

**Grand Lodge
Free & Accepted Masons
Of California
Grand Oration 1903**

**Grand Orator
Edward H. Hart
"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"**

Most Worshipful Grand Master and Brethren

"The number three," we are told, "alludes to the three great, Lights of Masonry, the three Degrees of Masonry, and the three principal Officers of the Lodge."

In Masonry and in the universe the number "three" has a far deeper significance, and on all sides do we encounter the mystic triune qualities of three in one. Nature itself is made up of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and immortal man, the crowning work of creation, is formed of body, mind and soul.

The number "three" was the sacred number of the Hindoos, the Egyptians and the Greeks, and throughout the civilized world to-day, and for nineteen hundred years, the Holy Trinity is, and has been, the hallowed essence of the greatest religion ever professed among the race of men.

In Freemasonry "three" is the most mystical of its numbers, in all the rites, no matter how many added grades or degrees there may be the "symbolic three" always lie at the foundation; in all the degrees there are the three principal officers, the three great supports, the three greater and the three lesser lights. The ornaments of a Lodge are three, the lights are three—the movable jewels and the immovable jewels are three each. The principal orders of architecture are three; and of the Fellowcraft it may be stated that his working tools are three, his wages threefold, and the "attentive ear, the "instructive tongue" and the "faithful breast," his three precious jewels.

The principal tenets of Freemasonry are three, and the rounds of the ladder which Jacob in his vision saw reaching from earth to heaven (a Masonic symbol) are likewise three, and the triangle—a combination of three—is the most generally diffused and the most significant of all the Masonic symbols. The right-angled triangle, upon which rests the 47th problem of Euclid, one of our emblems symbolizes as we know universal nature, and the equilateral triangle is found everywhere in Ancient Craft and York Masonry, and in the Ineffable Degrees of the Scottish Rite constitutes the Sacred Delta, and symbolizes Deity with the threefold attributes of Deity—Omniscience, Omnipresence and Omnipotence.

There is still another combination of three, forming a certain philosophy of life, not professed by Masonry among its tenets, nor specifically mentioned in its teachings, yet a philosophy which finds its truest exemplification in Masonry; a philosophy which lives in the spirit of Masonry, breathes and expands and grows in its atmosphere, a philosophy which in its ultimate perfection means the extinguishments of evil and the solution of the problem of human existence, a philosophy which in all ages has been the hope and aspiration of the wise men of the earth, and the dream of the earth's countless down-trodden millions, a philosophy which, though the conception of it had run mad, yet formed the rallying cry of the greatest revolution in the history of the world, a revolution that dethroned three hundred years of tyranny and despotism and oppression, a philosophy that in its final triumph will flood the earth with the benign and radiant light of humanity and love, a philosophy expressed by the three words, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

Freemasonry and liberty go hand in hand, and throughout the world their relations are reciprocal; both germinate in a soil of virtue and forbearance; both are nurtured by the dews of charity and toleration, and both expand and grow in the air and under the sunlight of knowledge and intelligence.

Among the English-speaking people of the earth, the race of greatest virility and the one possessing the highest conception of liberty, civil and religious. Freemasonry is the strongest.

In America, the young giant among the nations of the earth, and foremost in the understanding and regard for the genuine principles of liberty, two-thirds of the Masonic Lodges and two-thirds of the

Masons of the world are found.

It was in England, two centuries ago, that Masonry had its rebirth into the modern speculative system which has since endured, and in England, two centuries ago, John Locke, the celebrated Christian thinker, and Sir Isaac Newton, the profound mathematician and philosopher, were patrons of our Order, and there, fifty years later, John Wesley, the greatest religious reformer of the eighteenth century, wore, as one of us, the lambskin, the ancient and universal badge of a Mason.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, he who lifted highest, since the immortal Shakespeare, the torch of literary achievement, Sir Walter Scott, shed lustre, also, upon the society of Masons, of which he was an honored member; and across the channel, at the same moment, were the kindred and lofty souls of Goethe and Schiller, searchers always for the ideal, who, in answering, as they did, the first question propounded to them, as to all candidates for Masonry who have stood in darkness at our outer door, that what they desired was light, gave not only the key-note of Masonry, but announced, as well, their Gospel and their religion. Light was the quest of their wonderful lives; to gain light—the light of liberty and truth—the chief end and aim of Masonry.

The most enlightened rulers of the most enlightened nations of Europe have been Masons; and, in so far as the principles of Masonry have been reflected in their rule, their governments have been the governments of liberty. Oscar of Sweden, Christian of Denmark and Frederick the Great of Prussia were Masons, and Edward the Seventh of England, who rules today the broadest empire under the sun, the broadest empire that ever existed upon the earth, is a Past Grand Master of our Ancient and Universal Brotherhood.

