852, and then, as he tells us, with much the same feeling with which a Puritan might hear of a Buddhist ceremony performed in a Calvinistic church. He imagined that it was not Masonry at all, or else a kind of Masonic atheism. His misunderstanding was due, perhaps, to the bitter rivalry of rites which then prevailed, and which he did so much to heal. At length he saw that Masonry was one, though its rites are many, and he studied the Scottish Rite, its origin, history, and such ritual as it had at the time, which was rather crude and chaotic, but sufficient to reveal its worth and promise.

The Scottish appeared in America in 1801, at Charleston, South Carolina, derived from a Supreme Council constituted in Berlin in 1786. For its authority it had, in manuscript, a Grand Constitution, framed by the Prussian body – a document which Pike afterwards defended so ably, though toward the end of his life he was led by facts brought out by Gould and others, to modify his earlier position. The Council so established had no subordinate bodies at first, and never very many, in fact, until 1855, a very natural result in a country which, besides having Masonry of its own, regarded the Rite as heresy. None the less, Pike entered the Scottish Rite, at Charleston, March 20, 1853, receiving its degrees from the fourth to the thirty-second, and the thirty-third degree in New Orleans, in 1857.

The following year he delivered a lecture in New Orleans, by special request, before the Grand Lodge of Louisiana; his theme being “The Evil Consequences of Schisms and Disputes for Power in Masonry, and of Jealousy and Dissensions Between Masonic Rites” – one of the greatest single Masonic lectures ever delivered, in which may be found the basis of all his Masonic thought and teaching. Masonry, as Pike saw it, is morality founded in faith and taught by symbols. It is not a religion, but a worship in which all good men can unite, its purpose being to benefit mankind physically, socially, and spiritually; by helping men to cultivate freedom, friendship and character. To that end, beyond the facts of faith – the reality of God, the moral law, and the hope of immortality – it does not go.

One is not surprised to learn that Pike was made Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, in 1859. He at once began to recast the Rite, rewriting its rituals, reshaping its degrees, some of which existed only in skeleton, and clothing them in robes of beauty. To this task he brought all his learning as a scholar, his insight as a poet, and his enthusiasm as a Mason. He lived in Little Rock, in a stately home overlooking the city, where he kept his vast library and did his work. In the same year, 1859, he was reported dead by mistake, and had the opportunity of reading many eulogies written in his memory. When the mistake was known, his friends celebrated his “return from
Hades,” as it was called, by a festival.

Alas, then came the measureless woe of Civil War, and Pike cast his lot with the South, and was placed in command of the Indian Territory. Against his protest the Indian regiments were ordered from the Territory and took part in the Battle of Elkhorn. The battle was a disaster, and some atrocities by Indian Troops, whom he was unable to restrain, cause criticism. Later, when the Union Army attacked Little Rock the Commanding General, Thomas H. Benton, Grand Master of Masons in Iowa, posted a guard to protect the home of Pike and his Masonic Library. After the War, Pike practiced Law for a time in Memphis. In 1868 he moved to Alexandria, Virginia, and in 1870 to Washington.

Again he took up his labors in behalf of Masonry, revising its rituals, and writing those noble lectures into which he gathered the wisdom of the ages – as though his mind were a great dome which caught the echoes of a thousand thinkers. By 1871 the Scottish Rite was influential and widely diffused, due, in part, to the energy and genius of its Commander. In the same year he published *Morals and Dogma*, a huge manual for the instruction of the Rite, as much a compilation as a composition, able but ill-arranged, which remains to this day a monument of learning. It ought to be revised, re-arranged, and reedited, since it is too valuable to be left in so cumbersome a form, containing as it does much of the best Masonic thinking and writing in our literature. It is studded with flashing insights and memorable sayings, as for example:

Man is accountable for the uprightness of his doctrine, but not for the rightness of it.

The free country where intellect and genius rule, will endure. Where they serve, and other influences govern, its life is short.

When the state begins to feed part of the people, it prepares all to be slaves.

Deeds are greater than words. They have a life, mute but undeniable, and they grow. They people the emptiness of Time.

Nothing is really small. Every bird that flies carries a thread of the infinite in its claws.

Sorrow is the dog of that unknown Shepherd who guides the flock of men.

Life has its ills, but it is not all evil. If life is worthless, so is immortality.

Our business is not to be better than others, but to be better than ourselves.

For all his strength and learning, Pike was ever a sensitive, beauty-loving soul, touched by the brevity and sadness of life, which breathe in his poems. His best known poem, but by no means his greatest, was written in 1871 entitled, “Every Year,” in which this note of melancholy is heard:

Life is a count of losses,
Every year;
For the weak are heavier crosses,
Every year;
Lost springs with sobs replying,
Unto weary Autumn’s sighing,
While those we love are dying,
Every year.

To the past go more dead faces,
Every year;
As the loved leave vacant places,
Every year;
Everywhere the sad eyes meet us,
In the evening’s dusk they greet us,
And to come to them entreat us,
Every year.

But the truer life draws nigher,
Every year;
And the morning star climbs higher,
Every year;
Earth’s hold on us grows lighter,
And the heavy burden lighter,
And the Dawn Immortal brighter,
Every year.

Death often pressed the cup of sorrow to his lips. Three of his children died in infancy. His first son was drowned; his second, an officer, was killed in battle. His eldest daughter died in 1869, and the death of his wife was the theme of a melting poem, “The Widowed Heart.” His tributes to his friends in the Fraternity, as
one by one they passed away, were memorable for their tenderness and simple faith. Nothing could shake his childlike trust in the veiled kindness of the Father of Men; and despite many clouds, “Hope still with purple flushed his sky.”

In his lonely later years, Pike betook himself more and more to his studies, building a city of the mind for inward consolation and shelter. He mastered many languages – Sanskrit, Hebrew, old Samarian, Persian – seeking what each had to tell of beauty and of truth. He left in the library of the House of the Temple fifteen large manuscript volumes, translations of the sacred books of the East, all written with an old-fashioned quill, in a tiny flowing hand, without blot or erasure. There he held court and received his friends amid the birds and flowers he loved so well. He was companionable, abounding in friendship, brilliant in conversation, his long white hair lending him an air of majesty, his face blushing like a child’s at merited praise, simple, kindly, lovable. So death found him in April 1891, fulfilling his own lines written as a boy:

So I, who sing, shall die,
Worn thin and pale, by care and sorrow,
And fainting with a soft unconscious sigh,
Bid unto this poor body that I borrow,
A long good-by – tomorrow.
To enjoy, I hope, eternal spring in high
Beyond the sky.

