

Supreme Order of the  
Holy Royal Arch

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THE ORATION

delivered by the Acting J.

Ex. Comp. ALBERT GROVE, P.G. Std.B.

Third Provincial Grand Principal

at the

CONSECRATION

of the

Bromsgrove Chapter, No. 5414

on 20th. January, 1944.

The Companions of the Chapter of Stability No. 564.  
have had this printed as a sincere token of  
their esteem for its first M.E.Z.

MASONIC usage has decreed that at this point in our proceedings the Acting J. shall deliver an Oration. This word has come to be associated with "Orator" and all that word implies; but primarily the word Oration means "a speaking" or a speech. Happily for me we are taught that our Masonic Efforts should be such as lie within the compass of our attainments; therefore I know I shall not meet with your censure if I take my duty as being covered by the simpler meaning of the word, and make no attempts into flights of Oratory.

We are all of us conscious that Masonry has profoundly affected our relationship with one another and our bearing towards those who are outside our Order and that many close friendships would not have been possible and many a door would not have been opened or opened only with difficulty had we not been Masons. It is therefore not untimely that on an occasion such as this we should give a few minutes thought on the nature and purposes of our Order.

As before we were exalted into R.A. Masonry it was necessary that we should have exercised ourselves in Craft Masonry it may not be unprofitable if we glance at the principles and tenets of the Craft.

All of us have been asked probably many times "What is Masonry?" All of us I venture to say have found it impossible to give an adequate answer. Masonry makes different appeals to different men; some Masons find profit and pleasure in the working of our ritual, some in the study of the hidden truths veiled in Allegory and illustrated by symbols, some in historical research, some in the social friendships so easily made in masonry and all in the exercise of those truly masonic virtues, benevolence and charity.

The ignorant have accused us, not so frequently now, I think, as in the past, of being more concerned with the pleasures of the festive board than anything else. The fact that Masons generally have made efforts so considerable and successful to maintain their Lodge and Chapter Meetings during war-time conditions shows the falsity of this opinion, and proves, what we all know, that it is the opportunity of sitting on terms of easy friendship with our Brothers and Companions which is the great attraction of the Masonic meal.

Another objection is that we find pleasure in a form of play-acting. This suggestion is rather silly. Intelligent men bearing their share of the responsibilities of the civic, business and social life of the community would hardly remain keen and active masons for the greater part of their lives if masonry were merely childish make believe. They would leave it soon after their initiation.

The truth is absolutely the opposite. We do not confuse the means with the end. We do not let our ritual, the beauty of which we cherish, degenerate into the dead-thing ritualism. It is not without significance that Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter have never attempted to enforce any standard form of ritual. We appreciate that ritual is for many a helpful means of guiding a man's thoughts upward, and so we use our ritual to direct our minds to our dependence upon God, and to remind us of our duties both as men and as Masons.

It is rather remarkable that to-day when the air vibrates with the voices of men claiming their rights, Masonry continues to grow and expand. For Masonry says nothing about rights, but is insistent upon duties.

It is noteworthy that the fact that a Brother has rights is taught through a duty. That of the S.W. to see that every Brother has had his due before the Lodge is closed.

So when the M.M. is exalted into R.A. Masonry he is told that much of the working of Craft Masonry has been intended to remind him of the relative duties we owe to each other.

With this background we now turn our thoughts to R.A. Masonry in particular. The field is wide and fruitful, but time will permit of only one or two reflections.

The first and all important truth which is emphasized in our ceremonies and symbolism is the existence of the Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent God.

The second point I will mention is the different emphasis on the Volume of the Sacred Law. I will refer to this first.

In Craft Masonry the Sacred Volume lies open to all when the Lodge is open, may Masonry never depart from this, and the Candidate is enjoined to study its divine precepts. In R.A. Masonry extracts from this great gift of God to men are read in all our ceremonies. The candidate as we know is dramatically reminded of the light to be found in the Bible. Principals on Installation hear long extracts from the Sacred Word, and in our ceremonies to-day the wisdom and beauty of this great light in Freemasonry will be brought to our notice. So while the Volume of the Sacred Law lies open in our Chapters the Companions also read or hear portions of the Divine revelation.

