

**Grand Lodge
Free & Accepted Masons
Of California
Grand Oration 1932**

**Grand Orator
Oakley K. Morton**

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Officers and Brethren of Grand Lodge

I am not unmindful of the fact that you have suffered me this day to stand where many honorable men have stood. With pleasure we have listened to their eloquence as they reached into the archives of memory and unfolded before our minds the philosophy of Masonry. I, too, have thought that I might take you on a journey from Babylon up the beautiful Euphrates, thence westward by Tadmor in the wilderness, and from thence down through the corridor of time to the present hour. Such a theme has all the alluring beauties of a sorceress, and the story when told is much like the vision of Mirza. Or I might have chosen to take up the story of the trade schools established by Numa, second king of Rome, who reigned from 716 to 672 B. C., followed the mystic story of Masonry along the ever widening and deepening stream of the civil law as it flowed on down through the ages, stepped aside a moment to see an intellectual Hebrew Hercules baffle and confound the Roman governors and listen to his eloquence as he stood upon Mars Hill delivering the most daring and powerful oration recorded in the history of man. But I have selected a less pleasing theme and more difficult task. Less pleasing, because I shall endeavor to point out that, as Masons, we have a duty to perform vital to the life of the Republic in which we live, and more difficult because I shall seek to show that Masonry is a Battle and not a Dream. From the Babylonian captivity to the present hour the great eternal conflict between right and wrong has never ceased. Why were the chosen people of God suffered to be thus carried away? Was it not because they had forgotten the God of their fathers? Did not Zedekiah refuse the aid and deny the existence of Jehovah; and was not his Kingdom and the Temple destroyed, the holy vessels carried away and his people driven into captivity? In the very beginning of our Masonic life the Bible is given to us as the rule and guide of our faith and we are taught that it is to be the great light in our profession; we are told that in it we will learn the important duties which we owe to God, our neighbor, and ourselves. To God, by never mentioning His name but with that awe and reverence which are due from the creature to His creator; by imploring His aid in all our lawful undertakings, and by looking up to Him in every emergency for comfort and support. We are also taught that Masonry is calculated to impress deeply upon our minds a firm belief in the existence and attributes of a Supreme Being, and that we should have a due reverence for His great and sacred name. Such are the teachings of Masonry, and every one who takes the obligation is bound by those teachings. The eternal laws of God are written into the heart of the universe, and the entire world is ruled and guided by those laws. For our guidance He has laid down only such laws as were founded in those relations of justice that existed in the nature of things antecedent to the laws of Moses or any written law or precept. These are the immutable laws of good and evil, and they are written by the finger of God upon the heart of man and shall remain eternal and unchangeable for the guidance of humanity throughout all future time.

In those days of long ago there came the wave that caused the loss of faith in God, and when faith went out, fear moved in. For centuries thereafter, want and crime and cruelty and fear spread their blighting curse over the race. In the beginning of the sixteenth century Martin Luther kindled the fires of reason, burned away the burdens of ignorance and superstition and planted the seeds of hope and faith in the hearts and minds of the human family. The lightning of his intellect flashed across the dark, threatening clouds of doubt and unbelief, and the rumbling thunder of the Reformation was heard in the distance. From out the terrific storm that followed came the American Republic.

Our forefathers founded this Republic on the unlimited suffrage of the millions of their fellowmen. They spread the mantle of responsibility upon the shoulders of the people, and with a faith in both God and man they wove into the Constitution of our country the web of perpetual existence. One hundred and fifty-six years have passed away since they declared that God intended all men to be free and equal; all men, without restriction, qualification or limitation. As we

look back over the intervening decades our hearts must throb with pride when we consider the achievement of having successfully grappled with, and disposed of, questions incident to human progress, some of which threatened the very life of the Nation. Across the pages of history there has never been written such a chapter of accomplishment. The constitutional safeguards thrown around the human family by the builders, who laid the foundation of this Nation, have lifted up the people until they, as sovereign citizens, sit upon the throne of freedom trammled only by constitutional rights.