So passed Pike. No purer, nobler man has stood at the Altar of Freemasonry or left his story in our traditions. He was the most eminent Mason in the world, alike for his high rank, his rich culture, and his enduring service. Nor will our craft ever permit to grow dim the memory of that stately, wise, and gracious teacher – a Mason to whom the world was a Temple, a poet to whom the world was a song.
Let me introduce the speaker of the evening, although, as presiding officers so often say, he hardly needs an introduction. I believe that most Masons know him well and, after I describe him, you will easily recognize him. He is the Tiler of his Lodge and a very interesting man to meet. You will find it worthwhile cultivating his acquaintance.

I have met him wherever I have been privileged to visit lodge. He is a man of uncertain age. He is old in wisdom, in his knowledge of Masonic Lore, and in his understanding of human nature. He is young with that spirit of eternal youth that comes with fulfillment of the sweet law of Brotherhood. He knows all the Brethren intimately and never misses a meeting of his lodge. He has seen young men hesitatingly enter the preparation room for the first time; he has seen them passed and raised, watched their enthusiastic progress through the stations, served under them as they sat in the Oriental Chair, and walked with drawn sword at the head of the procession as they were carried to their last resting place.

His name is legion but I prefer to call him Peters, because everybody calls him by his first name; and if your think tank is working tonight, you will recognize the appropriateness of calling him Peter.

He does not get into the lodge room very often and would be particularly embarrassed if called upon to make a speech. I have seen him come into the room on large meeting nights to help the deacons purge the lodge. He will cast his eyes carelessly over the crowd and then confidently couch for every man in the room. I have sometimes wondered whether he possesses uncanny wisdom or whether he is simply faking.

But let us go out into his little room that is furnished with a cast-off table and some chairs that were used in the lodge room before it was remodeled; let us light the cigar, cigarette or pipe that Masonic custom denies us in the lodge, tilt our chairs back against the wall, lay our heads against that greasy spot left by many heads that have rested there before ours, and listen to this Masonic Philosopher.

“I have often wondered,” says Peter, “about these Masonic Symbols. Generally when you fellows are in there watching the work I am out here by myself, and so you see I have lots of time to think. Sometimes I am puzzled by what the Ritual says in its explanation of these symbols. Take for instance, those nine emblems of the Third Degree. I suppose most of you fellows have forgotten all about them because you generally come streaming out here and throw your aprons in a pile for me to straighten out about the time the Master starts on his lecture. The only time you stay is when the Master tells you there is going to be coffee and sandwiches after the work, and then you hang around during the lecture.

“There is one of those emblems that has given me more trouble than anything else in Masonry; it is the one in which you see a book lying on a velvet pillow with a sword over the top. The Masters tells you that it is the Book of Constitutions Guarded by the Tiler’s Sword, and that it reminds us to be ever watchful and guarded in our thoughts, words, and actions, particularly when before the enemies of Masonry, ever bearing in mind those truly Masonic virtues, silence and circumspection.
Now, that never seemed just right to me.  

“Those old boys who gave us this Ritual had pretty good ideas about symbolism, and the things they used as symbols generally meant just exactly what they told you about them. It is funny how much meaning they could get out of such things as a trowel, a square or a level. True symbolism, you know, isn’t forced. It just comes naturally. The moment you hear the explanation, you say, ‘Of Course! Why didn’t I think of that before?’ That is why I could never see what there was about that book and sword to teach us to be watchful and guarded in our thoughts, words and actions.

“You know the Chinese with their three monkeys, one with his hands over his ears, the other with his hands over his eyes, and the third with his hands over his mouth made a much better symbol of being watchful and guarded than our book and sword, and the same thing holds true in regard to silence and circumspection. If that is what we want to teach, we had better get rid of that book and sword and throw a picture of the three wise monkeys on the screen.

“Some time ago I read a book written by a great man who had spent his life studying Masonry. One thing that makes me want to study Masonry is that so many great men have found it worthy of such deep study. This writer seemed to have the idea that Masonry didn’t always say just exactly what it meant. He said something about the real truth of Masonry being hidden in the Ritual instead of being revealed by it; that you had to search out the real meaning of the Masonic Symbols for yourself. That always stuck by me. I was talking to one of the brethren about it and he agreed with this Masonic writer. This brother said we don’t sell the secrets of Freemasonry; when a man pays for his degrees, we only sell him the tools and he must use them to dig out the secrets for himself. And so I dug away at the old book and sword trying to understand what it really meant until the other night when one of these Service Association fellows came around and talked to us.

“He showed us how much the Masons had to do with the founding of this government. He told us how Paul Revere’s ride was organized among Masons and how all the fellows that helped Paul Revere make that ride were his Brethren, while Paul Revere himself was Provincial Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts. He told us of the Boston Tea Party, and how the little affair was arranged at the Old Green Dragon Tavern, which was nothing more or less than a Masonic Temple. He told us about John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin, Joseph Warren, Lafayette, and George Washington; and ever so many more of those early patriots who were all Masons, and how it was by working together as Masons that they carried out on the Revolutionary War, and then afterwards built this nation of ours, he told us about the constitution of the United States. You know the interesting thing about that is not that these men were Masons, many of our prominent citizens today are Masons, but that the same group of men who were leaders of our Fraternity were also leaders of the nation at that time. And then he told us how, because our Brethren had laid the foundation of this nation and because that foundation was in accord with Masonic principles, it was our duty to build the rest of the Temple to Liberty in America, and to watch over it and guard it with our very lives.

“So I got the thinking about that old Book and sword and it seemed to me that perhaps after all there was a real meaning behind it that was concealed rather than revealed in the Ritual, as that Masonic writer that I told you about said; and it seemed to me that Book of Constitution, instead of being a symbol of silence and circumspection, was a symbol of constitutional government such as we have in this country. Our Book of Constitutions, you know, is our Masonic fundamental law, just as the Constitution of the United States is the fundamental law of our nation. So you see how naturally it becomes the symbol of constitutional government.