Napoleon Bonaparte, who sprang from the people, and whose early career was as the champion of his country against its threatened subversion by foreign tyrants, and whose early triumphs were the triumphs of popular liberty, was, at the outset of his career, a Mason, as was also every General and every Marshal of Napoleon's republican army. After lust of conquest had undermined and destroyed his sturdier republican principles, his ambitious designs were first checked through the brilliant naval victories of the peerless British Admiral, Horatio, Lord Nelson, an honored Mason, and he finally met overwhelming ruin and disaster upon the field of Waterloo, where the armies opposed to him were commanded by Masons of renown and courage, Wellington, the Iron Duke, and Von Blucher—the impetuous and brave.

Thus, amid Europe's two hundred years of shifting scenes and struggles, do we find Freemasonry represented by many of the highest minds; do we find it, in the strife, on the side of liberty and light.

What now can be said of the new world? The greatest fact in the history of the human race, and the greatest triumph of liberty, is the American republic, and the American republic was founded by Masons.

One hundred and fifty years ago, August 1st, George Washington as he stood upon the threshold of legal age, was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Fredericksburg Lodge, Virginia, and throughout the remainder of his unexampled life was a constant and consistent Mason; his counselors and advisers all were Masons, and after the struggle for Independence was over, and the French patriot, La Fayette, a brother of the Mystic Circle, had returned to his native land, and desiring to send to the "Father of his Country" some token as evidence of appreciation of his exalted character, he could conceive of no gift more expressive of sublime sentiments than a Masonic scarf and apron embroidered by the hands of Madame La Fayette, and this gift has ever since been preserved as an emblem of the ties of brotherhood that united in their sufferings and struggles the patriots and lovers of liberty of two hemispheres.

The oath of office which inducted George Washington into the exalted station of first President, of the Republic was administered by Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, seventeen years Grand Master of Masons of New York, and one of the foremost men of his commonwealth.

Benjamin Franklin, patriot and philosopher, a man of international reputation, who, of all his countrymen, stood highest at foreign courts, and who, by his skill and diplomacy, wrought such invaluable service to his country in the hour of its deep distress, was not only a Mason, but in 1734 Grand Master of his Masonic brethren of Pennsylvania.

When the struggle for American liberty actually commenced it was Masons everywhere that stood at the fore.

"The Boston Tea Party," which early showed the temper of the Colonists in their resistance to the encroachments of the Crown, was it has been said, an adjourned Masonic Lodge.

Paul Revere, whose midnight ride spread the alarm that aroused the Minute Men, who sprang, as it by magic, to resist the invaders at Lexington and Concord, upon the first battle-fields of the Revolution, was Master of a Boston Lodge of Masons; and the shaft at Bunker Hill not only marks the spot where American patriotism cemented with its blood the first foundation stones of the Republic, but it is also a memorial to Masonic valor, for here General Joseph Warren was consecrated as the first distinguished martyr in the cause of Independence, and at the moment he fell he was not only Grand Master of Masons of the Massachusetts Colonies, but the foremost man of all New England as well.

The fiery Patrick Henry, foremost orator of Virginia, and the high-minded Payton Randolph, first President of the Continental Congress, were Masons, as was also the intrepid Hancock, whose lid signature bidding defiance in its every line, as he did in his every word, to oppressors and Kings, stands at the head of the list of immortals who signed the Declaration of Independence, and the further remarkable circumstance is true that fifty-two of the fifty-two signers of that historic, momentous document, men who did not hesitate to dare to publish to King George their names as revolutionists and enemies of his tyranny, were Masons.

There was no victory in the War of Independence, from Saratoga to Yorktown, that did not shed lustre upon some Masonic name, for all officers, of the Revolutionary army, without an exception, from the rank of Major to Commander-in-Chief, not only those who fought for their native or adopted land, but including, also, those patriot soldiers who came from across the sea to battle in the cause of liberty, were Masons.

And after the struggle for Independence had been won, and the loosely connected and disorganized Colonies were threatened with ruin and disaster because of lack of unity and strength and harmony, they were saved from this direful calamity through the work of that greatest of all deliberative bodies that ever assembled upon the earth, our Constitutional Convention, which, guided by masterful intellects, framed the Constitution of our country, the greatest charter ever drafted by the wisdom of man, and of that convention of fifty-seven members, fifty-four, we are credibly informed, were Masons. Thus is it clearly apparent that the statement that the American Republic was founded by Masons is true.

