

ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE MEETING

OF THE

Provincial Grand Lodge
of Warwickshire,

HOLD AT THE

TOWN HALL, LEAMINGTON,

ON

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BY

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IN the Biblical account of the construction of the Temple by King Solomon, an obscure phrase is used in connection with the description of the windows. The Authorised Version gives the rendering: "And for the House (*i.e.* the Sanctuary), he made windows of narrow lights." (*1 Kings vi. 4.*) If you turn to the Revised Version, you will find the last words replaced by "windows of fixed lattice-work"; and in the margin, still another translation is offered, *viz.* "windows broad within and narrow without." According to this rendering, the shape of the windows resembled what we find in medieval castles and fortresses—they sloped to a greater width inside, in order to secure a better diffusion of light in the interior.

But an interpretation of the disputed phrase is to be found in an ancient Jewish Commentary, which is the reverse of that given in the Revised Version margin. It reads as follows: "When a man makes windows for his house, he forms them wide inside and narrow outside—to draw in the light; but as for the windows of the Temple,

they were narrow within and broad without. And why was this? That the light may issue forth from the sanctuary and illumine the world."

A most beautiful and inspiring thought underlies this comment. According to it, the Temple had, as its fundamental purpose, the diffusion of the light of holiness to the human race. It was to be the centre from which radiated sanctifying and ennobling influences for all God's creatures.

Our first Grand Master, in his sublime prayer of dedication, explicitly stated as the ultimate aim of his work: "That all the peoples of the earth may know Thy Name, to fear Thee." (*Ibid*, viii, 43.)

Brethren, our Masonic Temples reproduce in symbolic form the Sanctuary constructed by the Royal Solomon. But is it true that our windows are narrow within and broad without? Is it true that the lamps of Freemasonry—brotherly love, relief, and truth—send their rays broadcast into the World? We have listened to a report of the remarkable progress which Masonry has made in this Province; and I have no doubt that what is true of us holds good also of other Provinces. Let us, by all means, rejoice in the increasing

numbers of men who are being drawn within the circle of Masonic light ; but let us never forget that the final test and justification of our Order are to be sought in the effect it produces not so much upon the individual, as upon mankind as a whole. We teach brotherhood ; but even if we do give a special significance to the term "brother" as it applies to a member of our Order, we should be faithless to the finest principles of the Craft, if we failed to recognise that all men are brothers, as children of the One Father. We teach the supreme value of peace and harmony. But we must not be contented with concord in our Masonic Temples. The world itself is—or rather, should be—one vast, all-embracing divine Sanctuary ; and it must be our keen desire, as Masons, to promote peace and harmony in this greatest of all Temples, God's Universe.

Freemasonry has a mission to fulfil, and never was the need of its services greater than to-day. We see all around us painful traces of humanity split up into rival factions, injuring one another in an insane fratricidal struggle—nation against nation, race against race, class against class. The process of recovery, from the ravages of the war is being retarded. The wounds in the bruised body of mankind are

still open and raw. What is the basic cause of this? It is surely due to the fact that each section is thinking only of itself, is seeking its own salvation, regardless of the fate of the rest.

But Brethren, you know that when men attempt to climb a mountain, they are usually tied to each other by a rope. They must accordingly keep together, help one another over the difficult places; then is their progress made surer and safer. Should each, however, try to reach the summit first by disregarding the others, each pulling in his own direction unconcerned about the welfare and safety of the remainder — you can see that disaster is certain. Exactly so is it with mankind. If the world is to recover from the effects of the titanic struggle in which it has been engaged, if men are to rise to loftier heights, it can only be done by a united effort. The ties of brotherhood which link us all together must be felt by us and induce us to mount hand in hand with our fellow-creatures.

Cannot our vast organisation, with its ramifications in all parts of the world, help to bring this healing balm to the wounds of humanity? Cannot Freemasonry do something to impress this vital teaching upon the hearts and minds

of men, so that they may bask in the light of its elevating and inspiring principles? Brethren, we shall best serve the highest cause of Freemasonry, by symbolically constructing the windows of our Lodges after the pattern of the ancient Temple — narrow within and broad without. Then will they radiate far and wide the spirit of peace and fraternity which is the essential pre-requisite to the reconstruction of the world.



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