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(17)

III. Bro. H. Lawrence Noble once said: "It is not my desire to give opinion—or offer advice—or make suggestion, my hands are full attending to my own business as a man and as a Mason. But occasions rise like mountains out of the sea. Our problems are at hand, pressing and many. As responsible Masons, we cannot but be involved in the exploration for their solutions, or we are not worth our good name."

Masonry enters into the public life of every country and age in a larger and ever-increasing degree. This is due to the exemplary character of the product of the Order, and that this integrity is built upon that of individual members. It is a composite graven symbol of an inherited masterpiece and as awe-inspiring as that of the Pyramid of Egypt.

We are taught that the first duty of man is to his God. So we have the Holy Writings typical of the Holy Thought, the basis of morals and of reason. The next and far from least is the duty we owe our country, and in the present time of her needs, Masons are to the fore. Many of our leaders and soldiers are Masons. And they neither are nor can be remiss in the performance of their civic and moral duties. Then there are our duties we owe to our neighbors and ourselves, and in constant associations, we show what we really are. Religion and Masonry keep us aright in this respect, or should. Religion is a mode of expressing our faith in God. Masonry is not a religion, nor is it meant to be; but Masonry makes for religion, and the best of

us need a guiding star.

It is then that the mission of Masonry comes in: to endow and direct men to higher and better living, these founded upon broad, universal, ethical principles, the very essence of every true religion—great eternal lights in the canopy of heaven, never to be forgotten by the initiates. These principles may not be the tenets of any narrow sect, but they are eternal truths no man can understand except by thoughtful study, in the light of his years of experience—his education, his environment, his travels, his search for the best in life. Decorations, insignias, jewels, honors of office in Masonry, proficiency in the Ritual of the Craft, are of no consequence if we undermine and wittingly violate its ideals, its precepts.

Every design drawn upon the trestle board, every thought in progressive Masonry is for the upliftment, nay, for the purification of mankind. From the first timid step of the candidate on to the threshold of the highest degree where the wisdom of the ancient sages unfold, we are taught what our forebears have decided, should be reflected in our aspirations, as crystalized in human experiences and deeds. We may prize them as we should; but we can never feel them without effort, without all-necessary use—the practice which should follow the thought.

We have known men who habitually use profane language, but a Mason, we and the world, expect him to be clean-thinking, honest in dealing and acting, and living a creditable life. Merit alone is the just title to our

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privileges. Far more merit it is for a Lodge to boast of the fine character of its membership than of numbers. Nor is it enough to take "steps." Far more important than carrying out the letter of our work is the observation of the spirit. What a mockery to acknowledge the Holy Bible to be God's inestimable gift to man and then fail, refuse, and neglect to follow its commandments? Does it import less to us that while physical defects are evident and sneered at, moral defects are condoned and not easily seen?

Due to its dynamic force and potential greatness, Masonry creates and preserves superior minds and noble souls. There are no boundaries to science, righteousness, patriotism, fraternity and progress. Bans have been laid, at different times and places, upon all these. But where are they now? As Masonry is founded upon Truth and Justice, so it weathered all oppressions and persecutions. After centuries of relentless harassment, our worst enemy, has at last come to realize their folly. Now they not only commune with us but actually are cooperating in many of our humanitarian endeavours.

Two voices are ever calling man; one from the swamps of greed, selfishness and force, where success is merely apparent and may end in failure, death; and the other from the hilltop of love, justice and progress, where even failure brings glory and honest effort is rewarded with immortality. Freemasonry always voices the higher call and draws men to the highway of a bright morning where we shall hear joyous shouts of mankind's posterity.

There is an appeal to the best that is in us—in every vow, every lecture, every tenet, every symbol. But we are all too prone to ignore what we learned within the sacred walls. A sudden flare of temper and the base in

us will show, the best in us trampled underfoot. Take heart, in spite of all these shortcomings, let us heed the Master's exhortation in relation to temperance and prudence. We will rise again, but tell our brother, so that he will understand—a vessel will sail the better with the barnacles scraped off.

But be assured, brethren, if you are to GET the best out of Freemasonry, perforce, you must GIVE the best that is in you. So on the threshold of a rite, that the degrees may be impressively rendered, that the Masonic virtues may be deeply ingrained in the mind of our candidates, let nothing distract from or clash with the beautiful and solemn ceremonies. What we need is not admiration of our ritual—imposing as it is in itself—but sincere and untiring workers in our Lodges; not him who grudgingly gives a stolen hour, but he who of his free-will gives all—his best! Because we have not taken part before is no reason we should not now begin, for it matters not so much where we have been but in what direction we are heading. Would we enjoy the corn of nourishment, the wine of refreshment, and the oil of joy by not being involved? It is a truism that we cannot get from life more than what we give. Masonry is a most human institution. It is not all symbolisms as the dictionaries seem to think. It is charity, it is work, it is action, not in words but in deeds. We should take delight in hearing lectures, taking part in the conferral of degrees to gain Masonic knowledge. Public instruction in one night does more good to the learner, than twenty, browsing alone. You may have all the facilities, but to unravel our mysteries, you must need guidance and proper environment. It is a Masonic dictum that in our labors, we must not expect to receive but to give as the poet says:

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there, we must always be mindful of the pitfalls of human life."

— *Third Messenger*: "However lowly may be our stations in life, our responsibility to God and to all mankind should ever prompt us to noble deeds."

— *Fourth Messenger*: "Righteous service will lead to life eternal."

— *Fifth Messenger*: "We should reflect on past actions and thoughtfully review our surroundings that we may reach the highest attainments in life."

— *Librarian*: "We should develop our intellect so that we may be of the greatest use to ourselves and others as we assume our positions in such duties as it may please God to call us."

— *Musician*: "Harmony is essential to all organizations and is a virtue for which we should all strive."

— *Recorder*: "My every act should be as the Recording Angel would have it in her Book of Life."

— *Treasurer*: "Honesty of purpose is the foundation upon which to build character."

— *Chaplain*: "Piety, religion and reverence for sacred things are the beacon lights of life."

— *Marshal*: "Good order, kind words and noble actions are essential in our lives."

— *Guide*: "As God in His wisdom guided Job to restored health and prosperity so will

He guide us to live uprightly if we follow His teachings."

— *Junior Princess*: "The need of improving our times of prosperity with acts of kindness to our companions."

— *Senior Princess*: "In the story of Job's suffering, his faith in God and his utterances of wisdom, we learn that we will overcome our adversaries if we put our trust in Him."

— *Honored Queen*: "We are taught the triumph of faith in God as we journey through life."

FOSTER PARENTS

Aware of the character-building nature of the teachings of the International Order of Job's Daughters, and desiring to help in perpetuating the same in this country, Rosario Villaruel Chapter No. 2 (Manila) of the Order of the Eastern Star, in its meeting of June 5, 1967, unanimously declared to make itself the "Chapter Foster Parent" of Bethel No. 2 (Manila) of the International Order of Job's Daughters. And every member of the said Chapter, a "Foster Sister" or "Foster Brother."

It is now the task of the Chapter Foster Parent and of the individual Foster Sisters and Foster Brothers to foster the ideals of the International Order of Job's Daughters and to encourage others to visit Bethel No. 2.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Address Bethel No. 2, International Order of Job's Daughters, Paridel Temple, 1440 San Marcelino, Manila.



THE BEST IN YOU . . .

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Give love, and love to your life will flow,
A strength in your utmost need:
Have faith, and a score of hearts will show
Their faith in your word and deed.

For life is a mirror of king and slave;
'T's just what we are and do,
Then give to the world the best you have
And the best will come back to you.