

Inasmuch and Furthermore

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This Short Talk Bulletin has been adapted from the Grand Oration given at the Grand Lodge of Illinois in 1980. We thank Brother Brown, who is world renowned for allergy research, for sharing his thoughts with us.

Society today is being buffeted by the winds of change – changes in life styles and morality. Unfortunately, many people are willing to compromise their principles. Too many people have given first-class loyalty to second-class causes. Those second-class causes have betrayed them. The Ten Commandments are not on trial – they have stood, and still stand, the test of time.

The "furthermores" which we took while kneeling at the Masonic Altar with our hands resting on the Holy Bible, square, and compasses constitute the finest set of guidelines ever compiled by the mind of men. one sometimes wonders if some of our Brethren leave some of their furthermores lying there on the Altar instead of taking them into their life – incorporating them into their every day living?

A song is not a song until you sing it, A bell is not a bell until you ring it. God did not put love in your heart to stay, Love is not love till you give it away.

To which we might add: Masonry is not what you get from it and what you give it, but Masonry when you live it.

Are you putting as much into Masonry as you get out of it? If you are not, Freemasonry could end up like the farmer's cow who was fed nothing but her own milk – she eventually shrivelled up and starved to death.

Janet Taylor Caldwell, in "The Great Lion of God," lists thirty causes for the decline of civilization. She lists the first three in this order: 1) Permissiveness in society; 2) Immorality; and 3) The Welfare State. Edward Gibbon, the British Historian, in his classic book, "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," lists: 1) Apathy; 2) Affluence and 3) Immorality. Arnold Toynbee, another British Historian, in "A Study of History," outlined the Rise and Fall of 26 different cultures – including the great cultures of Greece, Rome, Persia, and Egypt – each

of which were unable to accept affluence without complacency and apathy. But Greece, Rome, Persia, and Egypt did not have Freemasonry.

No freedom ever lasted unless it involved responsibilities as well as rights and privileges. The present day cry for rights should be accompanied by a pledge and assumption of responsibilities. When God gave each of us an ability, he also gave us a responsibility to make good use of those talents. Freedom has always been beset by the inward enemies of indifference, selfishness, greed, intolerance, lust, bigotry, and prejudice.

Historian Toynbee also said that the only hope for America is a spiritual rebirth. Next to religion, there is no other body that does more to establish the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God than does Freemasonry. We do so because our paths are illuminated by that Great Light in Masonry, The Volume of Sacred Law and its precepts. To fail to use the full potential of Freemasonry is a crime of negligence. Are we proud enough of Freemasonry to make it a priceless legacy for those who come after us? Or do we simply bask in the reflected glory of having been Masons?

We need Masons who see, who understand, and who proclaim the influence of Masonry on the individual, the family, the community, the nation, and the world. We need Masonic flagwaving! "Flag-waving" is not old fashioned. Flag-waving indicates we know a good thing when we see it, and that we want the world to know about it – whether it be Lodge, Church, or Country.

We need Masons who are "Masonic" examples to the newly-raised Mason. Enthusiasm is as contagious as a smile, and there is absolutely nothing more contagious than a smile. We need Masons who, by their example will attract others to Freemasonry. We need Masons who know and who appreciate the beautiful Masonic legacy that has come down to us from our forefathers. The more we know about Masonry, the more fascinating it becomes and the more we appreciate it.

President Abraham Lincoln, in referring to the state of the nation, said: "Nothing from the outside can defeat us. If destruction be our lot, we ourselves must be its author and its finisher. "

Edmund Burke, a British statesman who was sympathetic with the American colonies at the time of the Revolution said: "The only thing that has to happen in this world for evil to triumph, is for good men to do nothing."

The mood of an age is revealed in many ways: – through its music, its literature, its art, through the movies and T.V. Twenty-five years ago we used to say, "Do your best," and now we say, "Take it easy." The motto used to be, "Save for a rainy day." Now it is "Enjoy now, pay later." We used to say, "He has a most commendable character." Now we say, "He has a marvelous personality."

There was never a time in history when Freemasonry was more important than it is today. Freemasonry has demonstrated its power to improve the world. Never has there been a greater need for men of quality and character than there is right now.

In Saint Paul's Cathedral in London, carved in the stone base that supports the stone bust of Sir Stafford Cripps, are these words by Cripps: If man neglects the things of the spirit and fails to put on the full armor of God, he will seal the doom of future generations."

