



## **LODGE VEGAS # 32**

### **Masonry and the Problems of Men**

The whole purpose of philosophy is attained when men are enabled to think clearly and act wisely. To this end has the thought of all great philosophers been directed. Long before Plato, through his persistent questioning, strove to elicit from men their knowledge as to what constituted truth and virtue, eager souls had been groping for the light that makes men free.

No man, having once rightly apprehended the significance of Freemasonry, will be blind to the necessity of men directing their lives by some sort of a philosophy. A man's philosophy is the reason he gives for the deeds he executes in life. And his life in turn is the great witness to the richness or the poverty of his philosophy.

Of the making of books there is no end, and so saying we are but re-echoing the conclusions of a probable ancient brother. Such too may be said of philosophy. Of philosophies there is no end. But what wonderful understanding would one need to select wisely and value justly, for his own governance and happiness, a practical and workable philosophy from among such a number. This task is for the scholar, as most of us in this busy world have not the time to devote to intense studies. Masonry rests on the principles of the first great elemental philosophy, "Belief in God and the immortality of the soul." Providentially for us Freemasonry has preserved the record of man's early thinking. Thus a philosophy of life has been brought down to us which is radiant with a beautiful simplicity, and nowhere is it more practical than in its application to the social and governmental activities of men.

Someone has told us that Masonry is philosophy teaching by symbol, even as History is philosophy teaching by example. In Masonry we have a philosophy that is practical for life and conduct everywhere and all the time. It is a sign of a new day for Masonry that the Masonic Service Association of the United States is confirming this conception. Evidently the most important work to be done now is to emphasize fundamentals. To do this effectively we must go back to the Landmarks of the Fraternity. Masonic philosophy is embodied in those Landmarks. To translate those Landmarks into civic duty and to bring to each Mason a realization of his own part is the task of the Service Association. If the appreciation of the individual Mason for these principles can be aroused the possibilities of the Service Association program will be fulfilled. He who recognizes the value of such an interpretation will live it. When not only one Mason but two million of them apply Masonic principles to the era of readjustment and reconstruction which now lies before us, our government and

our society will be stabilized. By such a process only can humane and righteous conditions be established on the earth.

Masonic philosophy enjoins that life must be viewed reasonably. As if to assure man that the time requisite for such contemplation shall be set aside, it has measured the day into proportionate parts. Eight hours of the twenty-four, it is impressed upon the new initiate, is for the service of God and a distressed worthy brother, eight for work, and eight for rest and refreshment. It must not be implied that a specified form of worship is enjoined in the hours that have reference to God. Neither is it implied that we are literally to seek out a brother daily that we may relieve him of his distress, which usually is understood to mean his bodily necessity.

It is not altogether a modern thought that we can worship through our work, but it is a thought that can be reconsidered to advantage, especially in this day. Our work then must be worship and the period designated as being set aside for the service of God must be devoted to our spiritual enrichment, and not in ways derogatory to the growth of man's nobler self.

There are those to whom every form of work is drudgery. They cannot think of work in terms of service. They cannot understand that any task, no matter how menial, can be dignified by a definite aim. Perhaps they see in the evolution of industry that the man who was once a skilled handicraftsman is now a mere cog in a machine. If they would turn the canvas around they would see what a boon to humanity as a whole intensive production has become. They know that the unhealthy conditions in factories a generation or two ago have given way to sanitation and comfort. Some are pessimistic and feel that these improvements, like many others, have been won from unwilling employers. Often this is true but on the other hand we must remember that it was some considerate employer who first realized the relation between pleasant surroundings and efficiency.

The alienation of employer and employee, creating a condition of almost social anarchy, is gradually being bridged. The idea that is going to prevail after the wage and profit issues are adjusted, is that they are co-partners. Whether the work to be done be simple or intricate, it is as co-operators that good work, square work, the best work can be done. In arriving at such mutual relationship the Masonic teaching regarding the right use of the day will not only be appreciated but applied. No doubt, as some theorists are fond of exclaiming, the world's work could be done in infinitely less time if everybody worked, or rather if every able bodied man worked. But just at present we are not living in any Utopian realm; we are living in the United States where eight hours a day, worked and not shirked, is considered the requisite for both comfort and success.

To what use do we put the eight hours of rest after our eight hours of labor are over? We chance to live where the eight hour day is in vogue and our observation in traveling lends weight to our personal conclusion as deducted from conditions at home. Are these young men who loaf and upon whose hands time seems to be heavily hanging doing anything commensurate with a service to God or a distressed worthy brother?

We fear that they are rather of those who brood sulkily over working conditions and are naturally the prey of fanatical agitators. It is the conclusion of some of our keenest students that Young America is neither reading nor thinking. In this Young

America must be included many who display upon their coats the square and compass. Had the Masonic ritual told them its full story, they would know how to employ the other eight hours, and their lives would prove it.

- Robert Tipton.

- Source: The Builder - December - 1920

*Prepare By, Br. Florian for the benefit of the Craft, OCT, 2012*

-