We should make no mistake about the active energy of the constitution and laws of our country. With all its roughness and faults, the fact remains obvious that it is the greatest foundation of civil government known to history. It gives energy to the wheels of progress, broadens the avenues of education and places in the hands of the people the power to determine and extend the limits of their liberties.

Our fathers realized, as we do, that this Republic could not survive we could a people enjoy the benefits of free institutions unless there was a free, popular education; unimpaired by religious bigotry, racial hatreds or the selfishness of man. Macaulay said, "It is universally allowed that, by some means, government must protect our persons and property. This being admitted, can it be denied that the education of the common people is a most effectual means of securing our persons and our property?"

Fully realizing this principle, our immediate ancestors established the free public school system in order that not only our persons and property might be secure, but that future generations might not go through life bearing a burden of prejudices heaped upon them by ignorance. A thousand foes have in the past and are today assailing our public school system. Men and women clothed in the garb of American citizenship pose as teachers in our schools in order that they may pour the deadly virus of their disloyalty into the minds of our children. In my official capacity I have met and grappled with this hydra-headed monster in our schools within the last six months.

It is time that we, as loyal American citizens, awoke to the dangers which beset our cherished institutions. This is not a time for silence. We should not be lulled to sleep by sophistry nor allow the smoothness of political flattery to blind our minds or obscure our visions concerning the important question of Public Education. We here have a duty to perform, vital to the existence of the Republic in which we live. The all important factor in public education is the school teacher, for he is the one who does more to direct the mind and mould the character of the American citizen than any other agency outside of the family, and the requirements for an American teacher ought to be patriotism of the highest and most unswerving character, to the end that he be a formative influence that would enrich the hearts and minds of the youth of America with patriotic thought. It is our duty to demand such qualifications in all those who seek to teach the children in our schools.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." Some of the most powerful lessons which we learn are taught us in the every day lives of men in their every day work, and no man should be allowed to teach in our schools or universities who has not reached into his own soul, searched for and found the spirit of America. There is a necessary relation between the love of God and the love of country. Throw the pilot overboard and your ship will run upon the rocks and be lost. Leave God and the moral law out of our schools and universities and the end of the Republic is in sight.

When we think of all the sacrifices and glories of the past, of the struggles and hardships endured by our fathers and mothers, it appears to me that our Masonry should be baptized into a new hope for humanity. We cannot hang the shield of our faith in the armory of the past and expect the deeds of our fathers to release us from the responsibility that is ours.

America has nothing to fear from outside foes. The only danger to our national life lurks within the borders of our own country. Many of the enemies of our institutions, along with others who are imported, come out from our higher institutions of learning preaching their deadly atheism, agnosticism, communism, and those other isms which are all bastard brothers of disloyalty.

There is a rising tide flowing from out our universities that is bearing the youth of our country away to their spiritual doom and our nation to oblivion. Grandeur of intellect without truth and morality is a delusion; it is the union of those gifts and virtues which alone can elevate man to that dignified station which God intended him to occupy.

These institutions of learning of ours, from the little red schoolhouse to our great universities,

should become shrines of patriotism filled with the spirit of hope and faith, of freedom and justice.

"Long should pause the erring hand of man before it dares to clip away with the chisel of human reason, one single word graven in the enduring by the hand of the Infinite God."

It is well to remember that this nation was founded to carry into practical effect the beneficent principle that government is instituted for the advancement and improvement of the people who determine the government. This is peculiarly true of our nation, for the American Republic was organized primarily to give to the people of this nation a freedom denied to them in other lands, to inculcate a love of liberty, to promote happiness and dispense justice, giving to the people the full enjoyment of life. We are distinctively a liberty loving people. We believe in the right of freedom of speech, of an untrammelled conscience, of civil and religious liberty and the dignity of labor. We should never lose sight of these exalted principles in the turmoil and wild mad rush of every day life.