But the great truth brought home to every R.A. Mason in our ceremonies is the eternal existence of the Creator of all things and the relation we bear to Him as creatures offending against His mighty will and power yet the adopted children of His mercy.

In all our ceremonies and by all our symbolism the mind of the R.A. Mason is directed to some attribute of the Divine Creator in whom we live and move and have our being. Taught to bend with humility and resignation beneath the chastening hand of the Most High we are reminded that frail and erring man is still the adopted child of God and the subject of His mercy and compassion.

When the R.A. Mason approaches the shrine and sees the words and symbols of the Deity great truths are brought to his notice.

Surely in this age, which seems so prone to confuse charge for progress, it is peculiarly right that we should be reminded that all things great and small in the heavens above and the earth beneath are held within and surrounded by the endless, timeless circle of the actual, future, eternal, unchangeable and all sufficient God. When the R.A. Mason turns his thoughts to the meaning of the words on the triangle many aspects of the Deity must be brought forcibly to his mind. He must ask himself why the Chaldean, Hebrew, Syriac and Egyptian words are so prominent in the symbolism of an order dedicated to the one true and only God. No doubt several useful lessons can be learnt from this. I will mention one only. It seems to point out that in all ages and amongst all peoples man has felt his need of a Divine Being, and in times before the fuller light which shines for us, God did not leave himself without witnesses on earth. They realized dimly and partially some of the attributes of the Lord of All. Thus the three sides of the triangle pointing out **the actual future and eternal existence of the Most High, the Being who has the heavens for His throne and the earth for His footstool and the Lord Omnipotent** make the whole triangle, for the R.A. Mason, a vivid reminder of the FATHER OF ALL.

The characters at the angles of the triangle. Just three Hebrew letters. Yet we are told they are of exceeding importance. They are, for they direct the thoughts of the R.A.M. to God. At one angle he learns the real basis of our equal Brotherhood. Masonry teaches equality but not the equality of the demagogue. Masonry condemns alike pride in and envy of the external advantages of rank and fortune, but it has too long an experience of the human race to teach that all men are equal in goodness, wisdom or abilities any more than in stature or physical strength. Yet Masonry does teach equality, the only true equality, equality in and before God. So we are Brothers and equals because children of the FATHER LORD.

At another angle the R.A.M. learns that God spoke the word which set all creation in motion. At a time when our world is full of people who say they are ready with plans to build a new earth it may be humbling, but not unnecessary, to be reminded that the Divine Being we worship made the Laws which set in motion and control the forces which govern not only this tiny world but universes vast beyond our conception. Some seem to think that because science has discovered a few of nature's laws the whole Creation is explained and no Divine Creator is necessary, whereas to the R.A. Mason it always seems that the more we discover of those laws which control the minutely small and the infinitely great the more should we be filled with awe and admiration of Him whose word set all in motion, the WORD LORD.



At the last angle the R.A.M. receives new hope for the future. He learns that the Divine Spirit is abroad in a troubled world. He is conscious that all his thoughts of, and aspirations for higher things, his appreciation of the good, his willingness and capacity to shed a tear of sympathy over the failings of a Brother, and pour the healing balm of consolation into the bosom of the afflicted, are possible only because he has been endued with a portion of the Divine Spirit. So he hopes, and hopes with faith that all mankind will come increasingly under the benign influence of the SPIRIT LORD.

Therefore the R.A.M. being ever reminded in his Chapter of the wisdom, strength and love of the Eternal Ruler of the Universe leaves it to tread with serenity the thorny path of life, and to take up the daily round and common task with added strength, conscious that the things which are eternal remain.

Knowing this we may believe with humility, but firmly, that we do well to-day to join in the Consecration of yet another Royal Arch Chapter.