“That Sword over the Book is this little old sword lying here on the table beside me. You know, this sword isn’t any good to hurt anybody with, but it is just a symbol by which Freemasonry protects itself against cowans and eavesdroppers. So it is just a symbol of Masonry on guard and, as the Book of Constitutions is a symbol of constitutional government, the Tiler’s Sword is a symbol of Masonry on guard. Do you see what I’m getting at? I believe the Book of Constitutions Guarded by the Tiler’s Sword teaches us that Masonry should always be the Guardian of Constitutional Government.
"I was telling another Brother about this the other night and he told me I was wrong because Masonry was older than the United States government and the symbol, he said, must be older than this country of ours. So I got to thinking about that too and it came to me that much of this speculative Masonry that we have today comes to us from England. Of course, I understand that Masonry as we know it has been gathered together from many countries. Some fellows say that we get it direct from the boys that worked on King Solomon’s Temple but it may be that isn’t quite right. Speculative Masonry, in its present form at least, did have its origin in England, and you know that a lot of the ideas about constitutional government that were accepted by us were first brought into practice back in England before the United States became a free country. And so I thought it very likely that even back then in those days our English brethren, just like our Revolutionary brethren were fighting for constitutional government and maybe they had as much to do with getting it in England as George Washington, Paul Revere, and the other boys had with getting it in this country.

"But I’m inclined to agree with Brother Mackey, who believed that our monitorial definition of this emblem is a modern one, and was introduced by Brother Webb. It does not appear in the first edition of Webb’s Monitor, but I found it in the second edition, printed in 1802. Mackey says, ‘This interpretation of Webb is a very unsatisfactory one. The Book of Constitutions is the Symbol of constituted law rather than of silence and circumspection, and when guarded by the Tiler’s Sword it would seem properly to symbolize regard for and obedience to law, a prominent Masonic duty.’

“So, until somebody shows me that I am wrong, I am going to believe every time I see that book and sword on the screen that the book is the Constitution of the United States and the sword is Freemasonry on guard; and instead of teaching me to be watchful and guarded in all my thoughts, words and actions, it is going to teach me to be ever watchful and guarded against the enemies of my nation and its Constitution, so that when I get up into the Grand Lodge above those old boys up there that built this nation are going to meet me with the Lion’s Paw, and vouch for me when the Supreme Grand Master of the Universe takes the Pass.”

That is Peter’s story of the Book of Constitutions Guarded by the Tiler’s Sword. You may take it or leave it, but somehow or other I think he is right. At least, ever since I heard tell that story I have had a new thrill while listening to the Master explaining the nine Masonic Emblems in the Third Degree; and I say to myself, ‘Well, that is all right for the candidate. We can’t give him all the light at once, because he would simply be blinded by its brilliance. But, for myself, I have been out in the anteroom with Peters using our working tools in a search for further Masonic light, and I know that sword and book mean that it is up to me to fight the enemies of constitutional government and to protect our Constitution from those seeking to destroy it. And with the help of the Great Architect of the Universe, and my nearly three million Brethren, I am going to do that little job!’

~*~
WARREN HARDING – FREEMASON

UNKNOWN

A nation is not simply a human encampment, or a business concern. It is both of these, but much more. It is the fusing of millions of people into a vast fraternity, a great friendship, into a unity of faith, feeling, purpose and destiny. It is a collective memory and a collective hope; a thing of spirit, ideals, sentiment – a fellowship in history, service and that obligation to the future which is one of the noblest sentiments of mankind, and the most disinterested.

Of the faith, history, genius and destiny of the Republic, the President is the embodiment. He is a symbolic figure. When he is running for office he is only a man like the rest of us, chosen from among ourselves by virtue of his strength of intellect and nobility of character, as these have developed before the eyes of his fellow citizens. When he is elected he is something more. He becomes then the incarnation of the spirit and will and purpose of a great people, and we need not apologize to any sentiment of equality for regarding him with reverence. There is, in one way of looking at him, something sacred about the President, as the instrument of the execution of the organized will of the nation.

This is not a mere fancy, but a fact of deep import which we need to ponder. The investiture of the President with the power and purpose of millions of people makes him other than he is in his private capacity. What the President does before the world he does for and through us, typifying the nation as no mere ruler could typify it. He is a servant of the people, not a master. His character as revealed in his stewardship is our character, his work in no real sense our work, doing things which free people decree shall be done. He stands for the only Divine right that Republics know – the right of men to rule themselves. The accolade of the popular will changes him and makes him a High Priest of humanity in this land, where, are being wrought out the highest ideals of the race.

The President is the nation brought to a focus of personality, and we see him walking in a fiercer light than ever beat upon a throne – from humble life to the highest office a mortal may hold while wearing our morality. We have had many great Presidents, never a bad one. No one on that great roster has betrayed his people, or proved unworthy of his mighty trust. Each is known to have been moved by pure motives – doing with an honest purpose all he could for the glory of the Republic. Read the life of each President, and, in the light of all the facts and the posture of the hour, it will be seen that a better choice could not have been made than was made at the time.

In a manner not merely accidental, but providential, each of our Presidents, by virtue of his temperament, training, character and personality, has been the man to match the hour – for, to a degree not realized, the personality of the President gives and receives the tone and temper of the nation. The names and services of our Presidents are a testimony to all the world that the plain common people can be trusted, while showing what kind of men a democracy can discover and develop. Most of the great Presidents revealed their greatness after the wise ones wondered why they had been elected. What was then the future and now the past has vindicated the intuition of the nation, in an almost miraculous manner.

Into this great tradition of honor and service came President Harding, at a time of disillusion and
confusion, in the wake of a gigantic War, when the world was feverish and almost fanatical with shell-shock; a quiet, gentle-hearted man of fraternal instincts and humanitarian sentiments, having wisdom of patience and the patience of love; conservative, conciliatory, seeking to plant seeds in the good soil of understanding; friendly of spirit, faithful of heart; a man of haunting sympathy and healing goodwill; a small-town man, who loved all kind of folk, at once our neighbor and our President; honored for his character, beloved for his simple, unveneered humanity, and to be remembered as a man in whom the spirit of our Republic revealed itself as a great Friendship.

Alas, just as he was striking his stride as a servant and leader of the people, God touched him and he fell asleep – plunging the nation and the world into a bereavement as unexpected as it was profound. Each of us, whether we agree with the politics of the President or not, felt a sense of personal loss, as if a near neighbor and old friend had suddenly passed away – leaving us to wonder at the fleetingness of life and the strange ways of God. He brought the people close to the Government, and the Government close to the people; he wanted to foster fellowship, understanding, brotherhood, cooperation between classes, creeds, nations, races. In short, he was a man and a President to whom Fraternity was the fundamental need, faith and hope of the nation and the world, without which chaos comes again; and in this he was a true Master Mason.

