

THE LODGE BANNER

From the earliest times a banner has been used as a rallying point wherever men have espoused a particular champion or cause. Hence we find the Egyptians marched to war under a banner bearing a design usually of the god which they worshipped. The Israelites after the Exodus were divided into twelve tribes each of which had its own banner, which portrayed in heraldry the peculiar blessing bequeathed to each tribe by the Patriarch Jacob, and in addition each of the four divisions of their army had a special ensign.

In English history the earliest banners were of a religious character, and usually bore the design of a cross. The Crusaders sailed to the East with the red cross of their patron Saint George as their banner; thus generally a banner is considered as a symbol of principles or fellowship.

The Lodge Banner is consequently a very important ornament in the Craft. In design it is what is known in heraldry as the Gonfannon, i.e. a square or oblong of silk tapestry, with or without streamers, mounted on a cross-bar and suspended on a staff. The embroidery usually depicts the sacred symbol, the two pillars B and J, the square pavement, on which are set out the working tools and the ashlar, whilst in the centre is the heraldic badge of the Lodge.

There are, in addition to the above, five points which the banner especially symbolises in Freemasonry. The first is Strength, for we walk under the protection of the M.H and under his protection we face the difficulties which confront us.

The second is Peace, for peace is truly a masonic virtue, and is one of its great powers throughout the world.

The third is Progress, with a banner to lead us, we march gladly behind it, we cannot stand still, or in other words it reminds us of our undertaking to endeavour to make daily advancement in masonic knowledge.

The fourth is Loyalty not only to our King and country but also to those who rule and direct our Lodge; loyalty to our brethren with whom we disagree, and to the principles of the Craft.

allegiance.

The fifth is Service for only by service can brotherhood and friendship develop to its full fruition.

In short the possession of the banner should be a constant reminder to practise outside the Lodge those principles which are taught within, and to be ever ready to champion the cause of Benevolence and Charity in the never ending war against Poverty and Misfortune.

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