The future welfare of our country depends upon our attitude toward the enforcement of our laws and the tone and spirit in which we perform our duties as citizens. Our faces should be set against the vain display of wealth and earthly power, and set towards rational enjoyment and a faithful performance of those services to our country which would annihilate the influences that are seeking to undermine our system of government.

As a correlative of our duty to uphold the law it is equally incumbent upon us to suppress the evils that exist, everywhere tending to lawlessness and anarchy. We should, too, on every occasion instill in the popular mind an undivided and unswerving devotion to the American Republic. We should teach without prejudice and with the kindest feelings that every citizen should, regardless of the place of birth, fraternal, political or religious affiliations, hold this nation above any organization on the face of the earth; that it should receive our undivided loyalty and the efforts of our lives should be put forth to preserve it in all its purity and strength.

If the principles upon which our country rests are similar to the fundamental principles of Masonry, and they are in a marked degree, it is because the spirit of freedom moved throughout the fraternity, giving energy and power to the voice of liberty. Across the ocean the voices of Samuel Adams and John Hancock shook the thrones of Europe.

"Freedom of speech is God's training school in which men are educated," and we should use it in all its power and glory to blast criminals from their strongholds, fetter and destroy the agencies of crime, and place American citizenship and honor above the tongue of reproach. By printed page and public utterance we should kindle the fires of righteous indignation in the hearts and minds of our people against all those who defy our laws, to such an extent that it will rise a living, vital force that will descend in fury and destroy every enemy of society.

Organized greed and crime have snatched the scepter of power from the hand of decency and honor, and we have lost the sense of God and the ability to enforce the law, until a child is not safe in its crib in the home of its father. The hour has struck when we must consider it a patriotic duty to emphasize a devotion to the fundamental principles of the Republic and the majesty of the law. Is the spirit of Washington lost in the maw of Greed? Are the fires of seventy-six entirely quenched and the ashes cast to the four winds of heaven? If not, what influence is it that distorts the mind, contaminates the soul and dries up the stream of American courage in our veins until we sit unconcerned while this heritage of ours, that has come down to us at the price of blood, is trampled in the dust and yet we are not aroused from the slumber of indifference?

Masonry is a Battle and not a Dream. A battle against the vicious and consuming elements which tend to destroy mankind is the chief business of Masonry. If there is to be progress we cannot escape the conflict. That which is Masonry is in constant conflict with the forces of error. The momentous lesson written in the blood of patriots on a thousand fields of battle teaches us that it is our duty to see that the free current of our country's constitutional rights runs on unobstructed. If this current is to continue to widen and deepen and wash itself clearer as it runs on the agent of civilization, it must find its source in the hearts and minds of men such as are here assembled, springing from their souls and issuing from their lips in the daily walks of life.

The foundation upon which shall rest not only the progress and development of the race, but the future safety of our liberties, must be laid in the hearts and minds of our children in infancy, and upon their souls must be inscribed, "Under God my first duty is to my country."

We need the courage, the moral character, the firm determination and the Masonry of Washington to enable us to stand as a solid phalanx, on the side of truth and justice, in the great eternal conflict between right and wrong, to lift this noble brotherhood above the common level of

fraternalism and place it upon a higher plane of endeavor worshipping God, honoring the state and obeying the law.

On this auspicious occasion, rejoicing in the memories of long ago when California contributed the spirit of her people, together with her golden stores, to preserve this union, we ought as patriotic Americans to pledge anew our loyalty to the nation of which we are a part. We ought to regard every agency of the government as a memorial to the memory of those who contributed so much that freedom might be the heritage of humanity. We ought to look upon all of our institutions as reminders of those who fought and labored that we might enjoy the inestimable benefits of a free nation. We ought to utilize every influence in our power to teach our citizens a reverence for our National Constitution, a high regard for the institutions of the nation and a patriotic ardor for the advancement and integrity of our citizens.

Let us hope and pray that as the years roll away the great eternal Ruler of the Universe will shower His blessings upon the American people, lead and guide our nation in the paths of peace and prosperity, so that our Republic may stand as a beacon light of justice, admired and respected by all the world as the brightest hope for humanity.