To the judgment of statesmen and the verdict of historians we must leave the final appraisal of the public acts of the President. Leaving these large matters for some ultimate estimate yet to be made, it is with the more intangible influences of character and personality that we have to do now; those things which seem imponderable, but which are more precious than any official act. Such influences are spiritual, mystical, incalculable, but they are beyond all price and make it worth our time to live.

As has been said, the President was a great fraternalist, alike by temperament and by the habit of his life. Brotherliness was native to his spirit, and he was a Mason in his heart, as all men should be, long before he was made a Mason, in the Lodge. "I like the atmosphere of Fraternity," he said in one of his last speeches; and that was no affectation, but the literal truth of the man. "I think I know the very soul of Masonry," he said in his address to the Imperial Council of the Shrine, and he rejoiced in the great place which fraternalism in general, and Masonry in particular, has in America. He saw its value, both as a bulwark against anti-social forces, and as a constructive force in behalf of social stability and advance. His estimate of Masonry was shown by the place he held in its fellowship, and the part he took in the assemblies, his Masonic affiliations being as follows:

Marion Lodge No. 70, F&A.M., Marion, Ohio; Marion Chapter No. 62, R.A.M., Marion, Ohio; Marion Commandery No. 36, K.T., Marion, Ohio; Scioto Consistory, A.A.S.R., Columbus, Ohio; Aladdin Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S., Columbus, Ohio. Honorary Member Albert Pike Lodge No. 33, A.F.& A.M., Washington, D.C.; Columbia Chapter No. 1, R.A.M., Washington, D.C., and Almas Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S., Washington, D.C.

The President was elected to receive the Thirty-Third Degree of the Scottish Rite in 1920, but owing to the illness of Mrs. Harding, was unable to be present at the conferring of the Degree at Cleveland. It was his intention to attend the session of the Supreme Council, Northern Jurisdiction, in New York in the autumn, to receive the Degree; but in the hearts of his Brethren he had already been crowned with the highest Degree within the gift of the Fraternity, as much for his spirit and character as for his devotion to the Craft. At the time of his raising, and on various Masonic occasions, he left many expressions of his vision of Masonry, one of which, in his address to the Shrine, is as follows:

No man ever took the oaths and subscribed to the obligations with greater watchfulness and care than I exercised in receiving the various rites of Masonry; and I say it with due deliberation and without fear of breaking faith. I have never encountered a lesson, never witnessed an example, never heard an obligation uttered which could not be openly proclaimed to the world. More, if the lessons taught were heeded, if the obligations read were assumed, if the relationships urged were adopted men would be infinitely better in their relationships.

The Short Talk Bulletin
There is an honest, righteous and just fraternal life in America. It embraces millions of men and women, and a hundred fraternal organizations extend their influence into more than a third of our American homes, and make ours a better Republic for their influences. Fraternity is inherent in man. It is our obligation to make the most of it for human betterment . . . In the Lodge room there is molded what becomes public opinion, and contributes to the moving forces of developing civilization.

I wish somehow we could have fraternity among nations, as it is taught in America among men. I do not mean to employ sign, grip and password; which afford an appealing mystery to our relationship, but the insistent demand for just dealing, the respect for the rights of others, and the ideals of brotherhood recited in the Golden Rule, and the righteous fellow-relationship which every man knows his God approves. Under such a reign of fraternity cruel human warfare will never come again.

Naturally, the President had a special affinity for the stately Order of the Knights Templar, in which two of the most beautiful things in the world are united – Freemasonry and Christianity. He was a Christian, holding his faith with the simplicity of a little child – wherein he was wiser than any philosophers – striving to live by its high principles, in private life and public office; and he died in its great assurance of the life immortal.

Three days prior to his inauguration, at Marion, Ohio, the Order of the Temple was conferred upon him. After the conclusion of the ceremonies he addressed the assembled Templars as follows:

Sir Knights:

It seems for a moment as though Masonry must have been designed for my helpfulness at this particular time. If I have had a thought that I believed was my own, in all sincerity of a man's soul I believe that I have had the thought approaching my great responsibility in humility and faith; and I come tonight to the Temple of this splendid Knighthood and find it teaching me and emphasizing those things I have been thinking. And so I have come to the new assurance and new confidence in the knowledge that the manhood of America which bears the stamp of Masonry is back of me.

I thought while the Eminent Commander was speaking of the Flag, that he need not worry about the Flag. All America is consecrated to the Flag, and I promise you, though I may fail you in many ways, God knows I will not fail you in that one thing. While I love peace no less than any man on earth – While I think peace is the greatest thing to be thought of – I should have no hesitancy to draw this sword in the preservation of our national honor.

Have you ever stopped to think that tradition seldom preserves anything not worthwhile? Oh, how beautiful is the story of Christ, and how you can bring it home to every man! Every man has his Gethsemane. Every man has his cross to bear, and the measure of his manhood is the way he bears it. Men are crucified every day, as was Christ; and, while they do not rise again, perhaps, in the same great way, any man who performs his service to Christ never fails to live again.

Knighthood is no more forgotten today than when it flourished in its outward manifestation. I believe the world is everlastingly growing better. The Order of the Temple made a great impression upon me. One of the twelve chosen apostles privileged to be with the Master daily, failed, and today we do not expect one man in twelve, or indeed, one in many more than twelve to fail. We are going on to a finer and better order in the world. The World War isn't chargeable to the Christian Religion, but to the failure of those who profess it. Too often we take an obligation carelessly. Too often we do not give it the consideration which we should.

I am mindful tonight that three days hence I am to take an oath – a solemn one, one that no man can approach without solemn thought. I mean to take that obligation to defend and preserve in humility and faith; and in love of truth. I want your help. I want you to realize that the
next administration of the greatest land on earth is yours, not mine; it's that of one hundred million, and I want the help of all of them.

