

**Grand Lodge  
Free & Accepted Masons  
Of California  
Grand Oration 1912**

**Grand Orator  
James A. Foshay  
"Temple and Character Building"**

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Wardens and Brethren of the Grand Lodge

This has been a year of astounding prosperity. The Great Author of nature, the Grand Master of the universe as well as of ourselves, has dealt with us richly and bountifully. It has been a year of wonderful development in all the sciences and in all that goes to make up the sum total of happiness; and to prepare humanity for the great achievements to come.

We are pleased to have this session of the Grand Lodge in our sunny Southland, where nature so lavishly bestows upon us everything for our comfort and happiness. You are welcome to our hearts, to our homes. May your coming bring to you no less of pleasure than to us of inspiration.

This afternoon I would be to you a Spencer, of far-reaching philosophy, and a Xenophon, intensely practical, but my wish, I know, is vain—

"I am no orator as Brutus is,  
For I have neither wit nor words nor worth,  
Action nor utterance nor the power of speech,  
To stir men's blood."

Yet I am proud to occupy this station, so greatly honored by men who have held it before me, and who have left to us a rich inheritance of wisdom and of grace.

**TEMPLE AND CHARACTER BUILDING.**

We read in the Holy Writings that it was decreed in the wisdom and counsels of Deity aforetime that a house should be built, erected to God and dedicated to His holy name. "And Solomon selected 70,000 men to bear burdens, and 80,000 men to hew in the mountains, and 3300 men to oversee them." This vast army of workmen of more than 153,000 was divided into companies, as best fitted their special qualifications. "And Solomon sent to Hiram, King of Tyre, saying, 'Send me now, therefore, a man cunning to work in gold and in silver, and in brass and in iron, and in purple and crimson and blue. Send me also cedar trees and fir trees and algum trees out of Lebanon.' Then the King of Tyre sent a cunning man; and cut the wood out of Lebanon, which was brought in floats by sea to Joppa." This account marks the beginning of a great structure, at a time held by many as the date of the beginning of what is now known as the Order of Free and Accepted Masons.

This structure, perhaps the most wonderful in the world's history, was known as King Solomon's Temple, and to it Masons have turned for many ages for examples in operative masonry. We are told that the stones were hewn, squared, marked, and numbered in the quarries; that the trees were felled and prepared in the forests, and that the work was so carefully planned by the architects and builders that the building was put together without sound of axe, hammer or any tool of iron. What a wonderful description is this of silent yet marvelous workings with most stupendous results, yet without noise or confusion!

The material was so carefully planned and finished that every part fitted into its place with exact nicety. The material of which Masonry is composed should be selected and prepared as carefully. As the Temple was a wonderful scientific and mechanical structure, such should be in the moral world the body of the teachings of the institution of Masonry, whose tenets have been transmitted through the ages, and which for ages shall continue to endure. The wisdom, which brought into being our great fraternity is beyond our power to fathom, and may we not believe that the Great Architect of the Universe ever has had in mind the welfare and best interests of

Masonry? The same wisdom, which designed our moral and spiritual edifice, will maintain it to bless mankind.

Masonry always has been synonymous with building. It is true righteousness built into character, which is the grandest and best of structures. The work of the initiate is that of a builder—he is building a great temple of human character. It does not have to deal with bad men and endeavor to make such good, for they are supposed to be good at the beginning, but it makes good men better.

In art and symmetry, the Temple was a triumph of the human mind. It stood unrivaled, an inspiration to every beholder. So must the spiritual temple stand in its moral beauty and adornment as the mystic creation of Him whom we all delight to serve.

In selecting material for our Spiritual Temple we must see that we are not misled by title, position, wealth or profession. We must demand something higher, nobler and better than these. A man to fill a place in the Temple of Masonry should be intelligent, that he may understand its teachings; he should be social and fraternal, that he may enjoy the companionship of his brethren; he should be unselfish, that he may practise charity; he should be scrupulously honest; he should be broad-minded, ready to appreciate the deep lessons taught in the several degrees. Perhaps one of the greatest deficiencies in the material from which we build the moral, Masonic edifice is ignorance of the high moral ground, which should be occupied by every Mason. Craftsmen must be able not only to read the designs on the trestle board, but they must be able to carry them into effect. They must have the efficient knowledge before they can attempt to teach it to others.

