

enter, with all who are to take part ready to proceed. Thus can time be saved and early closing assured.

It is well for the incoming Worshipful Master to plan his program for the entire year. This can be done and by doing so he can book well in advance Grand Lodge officers and others whose time is much in demand. This method will make the year's program run smoothly, resulting in improved attendance and better spirit of cooperation. Always, planning should keep early closing in mind. Remember, your Brethren have to go to work tomorrow.



WORKING TOOLS OF A FELLOWCRAFT MASON

(New Zealand Freemason)

Much has been written about the working tools of a Fellowcraft Freemason, and a good deal about the charge with which they are presented to the candidate in the Second or Fellowcraft Degree. Our ritual abounds in brief patches of beautiful language, but in this charge the beauty of language is sustained from beginning to end; the imagery is apt and vivid; the whole charge flows with a graceful inevitability which makes it one of the most memorable parts of the ritual, and it has one advantage over some other charges; it is not too condensed. The candidate can follow it and absorb it at the first hearing. Sometimes a newly-made Fellowcraft is asked what part of the ceremony has impressed him most; the answer is often the Working Tools charge.

The lesson of the Working Tools in this degree is the lesson of community living. Real freedom is not freedom to do precisely as one likes, without let, hindrance, or inhibition. That would be an infantile form of freedom. Real freedom consists in willingly entering into such contractual agreements as will ensure our happiness and other people's. That is an ordered form of freedom, an adult giving away something for something of more value, and on multilateral basis. From the infantile point of view it may be freedom to take possession of any object that one sees; from the adult point of view freedom of action is better secured by having agreed means of acquiring ownership of anything, and then respecting the rights of anyone who has taken the agreed steps. In that way we can be assured that most other people will respect rights we have similarly acquired to other property.

The community may decide that the few recalcitrants or untrustworthy persons shall be compelled to conform, and appoint law enforcement officers to see that what has been agreed upon in the community shall not be disregarded. Hence we have the conception of freedom within the law.

The charge in the Second Degree is not concerned with the enforcement of law by any means other than the force of conscience. It is concerned with our being able to trust one another, and it points out in some detail the difficulty anyone has in being a completely trustworthy person. It is interesting that phrases like square dealing on the level, should have passed into current parlance far beyond the confines of the Craft. Square dealing imports rectitude—a word that itself means squareness, though now almost entirely in a metaphorical sense. Dealing with others “on the level,” although also a can’t or slang phrase, it is well known as the other, and is apt as a physical illustration or not the idea was derived from the plumb rule in its Masonic application, the idea of uprightness, and the characteristics the word connotes, are known to all society.

Square dealing, upright dealing, level dealing; they are all concerned with our relations with other people; objective but benevolent, unimpassioned, and, above all, fair. These are the desiderata the Craft requires.

The underhand, the deceitful, the half-truth, these are ideas which cannot be made to fit such simple tools. They are conceptions that no social person will entertain as a counsel of perfection; where we give way to them is not in the hope that we will be done by as we have done.

And, like most Masonic lessons, the lessons of these three basic implements are easily understood, and uncomplicated, and make for simple perfection in conduct. Perfection, of course, is not really simple at all in practice, but only as an ideal. Most motives for conduct are complex, and few sets of circumstances are simple. But the application of the tools themselves can show what should be done to the physical material.



THE TONGUE OF GOOD REPORT (New Zealand Craftsman)

One of the things we require of candidates is that the tongue of good report must have been heard in their favor. A well-known novelist, Maxence van der Meersch, whose last book, “The Hour of Love,” was published posthumously and has just appeared in English, uses this striking sentence: “And I was too young and too inexperienced to know that honour and reputation are not always the same thing, and that in fact the former might sometimes demand the sacrifice of the latter.”