His last address, read by his secretary almost at the hour when he passed away, was in presentation of a traveling banner, of which he was the honored bearer, from the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar of Ohio, to the Grand Commandery of California, at Hollywood, on the afternoon of August 2nd. The banner was inscribed with the text, "Not unto us, O Lord, Not unto us; but unto Thy Name be the glory;" and the President said:

We should glorify the Holy Name, not by words, not by praise, not by display of arms, but by deeds of service in behalf of human brotherhood. Christ, the great Exemplar of our Order, repeatedly urged this truth upon his hearers. There was nothing mystical or mythical in the code of living preached by Jesus Christ. The lessons He taught were so simple and plain, so fashioned to be understood by the humblest of men, that they appealed to the reason and emotions of all. His words to the fishermen bore conviction to the learned men of the Roman bench. All his teachings were based upon the broad ground of fraternalism, and justice, and understanding from which flows peace, always. 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.' Surely this is 'all the Law and the Gospel.' … With the universal observance of Christ's commandment we would have the essentials of all religions. Perhaps I will best express my thought if I say we need less of sectarianism, less of denominationalism, less of fanatical zeal and its exactions, and more of the Christ spirit, more of the Christ practice, and a new and abiding consecration to reverence for God.

Thus passed President Harding, Friend and Brother; on his lips words of love to man and faith to God, leaving a legacy of honorable character and gracious service. All the Craft unite in the words, "Hail and Farewell, until we meet in the Great White Lodge," the while we wonder in our hearts what it must be like to be past death — to have accomplished that one amazing act which we have yet undone before us, and which awaits our adventure — to know what that awful and mysterious thing is, and that its pains and terrors are gone past forever. For, whether we be Presidents or peasants, walking in high or humble lot, these things will pass away like a dream of the night, leaving only the Eternal God and the immortal soul, and the loves and fellowships of these many days and years!
Master's Piece
Unknown

In the olden time it was no easy matter for a man to become a Freemason. He had to win the right by hard work, technical skill, and personal worth. Then, as now, he had to prove himself a freeman, of lawful age, legitimate birth, of sound body and good repute to even be eligible at all. Also, he had to bind himself to serve under rigid rules for seven years, his service being at once a test of his character and a training for his work. If he proved incompetent or unworthy, he was sent away.

In all operative lodges of the Middle Ages, as in the guilds of skilled artisans of the same period, young men entered as Apprentices, vowing absolute obedience, for the lodge was a school of the seven sciences, as well as of the art of building. At first the Apprentice was little more than a servant, doing the most menial work, and if he proved himself trustworthy and proficient, his wages were increased; but, the rules were never relaxed, “except at Christmastime,” as the Old Charges tell us, when there was a period of freedom duly celebrated with feast and frolic.

The rules, by which an Apprentice pledged himself to live, as we find them recorded in the Old Charges, were very strict. He had first to confess his faith in God, vowing to honor the Church, the State, and the Master under whom he served; agreeing not to absent himself from the service of the Order save with the license of the Master. He must be honest and upright, faithful in keeping the secrets of the Craft and the Confidence of his fellows. He must not only be chaste, but must not marry or contract himself to any women during the term of his Apprenticeship. He must be obedient to the Master without argument or murmuring, respectful to all Freemasons, avoiding uncivil speech, free from slander and dispute. He must not frequent any tavern or alehouse, except it be upon an errand of the Master, or with his consent.

Such was the severe rule under which an Apprentice learned the art and secrets of the Craft. After seven years of study and discipline, either in the lodge or at the Annual Assembly (where awards were usually made), he presented his “Masterpiece,” some bit of stone or metal carefully carved, for the inspection of the Master, saying, “Behold my experience!” By which he meant the sum of his experiments. He had spoiled many a bit of stone. He had spent laborious nights and days, and the whole was in that tiny bit of work. The Masters assembled carefully examined his Masterpiece and if it was approved he was made a Master Mason, entitled to take his kit of tools and go out as a workman, a Master and Fellow of his Craft. Not, however, until he had selected a Mark by which his work could be identified, and renewed his vows to the Order in which he was now a Fellow.

The old order was first Apprentice, then Master, then Fellow – Mastership being, in the early time, not a degree conferred, but a reward of skill as a workman and of merit as a man. The reversal of the order today is due, no doubt, to the custom of the German Guilds, where a Fellowcraft was required to serve two additional years as a journeyman before becoming a Master. No such custom was known in England. Indeed, the reverse was true, and it was the Apprentice who prepared his Masterpiece, and if it was accepted, he became a Master. Having won his mastership, he was entitled to become a Fellow – that is, a peer and Fellow
of the Craft which hitherto he had only served. Hence, all through the Old Charges, the order is “Masters and Fellows,” but there are signs to show that a distinction was made according to ability and skill.

For example, in the Matthew Cooke Manuscript we read that it had been “ordained that they who were passing of cunning should be passing honored,” and those less skilled were commanded to call the more skilled “Masters.” Then it is added, “They that were less of wit should not be called servant nor subject, but Fellow, for nobility of their gentle blood.” After this manner our ancient brethren faced the fact of human inequality of ability and initiative. Those who were of greater skill held a higher position and were called Masters, while the masses of the Craft were called Fellows. A further distinction must be made between “Master” and a “Master of the Work,” now represented by the Master of the lodge. Between a Master and the Master of the Work there was no difference, of course, except an accidental one; they were both Masters and Fellows. Any Master could become a Master of the Work provided he was of sufficient skill and had the fortune to be chosen as such either by the employer or the lodge, or both.

What a rite or ritual, if any, accompanied the making of a Master in the old operative lodges is still a matter of discussion. In an age devoted to ceremonial it is hard to imagine such an important event without its appropriate ceremony, but the details are obscure. But this is plain enough; all the materials out of which the degrees were later developed existed, if not in drama, at least in legend. Elaborate drama would not be necessary in an operative lodge. Even today, much of what is acted out in an American Lodge, is merely recited in an English Lodge. Students seem pretty well agreed that from a very early time there were two ceremonies, or degrees, although, no doubt, in a much less elaborate form than now practiced. As the Order, after the close of the Cathedral-Building period passed into its speculative character, there would naturally be many changes and much that was routine in an operative lodge became ritual in a speculative lodge.

This is not the time to discuss the origin and development of the Third Degree, except to say that those who imagine that it was an invention fabricated by Anderson and others at the time of the revival of Masonry, in 1717, are clearly wrong. Such a degree could have never been imposed upon the Craft, unless it harmonized with some previous ceremony, or, at least, with ideas, traditions and legends familiar and common to the members of the Craft. That such ideas and traditions did exist in the Craft we have ample evidence. Long before 1717 we hear hints increase as the office of Master of the Work lost its practical aspect after the Cathedral-Building period. What was the Master’s part? Unfortunately we cannot discuss it in print; but nothing is plainer than, that we do not have to go outside of Masonry itself to find the materials out of which all three degrees, as they now exist, were developed.