The first lesson taught in Masonry is "To be good and true," and this fundamental principle is emphasized in every stage of the progress of the initiate. It is the foundation upon which Masonry is established, and upon which its stability and perpetuity depend. In Masonry is no place for contention, but always there is room for emulation among "who best can work and best agree"; where a mild and beautiful influence for good reaches out into the world and betters all mankind, by making all nations purer and all life sweeter.

The building of King Solomon's Temple is emblematic of the formation of character. Man's character is being formed daily and hourly; silently, unobserved by himself and others, yet surely. Much of this silent up building takes place in the home, where the child from infancy receives the shaping that determines his character and makes him the true man. Then there is the silent influence of the school, marvel-oils in its effects. There is the bible school and the church, influences woven and interwoven until at last the beautiful Temple of Manhood comes into existence, and the man so formed in silence becomes a tower of strength in the world, and in his world—the community in which he lives.

It is the duty of the Master Mason to see that the first impressions of the entered apprentice are correct; that he is admonished to act honorably and decently, to deal honestly by, and justly with, all man-kind. Yet not withstanding these admonitions. Masons may find competition similar in the lodge to that found in the general business world.

Masonry cannot be properly understood or appreciated without necessary proficiency in the degrees as the candidate advances, and this should involve knowledge of more than the Ritual; it should include the divine truths and precepts of Masonry, its history and the purposes for which it was instituted and has been maintained for all these centuries. Intimately connected with the different branches of equipment should be the provision of a Masonic library, where the; Mason can have opportunity to enlarge his mental culture and secure the knowledge necessary for advancement and accomplishment.

We live in a jurisdiction whose outlook for the future is very bright. With the completion of the Panama Canal, bringing to us a mass of foreigners who must be made true American citizens, and with the peace policies of President Taft influencing our line of thought, a great commercial growth necessarily will come to this State. It should be guided by those who fully realize that a national growth must be founded upon morality, and they themselves should be willing to render the services of citizenship.

In the early history of our country, conditions were different; cities and great corporations and the fierce competition which has transformed commerce into industrial warfare, -were unknown. Now, one of the greatest questions before us is, How shall we care for the hundreds of thousands—aye, millions of people who come to our shores from foreign lands? In many cases

these people know nothing of obedience to authority, are not considerate of new conditions; and it is the silent influence which must aid in giving to them a training in true American citizenship. There must be developed in them some-thing more than a proper sense of responsibility and obedience to authority an esprit de corps of the highest order, which shall militate for civic righteousness and moral culture.

If we are to meet the demands of California, our responsibilities are stupendous. There must be a unification of all moral forces to counter-act the movement of evil in our country. Our Order has helped to produce many great men, who have done their part and left their inspiration to those who are now on the scene of action. Let it be known to all, forever, that Masonry stands for the development of the individual, of his integrity and personal worth, and that it will meet its responsibilities to the full.

As the wonderful temple was reared silently but systematically, and when it was perfect in its completeness was dedicated to the worship of God, so Masonry at that time, while operative, was symbolical also; and the lessons from the trowel, the square and the compass are that we shall build into character that which is for the highest, noblest and best.

While it is not ours to visit the forests where those timbers were hewn and marked, nor the quarries where the stones were squared and numbered, nor can we explore the regions about Mt. Moriah, or the site of the great Temple itself, yet we may visit the places where the living material is being prepared for our moral, Masonic edifice, and fully realize how our characters must be formed, that we may become perfect pilasters and columns in our time-honored and mighty institution. Character is higher than intellect, but the training of intellect in the lodge room greatly helps toward the formation of character. In the building of character, let us take care to see that material and workmanship are of the best,

"In the elder days of Art  
Builders wrought with greatest care  
Each minute and unseen part;  
For the gods see everywhere."

It is our duty to take the rough ashlar—the entered apprentice—to note his possibilities and capabilities, and to assist him quietly and steadily to overcome self, to govern his appetites and passions, to realize that he is a moral being, fit to attain his highest ambitions if he obey the dictates of his better conscience, and thus to become an exemplar of one of the greatest of institutions, whose noble influences and noble deeds have merited the admiration of the world.

It is our duty to teach carefully the seeker after truth as he passes through the several stages and receives the degrees, and to unfold to him the deep, underlying principles and truths of Masonry. We must not think that the work is accomplished when a member receives his full initiation, but we should assist in training him toward the highest ideals, which it is our privilege to have. It is the silent force, which makes for good citizenship and leads man to fulfill his highest and best mission. If our work does not make the brother stronger and better, and more fully prepare him to face the world, we have failed.