Let us now call the roll of a few of the distinguished men of our dear Fraternity who have, since the formation of this government, assisted in guiding its destinies.

Alexander Hamilton, Washington's closest and most confidential friend, first Secretary of the Treasury, the most astute master of the science of government, and the greatest conservative statesman that this, or any other country, ever produced.

Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, zealous advocate of popular rights and liberties.

James Madison, efficient and capable Executive, who guided the Republic through the Second War of Independence.

James Monroe, clear-sighted, discerning and intelligent, President during the era of "good-will," promulgator of the greatest and most enduring tenet of American International policy and law.

John Marshall, thirty-four years Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, who, by his vast wisdom, his masterful understanding, and his inflexible moral courage, wrought into form and power the Constitutional system of the new nation, and gave to the supreme judicial tribunal of his country a dignity and a character and a standing unmatched by any Court of Justice in the world.

Andrew Jackson, brave and intrepid soldier, courageous and determined leader, revered party chieftain, and especially honored and beloved as the Grand Master of his Masonic brethren of Tennessee.

Henry Clay, that other popular idol, gifted orator, creative genius, gracious and winning personality, well nigh worshiped by his followers, and counted by the Grand Lodge of Masons of Kentucky as its most brilliant and honored Grand Master.

Stephen A. Douglas, first Grand Orator of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, intellectual giant, untarnished by his contact with the world, whose patriotism and love of country, as the guiding stars of his career, shone brightest in the midnight of his disappointed hopes.

And in the more recent days, after the clouds of Civil War had passed, when good men and true were divided, brother against brother, each battling, as he believed, in the cause of liberty, we find as chief of our chastened and once more united land, the scholarly and eloquent Garfield, brave in his life, exalted and heroic in his death, who, in the moment of our country's darkest tragedy, had stood before the frenzied multitude, and, proclaiming that "Golf reigns," calmed the storm and dispelled the tempest of unrest.

And then, still later, the beloved McKinley, luminous and broad minded statesman, wise and sagacious ruler, generous and kindly nature, invested in his life with the wreath of victory, crowned in his death with the light of glory.

And now, last but not least, the strong, aggressive, honest, adequate, present patriotic President of these United States, Theodore Roosevelt.

Of all these men it may be said that each one in his time, clad in the rough raiment of humility, stood knocking at our outer door; each was brought from darkness and saw in Masonry the light of humanity and liberty.

Masonry favors freedom; it has ever, frowned upon force. It recognizes that the superior mind is impelled to high action by motives springing from within rather than by influence or force exerted from without. It will never be propagated by proselyting; no man was ever asked to become a Mason, and no one was ever born a Mason, or confirmed as such, before he possessed the intelligence to object. No one ever approached the portal of Freemasonry and sought admission, save of his own volition, and upon his solemn declaration that he was actuated solely by the high opinion he had conceived of the institution.

Masonry, devoted to liberty, has never denied freedom to others. It has never striven to fetter thought, and no' prisons builded by its malice, or to restrain those who have differed from its views, stand along its pathway.

It has never been guilty of intolerance or persecution, and has never, while reveling in greed and luxury, ruined homes or confiscated the property of unbelievers.

It has not branded as outcasts those who have denied its tenets or authority, nor has it presumed to consign to bottomless perdition their undying souls. It has never seared with heated irons, nor torn upon the racks, nor broken upon the wheel, nor burned quivering at the stake, those who have dared to doubt its dogmas. No! Freemasonry's course in history has never been darkened by direful, dreadful deeds, but its progress has ever been illumined by blazing beacons of beneficence. It has ever borne aloft the torch of truth, and has produced, as has been shown, the most illustrious examples that history affords of men devoted to the sublime ideals of human freedom; and to its genuine appreciation of the true spirit of liberty. It adds the only adequate conception, found upon the earth, of equality and fraternity, and upon the perfection of these depends the final blending and harmonizing of society.

All men in Masonry meet, we are taught, upon the level, upon the footing of absolute equality, and the doctrine which affirms that all men are created equal finds in Masonry, if anywhere, an intelligent Interpretation, for among the members of the human family there is not now, there never has been, and there never can or will be equality of mind or manners, of strength or stamina, of privilege or position, of opening or opportunity, of riches or rewards, of alms or ambitious of character or conscience or of any one of the thousand other conditions and qualities that unite to make a man. All men are eternally and everlastingly unequal; but in our American Republic all men before the law stand, in theory at least, upon a footing absolutely alike.

In addition to this fundamental principle, there is in Masonry the recognition of still another standard of equality erected by original founders and rulers of the Order that is of deeper significance, if possible, than equality before the law, and that is equal in the element of industry.