A community in Spain was so proud of its ancient Roman aqueduct that they sought to preserve it by shutting off the water supply it carried. After several months, they discovered their mistake. Without water, the heat was causing the aqueduct to crumble and disintegrate. Human beings are like that. When we cease to feel that we have any purpose in serving mankind, we begin to falter and fail. We live in deeds, not years; in thought, not in markings on a dial. Who lives the best and thinks the most will make his life worthwhile.

John Hall said it very nicely in his poem, titled

"At Day's End."

Is anybody happier because you passed his way?
Does anyone remember that you spoke to him today?
Their day is almost over and its toiling time is through,
Is there anyone to offer now, a kindly word for you?

Can you say tonight in parting with the day that's slipping fast
That you helped a single brother of the many that you passed?
Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said?
Can the man whose hopes were fading now with courage look ahead?

Did you waste the day or lose it, was it well or sorely spent?
Did you leave a trail of kindness, or a scar of discontent?
As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that God will say,
"You deserve one more tomorrow, by the work you did today. "

Each kindly word and friendly greeting – yes, each helpful deed – all are building stones we send on ahead for the building of the heavenly home – "That house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

One of our Brothers who was in an automobile accident, had the misfortune to break his leg. His doctor put it in a walking cast and in a few days he was back at work in the office. He was impressed by how many kindly deeds other employees in the office did for him. They carried his books for him; brought cups for water from the water fountain; they did all sorts of thoughtful things. Then came the day when the doctor removed the cast. The following day he came to work with no cast but still with stiffness and considerable pain. What a difference in the

office! Now no one brought him water! No one offered to open the door for him; no one offered to carry any heavy books. Then the truth dawned upon him. Too many people are concerned with symptoms instead of the person. When the symptoms (such as a cast) were not present, no one paid any attention to the person.

Brother Norman Vincent Peale tells of an interesting experience. A southern minister had come all the way from the State of Georgia to New York to see him. The southern minister entered Dr. Peale's reception room at the great Riverside Church. Upon asking the receptionist if he could see Dr. Peale, she asked if he had an appointment. He told her he had come all the way from Georgia and did not know it was necessary. The receptionist informed him that it would not be possible to see Dr. Peale since the waiting room was full of people who had appointments and that Dr. Peale was booked up for some time to come. Just then, Dr. Peale's door opened and out walked Dr. Peale and a visitor arm-in-arm. Dr. Peale noting the hurt look on the Georgia man's face, came over and inquired about the problem. Dr. Peale then turned to the waiting appointees and said, "This is an emergency; would you mind if I give this man a few minutes of my time right now?" Of course all agreed. Thirty minutes later the two men emerged arm-in-arm with a glowing smile on the visitor's face. The Georgia visitor then addressed the waiting room crowd and said, "I want to thank you all so very much for making it possible for me to see this great man. You see I recently lost my wife by death; my only son is seriously ill in the hospital; I have had financial reverses and don't know how I will pay my hospital bills. In short, just about every star has fallen out of my heaven, and this great man listened to me, then one-by-one he put every star back in my heaven, and I thank you so much."

Yes, Brother Masons, inasmuch as you do it unto the least of these, you do it unto me.

By our work, may we one day be clothed in the habiliments of immortality and enter that Celestial Lodge where the Judge Supreme sitteth forever in the East.

We have made much more technical advancement in the last 50-year period than in any 500-year period before. The human mind is capable of successfully confronting the new changes that today challenge the very survival of civilization.

We are members of an Order which time has rendered venerable.

We are members of an Order which virtue has consecrated.

The future may bring some changes in ritual. Changes in the way in which we inform a non-Mason about Masonry, more elaborate temples, and other changes. But the greatest influence will be how much Masonic dedication we have. What Masonry offers to the next generation depends upon us. The work we do and the fruitful enthusiasm we display for Freemasonry. It will not all be easy, but extremely rewarding. It can be done!

The founders of Freemasonry have left us a priceless legacy. To lose it through apathy or complacency would be a tragic crime.

If every Master Mason would truly live all of his "Furthermore's," Masonry will yet see its finest hour.

Remember the words in the Holy Bible which say, "Inasmuch as you do it unto the least of these, you do it unto me." Isn't that exactly what we are taught in Masonry?

STB - November 1981