All men look forward to a ripe old age, in full possession of their powers. We are admonished to be temperate and properly to care for our bodies—to be temperate in eating and drinking, in work and recreation, but more especially to avoid strong drink. The great literary master says:

"Though I look old, yet am I strong and lusty,  
For in my youth I never did apply  
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;  
Nor did not with unabashed forehead woo  
The means of weakness and debility;  
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,  
Frosty but kindly."

Masonry makes for character by precept and example. Each Mason should build in himself a temple of imperishable character by living the lessons that are taught in the lodge room. As the

entered apprentice is placed in the northeast corner of the lodge ready to begin his work of preparation, so in life should he be placed in a moral environment, under the 'teachings of the Holy Bible and the guidance of divine leadership, and so should his character be formed. By working in harmony with the laws of nature, and the moral environment which surrounds him, a Mason grows into a true, upright, moral man, and fulfils his duty to be a strong, living force, and to exert a power for good in the world.

Think, if you please, of the silent influences, which are woven into the characters of men through music, decorative art, beautiful architecture—all silently working together to make true men. The standard of beauty and truth set for us in the Holy Writings inspires the beautiful works and sublime melodies of the musician, and we are lifted out of ourselves in the comprehension of the beautiful symphonies and oratorios of the great masters.

In the cities of the Old World civic administrators realize the necessity of positive training in morality and the rights and duties of citizenship. These can be taught to some degree in the schools and colleges, but the teaching must be forwarded in such organizations and societies as our own. The emphasis placed upon such teachings by this fraternity compares, in some instances, to the zeal shown in parts of the world by religious enthusiasts. Men who are leaders are be-ginning so to vitalize the subject of moral growth and training that the people receive inspiration, and are assisted to grow into true man-hood. Formal instruction in ethics and morality, unless vitalized and humanized, is of little value; we must see to it that this vitalizing and humanizing is a part of our accomplishment.

In some of the countries of the Old World, especially in England, France and Germany, associations of men of wealth and education are devoting themselves to the unfolding of the deep mysteries of Masonry. It matters little, however, what further revelation the future may have in store, for we already well know the fundamental truths, the strength and support of Masonry, the foundation upon which stands the ever-lasting Temple.

We are unable to trace the descent of our Order from the original temples of Egypt, Asia, and Europe, but we can safely assume that Masonic teachings, as given us today, are perpetuated in symbols and characters, which have been recorded from time immemorial. The great Masonic library in the Temple of the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction of Scottish Rite Masons, with more than 10,000 volumes on Masonic subjects and history, gives to us some idea of the immense amount of labor and thought which have been devoted by men of education, culture, and refinement to the production of Masonic literature. Books, though silent, speak with the tongues of men and the learning of the great philosophers. We are permitted to enjoy the society of the brilliant intellects of other ages, and to profit by the results of their labors.

In the formation of character, much depends upon the influence of environment. It, therefore, is the duty of intelligent, moral men to assist in making Masonic environment for the community such, that it shall fill this ideal purpose.

Society exists because men always have realized that security comes from union, and that each must give to the collective body something from himself as an individual. The silent influences of our temple should so enforce this principle that our citizenship shall rise high and higher in the moral, social, and intellectual scale. Macaulay said, "Logicians may reason about abstractions, but the great mass of men must have images." Then let us see that every stimulus to the imagination shall serve the highest purpose.

One reason why the general tone of our citizenship is not higher is because our people have not seriously attempted the proper training of our young men, so that they may enter upon life with clean bodies and clean minds. We well may look back to take lessons from Sparta, Athens and Rome, and accept from them the ideals which they held in regard to their young men. Ian MacLaren, in his "Young Barbarians," gives this prayer: "Lord, keep the laddies before Thee from cheating, lying and cowardice—which are of the devil. Be pleased to put common sense in their heads and Thy fear in their hearts, and give them to be honest all the days of their lives." This well may be adopted as the prayer of our active men, because it sums up much of the teachings, which have come to us through Masonry.

Masonry represents altruism and optimism; its philosophy and teachings cause us to see with prophetic eye into the future. But we are living in a world of commercialism, of chance and change, of materialism and utilitarianism, and because of this we should emphasize the finer teachings of this institution, and point our young men to their opportunities of forwarding in quiet

and helpfulness the work of our society. Masonry should be synonymous with civic righteousness and good citizenship. When lessons are taught and charges given, let them ever carry with them the great import, which the authors intended.