In the speculations of Masonry, during the hours of labor, though the character of the work performed by different individual may differ, all are presumed to be employed. The stability of society and the safety of the state rest upon industry. Idleness means decay and death, as is proven by the wrecks of nations strewn along pathway of history. And equality, in its final solution, demands that all men in the hour of their strength shall toil.

Solon of Athens proclaims the philosophy, "Know thyself." A modern philosopher has said, "To know thyself is impossible; know rather thy work, and do it." Usefulness, action, the possession of an aim in life, and striving laudably to attain it, constitute the footing of equality upon which all men should, and in Masonry do, stand.

No man should dare—or, if he dare, be permitted—to eat the bread of idleness, and every man should be equal, in all places on this earth, as he is in the philosophy of Masonry, in the right to use his own exaltation and advancement and glory, so long as the rights of others are not infringed, the talent that is his; and whether that talent be as the blazing sun at noonday, or as the dim flicker of light from the Eskimo's hut in the Arctic midnight, it should be absolutely his to use free from alarm or awe, fear or force, dictate or decree, imposed by others.

The secrets of a Master Mason, which the ruffians of Tyre, in the darkness of their natures, sought unlawfully to obtain, did not consist of ancient cabalistic words, or signs, or tokens, nor of anything akin to the modern duly certified statements of union standing, but rather of inward illumination and light, resulting in outward proved proficiency and skill, touched to ultimate perfection by the imparted wisdom of the Masters, and the ability of those operative Masons of the ancient and medieval world to "travel foreign countries, work and receive Master Mason's wages," arose, not because of the gracious permission of any one on earth, nor because of union seals and signatures, but because of their ability and knowledge, a knowledge that built St. Peter's at Rome, the seat of the Supreme Pontiff himself, and carried the art (afterwards almost lost) of ecclesiastical architecture to a degree of beauty and perfection not attained, or even attempted, in modern times.

Admission to the Ancient Craft was based then, as now, upon the desire and worthiness of the applicant, not upon compulsion, nor as a prerequisite to earning wages; it was then, as now, a high and mighty privilege to be a Mason.

Masonry has ever revered and dignified toil; it had its beginning—whether we accept the dictum of history or of tradition—at a place of toil, but it never overlooked that other law, that the hand is not the only creator of wealth, and that labor has advanced only in proportion as it has become intelligent.

He who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow is, in our teaching, as much entitled to respect and honor as he—and not necessarily any more than he—who rules an empire, and enjoys with him an equality of fraternity and friendship, of recognition and regard.

Character is the test of admission and standing. Character is the essence of Masonry, and wherever found, whether in the lowly or in the high, character is that which commands an equality of respect, of admiration and of esteem.

And in the portentous problems which may sometime in the future confront our country, and perhaps menace its safety, Freemasonry, with its superb strength and poise, its consistency and conservatism, and its magnificent conceptions of equality, based, not upon force, but upon character, will be the mighty and potential influence in their safe solution.

As Masonry recognizes the equality of all who toil, so also does it recognize that higher and loftier principle of equality, the ennobling and uplifting comradeship and companionship of woman.

In those places upon earth where Lodges are not permitted to meet women are bearers of burden; they are looked upon as inferiors and treated with contumely and contempt. Masonry exalts woman, and, above all other institutions upon earth, honors and reveres her; and about the wife, daughter, mother, sister and widow-places, as Master Masons alone understand and can tell, the sacred mantle of protection.

The chivalrous knight of old drew his sword in defense of his honor, his faith and his fair maid, and in like manner the valiant and magnanimous Templar of today vows to bare his blade as the defender, the preserver and champion of innocence and honor.

"No man," it has been said, "ever rose to the dizzy heights of fame but felt the touch of some good woman's palm." Few men attain the heights of fame, but many men, through the influence of true and gentle woman, attain what is of vastly more importance, the heights of moral rectitude and honor, and no man ever lifted his purposes or desires, his aspirations or his hopes, but felt beside him the form or presence of some good woman pointing upward.

Masonry may be entitled to admiration and applause because of its high conception of the true spirit of liberty. Masonry may be vastly valued and esteemed because of its genuine

appreciation of the dignity of toil and of the equality of character wherever found; but, above all, Masonry is honored and exalted in its reverence and regard for the name of the nobility and the character of woman.

And now for the final element in Freemasonry—the principle of Fraternity.