Masonry was not invented; it grew. Today it unfolds its wise and good and beautiful truth in three noble and impressive degrees, and no man can take them to heart and not be ennobled and enriched by their dignity and beauty. The First lays emphasis upon that fundamental righteousness without which a man is not a man, but a medley of warring passions – that purification of heart which is the basis alike of life and religion. The Second lays stress upon the culture of the mind, the training of its faculties in the quest of knowledge, without which man remains a child. The Third seeks to initiate us, symbolically, into the eternal life, making us victors over death before it arrives. The First is the Degree of Youth, the Second the Degree of Manhood, the Third the consolation and conquest of Old Age, when evening shadows fall and the Eternal World and its unknown adventure draw near.

What then, for each of us today, is meant by the Master’s Piece? Is it simply a quaint custom handed down from our ancient brethren, in which we learn how an Apprentice was made a Master of his Craft? It is that indeed, but much more. Unless we have eyes to see double meaning everywhere in Masonry, a moral application and a spiritual suggestion, we see little or nothing. But if we have eyes to see it is always a parable, an allegory, a symbol, and the Master’s Piece of olden time becomes an emblem of that upon which every man is working all the time and everywhere, whether he is aware of it or not – his character, his personality, by which he will be tested and tried at last. Character, as the word means,
is something carved, something wrought out of the raw stuff and hard material of life. All we do, all we think, goes into the making of it. Every passion, every aspiration has to do with it. If we are selfish, it is ugly. If we are hateful, it is hideous. Williams James went so far as to say that just as the stubs remain in the checkbook to register the transaction when the check is removed, so every mental act, every deed becomes a part of our being and character. Such a fact makes a man ponder and consider what he is making out of his life, and what it will look like at the end. Like the Masons of old, apprenticed in the school of life, we work for "a penny a day." We never receive a large sum all at once, but the little reward of daily duties. The scholar, the man of science attains truth, not in a day, but slowly, little by little, fact by fact. In the same way, day-by-day, act-by-act, we make our character by which we shall stand judged before the Master of all Good Work. Often enough men make such a bad botch of it that they have to begin all over again. The greatest truth taught in religion is the forgiveness of God, which erases the past and gives us another chance. All of us have spoiled enough material, dulled enough tools and made enough mistakes to teach us that life without charity is cruel and bitter.

Goethe, a great Mason, said that talent may develop in solitude, but character is created in society. It is the fruit of fellowship. Genius may shine aloof and alone; like a star, but goodness is social, and it takes two men and God to make a brother. In the Holy Book which lies open on our Altar we read: "No man liveth unto himself; no man dieth unto himself." We are tied together, seeking that truth which none may learn for another, and none may learn alone. If evil men can drag us down, good men can lift us up. No one of us is strong enough not to need the companionship of good men and the consecration of great ideals. Here lies, perhaps, the deepest meaning and value of Masonry; it is fellowship of men seeking goodness, and to yield ourselves to its influence, to be drawn into its spirit and quest, is to be made better than ourselves. Amid such influence each of us is making his Master's Piece. God is all the time refining, polishing, strokes now tender, now terrible. That is the meaning of pain, sorrow and death. It is the chisel of the Master, cutting the rough stone. How hard the mallet strikes, but the stone becomes a pillar, an arch, perhaps an altar emblem. "Him that overcometh, I will make a pillar in the Temple of my God." The masterpiece of life, at once the best service to man and the fairest offering to God, is a pure, faithful, heroic, beautiful Character.

Oh! the Cedars of Lebanon grow at our door,
And the quarry is sunk at our gate;
And the ships out of Ophir, with Golden ore,
For our summoning mandate wait;
And the word of a Master Mason
May the house of our soul create!

While the day hath light let the light be used,
For no man shall the night control!
Or ever the silver cord be loosed,
Or broken the golden bowl,
May we build King Solomon's Temple
In the true Masonic Soul!
The Rite of Destitution
Unknown

Nothing in Freemasonry is more beautiful in form or more eloquent in meaning than the First Degree. Its simplicity and dignity, its blend of solemnity and surprise, as well as its beauty of moral truth, mark it as a little masterpiece. Nowhere may one hope to find nobler appeal to the native nobilities of as man. What we get out of Freemasonry, as of anything else depends upon our capacity, and our response to its appeal; but it is hard to see how any man can receive the First Degree and pass out of the lodge room quite the same man as when he entered it.

What memories come back to us when we think of the time when we took our first step in Freemasonry? We had been lead, perhaps, by the sly remarks of friends to expect some kind of horseplay, or the riding of a goat; but how different it was in reality. Instead of mere play-acting we discovered, by contrast, a ritual of religious faith and moral law, an allegory of life and a parable of those truths which lie at the foundations of manhood. Surely no man can ever forget that hour when, vaguely or clearly, the profound meaning of Freemasonry began slowly to unfold before his mind.

The whole meaning of initiation, of course, is an analogy of the birth, awakening and growth of the soul; its discovery of the purpose of life and the nature of the world in which it is to be lived. The lodge is the world as it was thought to be in the olden times, with its square surface and canopy of sky, its dark North and its radiant East; its center, an Altar of obligation and prayer. The initiation, by the same token, is our advent from the darkness of prenatal gloom into the light of moral truth and spiritual faith, out of lonely isolation into a network of fellowships and relationships, out of a merely physical into a human and moral order. The cable tow, by which we may be detained or removed should we be unworthy or unwilling to advance, is like the cord which joins a child to its mother at birth. Nor is it removed until, by the act of assuming the obligations and fellowships of the moral life, a new, unseen tie is spun and woven in the heart, uniting us, henceforth, by an invisible bond, to the service of our race in its moral effort to build a world of fraternal good will.

Such is the system of moral philosophy set forth in symbols in which the initiate is introduced, and in this light each emblem, each incident, should be interpreted. Thus Freemasonry gives a man at a time when it is most needed, if he be young, a noble, wise, time-tried principle by which to read the meaning of the world and his duty in it. No man may hope to see it all at once, or once for all, and it is open to question whether any man lives long enough to think it through – for, like all simple things, it is deep and wonderful. In the actuality of the symbolism a man in the first degree of Freemasonry, as in the last, accepts the human situation, enters a new environment, with a new body of motive and experience. In short, he assumes his real vocation in the world and vows to live by the highest standard of values.