Our nation, our government, our social fabric depend in a very large degree upon the protection and chastity of women. We, as Masons, ever should stand ready to protect our wives, sisters and daughters, and we should go farther and defend woman because she is a woman. To be honest in this we must maintain that purity of life ourselves that will commend us to our brethren and to the community in which we live.

Masonry should offer aid and leadership to the study of the questions of sex education and sex hygiene now engaging the attention not only of the people in general, but of the schools as well; a study that I believe is destined to revolutionize conditions and make for man's future welfare and happiness.

Prostitution is not only seriously affecting men in the lower scale of life—those we term wicked—but it is contaminating innocent people as well, by causing paralysis, deformed children, insanity and mental decay. It is time that we, as intelligent, stalwart, moral men should lend support in some way to this movement to prevent moral and physical degeneration. Statistics show that syphilis and gonorrhea, two great venereal evils, are responsible for the threatening decay of our people, while according to the statement of Dr. Morrow, of New York, "Social tradition holds that it is a greater violation of conventional propriety publicly to mention this infection (gonorrhea) than privately to contract it and carry it home to the family."

I have seen the statement that the greatest contributing factor to the social evil is men, and while we are spending large sums on rescue homes, or endeavoring to check the vices by bringing the girls into juvenile courts, we seem to lose sight of the fact that the remedy of this great evil lies with men. By dealing with men and not with women, we can settle this great problem.

Man must be true. His duty to his friends, his faith to, himself and his God demands that he keep his body clean and pure. The call is to right living, the formation of true character, and all should be enabled to say,

"My strength is as the strength of ten  
Because my heart is pure."

We shall reach the high moral plane, which is just before us because it is our ideal and our inheritance. The members of our great fraternity, that grand army of noble men, should stand by its counsels and reflect its teachings in their deportment and conversation—to extend the true fraternal spirit and to be honest in their dealings.

It means much to a young Mason when he realizes that the officers and leaders of his lodge stand well in the community; that they are men who can be trusted; that they do not lie and cheat; and that no charge of chicanery, graft, or mismanagement is ever laid at their doors. If young Masons find that those whom they are supposed to obey as their leaders are not honest and do not exemplify true courtesy and right living, they are likely to become cynical and skeptical regarding our loved society. Let us, as men and Masons, ever be jealous of the good name and seek to promote the best interests of Masonry. Where devotion to its ideals exists, Masonry greatly promotes true moral character. One of its lessons that we must learn is to commit ourselves to the ends of benevolence, not in impulsive acts or spasmodic displays of generosity, but in those, which come from the growth, which generous impulses build into true manhood. The great work of our institution is to train its members toward the ends of benevolence.

For there is much of selfishness in the world, encouraged by our general acceptance of the competitive idea in our efforts for achievement. The spirit of mankind seems to favor the tearing down of one to build up another; but we as Masons should say to the community by our actions that we believe in a nobler policy, in seeking to elevate the whole body of our people, and in helping to make them all useful citizens. How much harm has been done in the world because of selfish ambition! Let us help to develop that type of man who will not prey upon his fellows for his own advantage. What is needed today, in and out of Masonry, is a vision of a spiritual ideal and strength for the accomplishment of great things in the moral world. History shows us that whenever moral ideals are not emphasized civilization suffers, and while we ponder the maxims

of philosophers and psychologists let us not forget that the highest text book of ethics is the Great Book, which ever is open on the altar when a Masonic lodge is in session. Let co-operation take the place of competition, and let all work together for that, which is highest, noblest and best. We, as a nation, must build; for a stronger race of men, physically, morally and intellectually, but above all we must establish character, the result of education and training, as the foundation of our Temple.

The ever-increasing complexity of our economic conditions, and the race to get rich, makes it more and more difficult for thinking men, who realize the necessity, to build for the future that which shall assist in creating a moral environment and in emphasizing the principles of right living, so that the integrity and prosperity of our country may be properly safeguarded. The influence of the love of money has reached those who have been honored with positions of confidence and power, and even in these days of prosperity, in practically all parts of the world, it threatens to destroy our civil liberty and undermine our institutions. It seems to push aside our higher, purer and better motives. But, brethren, let us see to it that there shall be altars in this jurisdiction alone, and more in the coming years, from which brotherly love, relief and truth shall be exalted far above the love of money.

We all seem bent on becoming rich, not realizing that wealth, of itself, has no moral or intellectual value or uplifting influence. It is beneficial to us only as it serves high ideals and noble purposes, as it makes conditions better for the individual and for society. If used to improve physical conditions and the general environment of our people in State and Nation, the possession of it should be encouraged, otherwise not. When it is used to 'lift up the fallen, and to bring all man-kind into one vast fraternity, then it shows us that there is

"One God, one law, one element,  
One far-off, divine event  
To which the whole creation moves."