Fraternity is broader than friendship. It is to the race, to the whole human family, what friendship is to the individual. It means lightening the burdens of the weak, softening the hardships of the unfortunate, sharing the tribulations and trials of the afflicted. It means the touch of compassion and sympathy in the ever-widening circle of human consideration and kindness. It means what was spoken by the Heavenly Host nineteen hundred years ago—"On earth, peace, good-will toward men." It is that which makes clear the truth that what this world needs is not more religion, but more humanity; not more of men of whom it can be said, "They loved the Lord," but more men who can ask the angel to say of them, as did Abou Ben Adhem to say of him, "I pray thee, then, write me as one who loves his fellow-men."

He who cultivates fraternity, and spreads its principles, is doing more to inaugurate the era of universal peace than he who preaches or proclaims any other creed or doctrine upon earth.

Life is a struggle, and, as presented to the vast majority of man-kind, a struggle almost for existence, and not infrequently does it appear to the individual as a strife, where every one has regard for himself alone, with no thought for others, indifferent even though his own advancement inflict irreparable injury upon those about him.

Notwithstanding these facts, there is in mankind, even it often latent and obscured, "the one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin," and let us believe that this "touch of nature" is the ever living spirit of human fellowship, the essence of which is our great Masonic precept of brotherly love, a precept from which is evolved a principle of action that develops the mental and moral character of the individual, a principle of action that folds the sympathetic cloak about those in suffering and distress, a principle of action that whispers words of encouragement and cheer to those oppressed a>y trials and troubles, and within the shadows of doubt and darkness, a principle of action that dries the tears of the widow and the orphan, extends about them the strong arm of friendship, and with gentle tenderness warms to life the heart over which anguish and bereavement have cast their chilling breath.

Love is the essential element of fraternity, and how and where love is placed points unerringly to man's true nature, and when rightly directed this is the element that inspires to noblest action, and lifts character to its highest level. It is the element of which it may be said that nothing is fuller or better or stronger, nothing more unselfish or courageous. It is that which feels no burden, sees no faults, and, in its mission for others, knows no trouble. It is that which reveals to man the truth that the chief aim in life is usefulness, and that the "world beautiful," like what we are told of the Kingdom of Heaven, is within. It is the sun of life, by which alone the choicest fruits and flowers of character and achievement are brought to maturity, and what was stated by an eminent thinker finds recognition in our observation and experience, that "flowing through the earth like streams amid desert sands, shining in life's darkest night, like stars in a wintry sky, throwing a bright bow of promise over every cloud of fortune to love, more than anything else, does this world owe what of happiness it enjoys."

Throughout the system of Freemasonry the central Idea of Fraternity is always present, and finds its expression in significant terms of affectionate equality, from the "brother" of the Blue Lodge to the "frater" of the Commandery of Knights Templar.

The leaven of brotherhood disseminated by Freemasonry and kindred organizations, and permeating the social fabric in America and wherever else liberty of conscience and conduct is permitted, is perhaps the greatest of all factors within the body politic in the promotion of the safety and stability of society and in raising man-kind to the heights of genuine humanity; its action is constant and unceasing, its power cannot be gainsaid or denied, and its influence for good is immeasurable and boundless.

The brotherhood of man, ideal and complete, will be the last and final condition that will be arrived at by the race in its process of finite evolution. What lies beyond, man may speculate upon; he cannot solve. This, however, it is possible for him to know: that whatever his profession of religious faith may be, whenever the • Se of high unselfishness of character and love of humanity (the elements of fraternity) is attained, the essence within him that endures is triumphant, and must arise to unceasing life and light.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the rallying cry of the human race, is typified by the great earth itself, the kindly mother of us all.

The mountains, lifting their chaste and mighty crests into high empyreans, first of all the earth to be crowned with the golden halo of the morn and upon whose glistening pinnacles the glories of the decending sun are last to rest, as the curtain of the closing day is dropped in silence upon the world, typify the pure, lofty unfettered spirit of liberty. —

The water, springing from the mountain sides, and spreading like a benediction over all the earth, carrying life and munificence and blessing and finding rest at last in the level of the shining sea, typify that all embracing principle of equality, which, from its beginning among the crags and heights of the struggle won liberty, moves surely and irresistibly forward to arrive finally at the vast ocean of the recognized equality of all mankind. —

And the benignant universal principle of Fraternity is typified by the bounteous and beneficent soil upon which life alone exists, and from which it springs upward to the right, the soil spread by the Almighty as the last and supreme touch of divine favor and omnipotence over the barren and forbidding rocks, after the completion of the earth's millions of years of preparation for the reception of Man, — its foreshadowed possessor and king. —

And thus, finally, is the mission of Freemasonry to cultivate this Soil of Fraternity to the end that all who live upon the earth may share in equal part the fragrant blossoms of life's gentler amenities, and partake equally in the ripened and sustaining fruits of liberty, humanity and love.