Like every other incident of initiation it is in the light of the larger meanings of Freemasonry that we must interpret the Rite of Destitution. At a certain point in his progress every man is asked for a token of a certain kind, to be laid up in the archives of the lodge as a memorial of his initiation. If he is “duly and truly prepared” he finds himself unable to grant the request. Then, in one swift and searching moment, he realizes – perhaps for the first time in his life – what it means for a
man to be actually destitute. For one impressive instant, in which many emotions mingle, he is made to feel the bewilderment, if not the humiliation, which besets one who is deprived of the physical necessities of life upon which, far more than we have been wont to admit, both the moral and social order depend. Then, by a surprise as sudden as before, and in a manner never to be forgotten, the lesson of the Golden Rule is taught – the duty of a man to his fellow in dire need. It is not left to the imagination, since the initiate is actually put into the place of the man who asks his aid, making his duty more real and vivid.

At first sight it may seem to some that the lesson is marred by the limitations and qualifications which follow; but that is only seeming. Freemasons are under all the obligations of humanity, the most primary of which is to succor their fellow man in desperate plight. As Muhammad long ago said, the end of the world has come when man will not help man. But we are under special obligations to our brethren of the Craft, as much by the prompting of our hearts as by the vows we have taken. Such a principle, so far from being narrow and selfish, has the endorsement of the Apostle Paul in his exhortations to the early Christian community. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we read: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” It is only another way of saying that “Charity begins at home,” and for Masons the home is the lodge.

So, then, the destitute to which this Rite refers, and whose distress the initiate is under vows to relieve, as his ability may permit, are a definite and specific class. They are not to be confused with those who are poverty-stricken by reason of criminal tendencies or inherent laziness. That is another problem, in the solution of which Masons will have their share and do their part – a very dark problem, too, which asks for both patience and wisdom. No, the needy which this Rite requires that we aid are “All Poor and Distressed, Worthy Masons, their Widows and Orphans;” that is, those who are destitute through no fault of their own, but as the result of untoward circumstances. They are those who, through accident, disease or disaster, have become unable, however willing and eager, to meet their obligations. Such are deserving of charity in its true Masonic sense, not only in the form of financial relief, but also in the form of companionship, sympathy and love. If we are bidden to be on our guard against impostors, who would use Masonry for their own ends, where there is real need, our duty is limited only by our ability to help, without injury to those nearest to us.

A church, it be worthy of the name, opens its doors to all kinds and conditions of folks, rich and poor alike, the learned and unlearned. But a lodge of Masons is different, alike in purpose and function. It is made up of picked men, selected from among many, and united for unique ends. No man ought to be allowed to enter the Order unless he is equal to its demands, financially as mentally and morally able to pay its fees and dues, and to do his part in its work of relief. Yet no sets of men, however intelligent and strong, are exempt from the vicissitudes and tragedies of life. Take, for example, Anthony Sayer, the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England. Towards the end of his life he met with such reverses that he became tiler of Old Kings Arms Lodge No. 28, and it is recorded that he was assisted “out of the box of this Society.” Such a misfortune or something worse, may overtake any one of us, without warning or resource.

Disasters of the most appalling kind befall men every day, leaving them broken and helpless. How often have we seen a noble and able man suddenly smitten down in mid life, stripped not only of his savings but of his power to earn, as the result of some blow no mortal wit could avert. There he lies, shunted out of active life when most needed and most able and willing to serve. Life may any day turn Ruffian and strike one of us such a blow, disaster following fat and following faster, until we are at its mercy. It is to such experiences that the Rite of Destitution has reference, pledging us to aid as individuals and as lodges; and we have a right to be proud that our Craft does not fail in the doing of good. It is rich in benevolence, and it knows how to hide its labors under the cover of secrecy, using its privacy to shield itself and those whom it aids.

Yet we are very apt, especially in large lodges, or in the crowded solitude of great cities, to lose the personal touch, and let our charity fall to the level of a cold
distant almsgiving. When this is so charity becomes a mere perfunctory obligation, and a lodge has been known to vote ten dollars for its own entertainment! There is a Russian story in which a poor man asked aid of another as poor as himself: "Brother, I have no money to give you, but let me give you my hand," was the reply. "Yes, give me your hand, for that, also, is a gift more needed than all others," said the first; and the two forlorn men clasped hands in a common need and pathos. There was more real charity in that scene than in many a munificent donation made from a sense of duty or pride.

Indeed, we have so long linked charity with the giving of money that the word has well nigh lost its real meaning. In his sublime hymn in praise of charity, in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, St. Paul does not mention money at all, except to say "and although I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Which implies that a man may give all the money he possesses and yet fail of that Divine grace of Charity. Money has its place and value, but it is not everything, much less the sum of our duty, and there are many things it cannot do. A great editor sent the following greeting at the New Year:

"Here is hoping that in the New Year there will be nothing the matter with you that money cannot cure. For the rest, the law and the prophets contain no word of better rule for the health of the soul than the adjuration: Hope thou a little, fear not at all, and love as much as you can."

Surely it was a good and wise wish, if we think of it, because the things which money cannot cure are the ills of the spirit, the sickness of the heart, and the dreary, dull pain of waiting for those who return no more. There are hungers which gold cannot satisfy, and blinding bereavements from which it offers no shelter. There are times when a hand laid upon the shoulder, "in a friendly sort of way," is worth more than all the money on earth. Many a young man falls, or makes a bad mistake, for lack of a brotherly hand which might have held him up, or guided him into a wiser way.

The Rite of Destitution! Yes, indeed; but a man may have all the money he needs, and yet be destitute of faith, of hope, of courage; and it is our duty to share our faith and courage with him. To fulfill the obligations of this Rite we must give not simply our money, but ourselves, as Lowell taught in "The Vision of Sir Launfal," writing in the name of a Great Brother who, though he had neither home nor money, did more good to humanity than all of us put together – and who still haunts us like the dream of a Man we want to be.

The Holy Supper is kept indeed,
In what so we share with another’s need;
Not that which we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who bestows himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me!

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For The Good Of The Order

Joseph Fort Newton

The substance of an address by Bro. Newton, Educational Director; at the Annual Meeting of THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION, Washington, D.C., Oct. 29th, 1923; following the report of the Executive Commission.

After listening so intently to this remarkable Report, no one wishes to hear a long speech from anybody. But, in as much as the Report referred so kindly to me, perhaps I may be allowed a personal word, if only to tell in what mood I take up the work, and the spirit in which I hope to do it.