The tongue is an unruly member, often used in repeating that which is derogatory to the good name of a brother or a fellow man. We must not be content simply to confer degrees, to permit men to go out with no teaching except that which they receive when the degrees are conferred. They must be taught the true, deep, underlying principles of Masonry. We must emphasize the cultivation of self-control in our members, so that each one may have an independence and individuality of character that will never accept for himself false or arbitrary standards.

As our institution has hitherto flourished because of the results it has brought about in promoting the general good of mankind, so should we of today continue to share with the world that light which we receive in the lodge room. A Master Mason should be thoroughly impressed with the responsibility of high station and deep knowledge.

Masonry often has been misunderstood and misrepresented because it has been confused with religion. It is religious in its teachings, but does not profess to be a religion. It never has claimed to be a religion, and it is very unfortunate that occasionally a Mason says, "It is a good enough religion for me." Religion has been defined as "a belief binding the spiritual nature of man to a Supernatural Being upon whom he is conscious he is dependent, and the practice and duties growing out of such belief." The Christian church, in general, sustains a very friendly attitude toward Masonry. Masonry in no way assumes the functions or takes the place of the church, and none of its ceremonies suggests the supplanting of any of the sacraments of the church. The church is waging a great battle against all sorts of dishonesty, wrong, in-justice, and infidelity, and so is Masonry. The quiet, steady, active influences of Masonry are needed to aid the church and assist in fighting wrongdoing and in building up character. The church and Masonry are doing parallel work. They are as the rails of the railway, running side by side; they bridge the same rivers and chasms; they tunnel the same rugged mountains; they extend side by side across the broad plains; they ascend the same heights; and at last may they together enter the beautiful city that hath foundations and whose Maker and Builder is God.

God ever has revealed Himself more powerfully and clearly through the symbols of nature than through the works of man. With us constantly are the examples of the wonderful works of God—our own world, with its myriads of stars, its golden clouds, its beautiful flora and interesting

fauna, its magnificent mountains and delightful valleys— these numberless wonders speak to us silently, emphatically and reverently of Him who holds all things in His care and keeping.

The improvement of character, the systematic fraternal work, the promotion of virtue, all should be results of Masonry. The invisible part of Masonry is the spirit, which animates and pervades the lodge rooms, in manifestation of the vital, active principles that have been emphasized through the ages. Let us realize that the ritualistic work, the forms, ceremonies, signs and lectures, the visible part of Masonry, are simply for the purpose of teaching and developing these very principles, that secret of vitality and power that has made Masonry what it is through all the generations past, and shall maintain it for generations to come.

We are proud of our country and of the patriotism of our people, but let us not forget that the highest patriotism is that men shall live for their country as well as die for it. It is the daily living of a devoted life that makes the patriot and the hero. We, as men, must cherish high ideals, believe in them, and act them. As King Solomon first dreamed of his wonderful temple and afterward built it, so should we dream of that which is morally elevating and spiritually uplifting, and then build it into our noble Masonic edifice.

We are in the midst of an unexampled political campaign. We are hearing daily conflicting statements as to the conditions of our country, its finances and its outlook. Orators draw us first one way and then another. Each party endeavors to show that whatever it does is right, and whatever its opponents do is wrong. There necessarily is confusion in the affairs of the outside world because of the conflict of convictions. But if we follow our God-given model, the Temple, in building the character of ourselves and our fraternity, there can be no differences of opinion among us, for the standard set in the building of the great Temple, the standard which should be our own, is the perfect standard set by Him who sees and understands all conditions, to whom is no possibility of error or of wrong.

"The crest and crowning of all good,  
Life's final star is brotherhood;  
For it will bring again to earth  
Her long-lost poesy and mirth,  
Will send new light on every face,  
A kingly power upon the race;  
And, till it comes, we men are slaves,  
And travel downward to the dust of graves.  
Come, clear the way, then; clear the way,  
Blind creeds and kings have had their day;  
Break the dead branches from the path—  
Our hope is in the aftermath—  
Our hope is in heroic men,  
Star-led to build the world again.  
To this event the ages ran;  
Make way for Brotherhood—make way for Man."

Brethren, let us as individuals awaken to the consciousness of our responsibilities, the possibilities and glorious opportunities for the building and development of true, moral character.