

## The Choice is Yours

AGUSTIN L. GALANG, P.M.

Renowned Masonic writers give different emphasis on their philosophies of Freemasonry according to their views and the needs during their times. Preston predicates his philosophy on knowledge—in the acquisition of education, which he hopes, will make the foundation of Freemasonry solid and unshakable. This gave rise to the acceptance that Masonry is a system of education, civic, moral, cultural, and inseparably, spiritual. One meaning of education is that it is life itself. It is the sum total of one's experiences taking into full account the effects of the environmental conditions surrounding him. These interactions, mould the character and shape the destiny of men and nations.

As Masons, it is our solemn duty to apply our useful knowledge in making the environment healthy and wholesome. We should be in the forefront in the promotion of progress, peace and order to contain the infiltration and subjugation of freedom loving peoples. We must be exemplars in the discharge of civic duties, character, conduct, leadership. Love and respect should prevail amongst us. Through our tenets, let us project Love and Truth so that they may pervade the world to serve as the harbingers of peace.

This spirit can best be exemplified in the word of that great and good Man who said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." But

do we really love one another? Brother to brother, people to people, nation to nation? How much have we assimilated of the essential lessons in Brotherly Love? If we did, and everyone of us influenced but a score or two of our fellowmen, social unrest would be minimized and the war of nerves would likely be averted.

The efficacy of Love as the Lord has envisioned, has not in the least been lost. Like Truth, it may be beclouded and sneered at by vicious men. Infused with Charity, which after all is its great attribute, it may yet redeem itself and serve as the Rallying Point in the attainment of enduring peace.

The shadow of many a titanic struggle is gradually falling upon the nations of the world. As we survey the wrecks of devastated homes and destitute orphans it has left in the battle-swept countries and watch misery creep along its trail, we question whether our vaunted civilization will be overwhelmed or will rise stronger and better for having been tried by fire. I am convinced that good will come out of this holocaust, as we are but passing through another cycle described by the poet who wrote of man in the following words:

"See him from nature rising slow to art;

To copy instinct then was reason's part;

Thus that to man the voice of nature spake-

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'Go, from the creature thy instruction take;

Thy arts of building from the bee receive;

Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave;

Learn of the little nautilus to sail,

Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale,

Learn each small people's genius, policies,

The ants republic, and the realm of bees,

Great nature spoke; observant man obeyed;

Cities were built, societies were made."

The question naturally arises what can we do to perform worthily our parts in the world history. The answer must be made by each one for Masonry does not attempt to dictate the part man shall play in his worship or in his government. It simply points out to him the path of right and leaves the solution to each individual to be worked out according to his light.

Let us for a moment recall that Freemasonry is a human institution and that we should not let its different bodies obscure its great mission to advance by all just and honorable means the welfare of mankind. It is based on simple humanity, and not on any creed, party, or sect. It instills the sacred duty of brotherly love, of forbearance, and of toleration. Its great mission is peace, progress, and prosperity for all. It educates men free in thought, noble in desire, and joyful in deed. Masonry has survived and today lives because of the morality it fosters and the manhood it expounds and exemplifies. Masonry passes the bounds of sect, creed, and nationality. It combines all creeds; it unites all nationalities; and it ignores all sectarianisms: it proclaims

and unfeigned belief in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Masonry stands as a beacon in the darkest hour of world history. It has witnessed the passing of the ages calmly and serenely.

Its place in the great reconstruction work of the world will be no small one and each of us must be ready and willing to perform every task which comes to us in the ennobling spirit of CHARITY toward all mankind.

We need not dwell upon the philosophy of life to expound in its landmarks or to enumerate its inspiring virtues. The dark hour through which we are passing and the occasion call for concerted efforts and you shall be asked to concentrate upon the great virtue of CHARITY in deeds and in words, which extends beyond the grave through the boundless wing of eternity. Charity prompts the noblest of act of which our nature is capable. It inclines us to think favorably of every man, and to do him good on all fitting occasions. It is our richest jewel and should ever shine with dazzling luster. Masonry guided by this star will do much to solve the real problems now rending the world asunder when the clouds of war have vanished and the sun of peace again shines. The world will then be weary of war, of patriotism, of frontiers, of foolish race prejudices and of the hatred and misunderstanding and dislikes to which they give rise. The very magnitude of the struggle will cause a violent reaction and the world will listen to good counsel and advice. To make one-half of the world hate the other half is too tremendous an undertaking to prove a success and will fail of its own weight. The vaunted claim of world leadership belongs to no one nation but rests upon that intangible but

powerful force of free-will intertwined with Charity in its broadest and fullest meaning, enabling us to see clearly the good there is in Unity.

In the great upheaval, Masonry can play a part of might and power. In religion, there are sects and factions which cannot well unite for a common and practical purpose; or, at any rate do not unite; but Masonry composed of men of good will, all religion and races may well and shall become, not only a moderating element but a potential and an active force in achieving a closer union of mankind and the permanency of peace between all countries. The moral force contained in Freemasonry, behind which lies the best tradition of the centuries, should increase in vitality, when these wars of attrition are over.

Masonry was born in the palace where there was not heard the sound of an axe, hammer, or any tool of iron. Iron being deemed an article of sacrilege in a place of worship to the ancients, and is now a hideous nightmare to the warring nations. Thus Masonry came into being as a silent power and has come down through the ages quietly performing its great mission of Charity toward all of humankind. It has seen revolutions sweep the earth, cities rise and vanish like bubbles upon the water, nations fly at each other's throats and grapple in death struggle, yet, it has moved serenely forward winning victories of peace and good will. It teaches us to regard the whole human species as one family—all children of one Almighty Parent. On this principle Masonry unites men of every country, sect or opinion; and causes true friendship to exist among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance. We have our allotted tasks to perform in this won-

powerful rehabilitation work and you should see to it that you give the best there is in you. It is an imperative duty which cannot be lightly discharged by the gift of money or by going through the motion of being good one day in seven. Another opportunity like this may not knock again on our doors, you should make the most of it to exemplify the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

Our task is an arduous one. Progress will be slow depending upon our enthusiasm, disappointment will be numerous, but we should be inspired by the genius of Masonry and ever press onward in our crusade. Let us learn from the poet who wrote:

"For form of government let the fools contest;

Whatever is best administered is best;

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;

His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

In faith and hope the world will disagree;

But Mason's rallying point shall always be,

Love for all mankind, enshrined in CHARITY."

Excerpt from—FUNDAMENTAL MASONIC EDUCATION

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**BETHEL . . .**

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of the Guardian Council of Bethel No. 2, Manila.

The Manila Bethel of the Order will have their installation of officers on June 26, 1966. They have invited Masons and Eastern Stars in the Manila area to be present at their installation. DeMolays and Jobies from Olongapo have planned to be in Manila on that day to attend the installation ceremonies.