First, let me tell a story. During the American Civil War a young Captain in the army of the South was taken prisoner and brought up the Mississippi to Rock Island. The northern climate was severe on the southern men, proof of which can be found in the files of the War Department. The young Captain fell ill, desperately ill. He made himself known as a Mason to an officer of the prison. The officer took him out of the prison to his home, and nursed him back to life. When the War ended he put money in his pocket and gave him a little pistol to protect himself on his way back to his southern home. That young Captain was my father!

So, as far back as I can remember, I have had a great admiration for a Fraternity whose spirit could soften the horrors of battle and mitigate the lot of a prisoner of war. By the same token, I hope I have done a little for Freemasonry in return, trying feebly to repay a measureless obligation. For the same reason I should like to do more in its behalf before the day ends.

The purpose of the Association, as I understood it, sought to fulfill three basic principles of Freemasonry. Brotherly Love, Relief and truth – the doing of good and the spreading of light in the spirit of good will. Living under the shadow of a vast tragedy – trying to think and pray in the rhythm of its guns – it seemed to me that what the world needed was more Light, more Love, More Understanding; and that is what it needs today.

Our program is two-fold, first to bring American Freemasonry together in cooperative fellowship and service in a time of need and calamity; and second, to educate Masons in Masonry that the gentle, kindly light which shines on our Altar may find its way through our lives...
and through our lodges into the world of partisan strife and sectarian feud where it is needed. What we want is a service that educates and an education that serves.

The whole principle of Freemasonry is that “Brotherhood of Man begins with the Manhood of the Brother.” It seeks to build men, and then to make them Brothers and Builders. Any other kind of brotherhood is weak, if not futile, either a flabby sentimentalism or a calculating selfishness. Masonry is made up of strong men, picked men – they cannot be picked too carefully – sworn and trained to make righteousness and good will prevail. By that very fact a great responsibility rests upon us, which we cannot escape even if we desired to do so. Whatever needs to be done in any community the Masons ought to be the leaders in doing it, because they are Builders. Every Masonic lodge ought to be a social and civic center, where designs are drawn upon the Trestleboard for the common good, regardless of sect or party.

At first glance, our program may seem to be rather academic and highbrow, but it can be modified and adapted to our real needs and problems. No man, no set of men, can make such a program outright; it is by doing things that we learn what needs to be done and how best to do it. If we work together wisely, keeping the human touch and the spiritual vision, our experiments will ripen into a fruitful experience of how the spirit and principles of freemasonry can be practically applied to the life and service of our generation; as Washington and Franklin wrought its genius into the organic law of our new Republic.

Frankly, my first thought is not of the men who are already Masonic students. We need them, of course, and I believe they will rally to our help, as they did when we founded the Research Society. No, we are thinking of the throngs of young men – shock-headed boys, God Bless them! – who are crowding into our Temples all over the land. We welcome their youth, their energy, their enthusiasm; but we want them to be Masons, not merely members. We want them to know something about Masonry, not only its ritual, but what the ritual means; and what Masonry can do and ought to do in the World. Otherwise, as is so often the case, they will drift away and become “Bread and Butter Masons;” attending “The Big Meets and the Big Eats,” using the Masonic Apron for a napkin. Such men ought to have a special Apron of their own, adorned with a knife and fork as emblems!

Perhaps it is not altogether their fault – the lodge that simply makes Masons, and does not teach Masonry, does only half its work, or does its work only half way. If we do not know Masonry ourselves, if we do not know how to teach it to our young initiates, if our lodges become simply mills grinding out degrees; our freemasonry will sink to the level of a club – useful as such but in no way unique – losing its original purpose and power, and its great opportunity in our own day.

Always the first principle of education is to excite curiosity, to awaken interest; hence the plan of this Association, a few items of which I wish to mention without going far into detail. The moving picture program seeks to make use of one of the greatest arts of our time to enlist interest in Freemasonry, by showing what it means when actually worked out in modern life. In the same way, the M.S.A. National Masonic Library will bring the best thought of the Craft within the reach of lodges and members; and our proposed journal, The Master Mason, will be a medium for the exchange of ideas, plans, methods and good-fellowship; and a means of learning the present state of Freemasonry in all lands, its aspirations and its difficulties.

Besides, we hope to enter the strangely neglected field of fiction, using another great art in the service of the Craft. Hitherto, except for the stories of Brother Kipling, we have had few Masonic stories. The men of the Craft, like all other Americans, read stories, and it will be good news to know that one of the greatest of American novelists has promised to write, as only he can write, the story of Freemasonry in the American Revolution. When our young men read that story their blood will tingle and their hearts will beat faster as they see and realize what a part Masonry had in the creation of our Republic. Also, there will be short stories dramatizing the meaning of Masonry and its creative influence in the practical life as we know and live it.

Masonic research, as I understand it, means to search again for something we may have forgotten or overlooked. There are treasures of truth in our
Freemasonry, and sources of power we have not yet dreamed of much less used. We need to know the past of Masonry in order to keep us true to its spirit, its purpose and its methods; and I think I have shown a not unworthy interest in the history and archaeology of the Craft. But we must also make research into the present meaning, power, and application of Freemasonry, the better to know what our great order of Builders ought to do and can do for the making of a greater and better America. The philanthropies of the Craft are munificent and its opportunities are magnificent!

Brethren, I believe in America as I believe in God, and I know that as Freemasonry did a great work in the past of America, so can it do a still greater work in the future of our country. With the utmost respect and regard for other lands and peoples, our care is for America – our America, God’s America – to keep it true to its high, heroic tradition. Three Ruffians threaten the safety and sanctity of America – racial rancor, religious bigotry and a disintegrating spirit of lawlessness!

Here is our challenge and our opportunity, lest our Temple of Liberty and Fraternity be injured or destroyed before it is completed and dedicated – for it is not yet complete. Racial rancor is a thing slithered with blood and the mother of feuds and wars. Religious bigotry is one of the most horrible things in history. Its story is a tragedy too terrible to tell. As for lawlessness, it strikes at the Altar of liberty, undermines all our institutions, and opens the floodgates of anarchy. These Ruffians, if they have their way, will wreck Freemasonry, as they came near doing long ago, and they will ruin America.

Freemasonry, by virtue of its spirit and its teachings, can do for America what no other Fraternity can do. Without entering into political debates or sectarian disputes, as in the past so in the future, let us build upon the foundations laid by our fathers, and make America what its poets and prophets have dreamed it should be; and to have even a little part in such a work is honor enough – it is honor enough.