

**Grand Lodge
Free & Accepted Masons
Of California
Grand Oration 1967**

**Grand Orator
Warren Harrison
(Delivered by Warren J. Blomseth)
"A Talk About Candlepower"**

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Distinguished Guests and Very Dear Brethren

It is the Grand Orator's duty to deliver an address at each annual communication, to the Grand Lodge, upon matters appertaining to the craft, and to deliver such other addresses as may be required. Unless this is, as I suspect, a dream, I have the privilege and pleasure to address you as the Grand Orator of the State of California. To me, on this day, no other order exists than THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

When Brother Dayton assumed office as our Most Worshipful Grand Master he expressed the desire "to increase the candlepower of Masonry." This is a most commendable theme and should continue to inspire us in the future, as it has in the past, to take Masonry at its altar and let it accompany us in our daily lives, that we may reflect the principles and tenets of our Ancient and Honorable institution and induce others, also, to hold them in due veneration. Masonry teaches men so to live, that they may be fit to die, I can pay it no higher compliment.

An experiment in a great amphitheater in Southern California, demanded that each individual present hold aloft a lighted candle, when the electric power was cut off the degree of illumination was practically unchanged. I am sure the impact would be just as effective, if each of you return to your respective Lodges at the conclusion of this communication with the firm resolve to present to your present members, as well as to your novitiates, the working tools of Masonry.

I do not hesitate to admit that the answer evoked from me on my first admission into the Lodge made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. Today I realize that "when we put our trust in GOD" we need not fear what man can do unto us. The volume of the Sacred Law comes to us from the hands of Jewish Scribes from time immemorial, and may well be called the cornerstone of Judeo-Christian faith. Perhaps you will agree with me that in five days the Israelites recent miraculous deliverance from the hands of their oppressors, was wrought by more than human hands. I am just as confident that with HIS blessing, our own nation will unite to lead the world as the Champion of Freedom.

Masonry performs its work in the hearts of men and among nations. To dignify the human race, we must begin with one man at a time, one initiate at a time. The same working tools that are indispensable to the jurist must be available to the gardener, the carpenter, the farmer and the blacksmith. Perhaps the finest example to illustrate this point would be the invitation extended by Teddy Roosevelt to a friend of his in Washington, D.C., during the time he was serving as President of The United States, to accompany him to lodge that evening to witness the conferral of the Third Degree by the gardener down the street. It was reported this Brother did a very fine job with the ritual. No man reaches such a pinnacle of success in this world, that he cannot profit from a refresher course in the principles and tenets of our Ancient and Honorable Institution.

When people are governed with the consent of the governed, it is essential they be an enlightened and a vigilant electorate. Spiritual and Moral enlightenment, vigilance and militance are just as important to our people today as they were in the founding of our country. James C. Penney-a Mason of the 33rd degree says "Our Country is great, not by accident, but because our forefathers hewed out an existence on the eastern shore of this continent, with the Bible in one hand and an axe in the other."

When citizens the length and breadth of our land, admit to themselves, and more importantly to GOD Himself, that they are putting their trust in HIM, woe unto those who represent us in the halls of congress or as ambassadors to foreign shores, should they be less dedicated to their duty to GOD, Their Country, Their Neighbors and Themselves.

There is no more practical way to divide our time than we find suggested in Masonry, a part for GOD and a distressed worthy brother, a part for our usual vocations and a part for refreshment and repose, nothing more conducive to a well ordered life than to divest yourself of all its vices and superfluities.

Were one to travel no further than the first degree, he would be in possession of the tenets of brotherly love, relief and truth. Were I to embark on this subject time would run out on me, and I would not have begun on temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice. Surely if there is something wrong with us as individuals, the fault is not to be found in Masonry, only in our ability to assimilate its teachings and incorporate them in our daily lives.

When the volume of the Sacred Law becomes the great light in your profession, when your reverence for GOD is that which is due from the creature to his creator, when you act upon the square with your neighbor and discipline yourself, you shall begin to expect others to show concern for that which you hold so dear. Your life takes on new meaning, your country has a better citizen, and you suddenly realize that you are responsible for the preservation of our Ancient and Honorable Fraternity, in order that future generations might have access to this unencumbered source of enlightenment, and the serenity that only the heart can define, when a task has been well done.

The history of man has witnessed one religion after another spring up, grow for a time, decay and die, and give place to another. The framers and the select few, will understand these great principal truths that are the foundation of all religions, but the people will ever worship idols and images, either carved of wood or stone, or found on earth or in the heavens, or the gross material ideas and images which, in their own minds, they will form and enthrone as representations of the Deity.

The applicant for the degrees of Masonry, may be a member of most any religious faith, so long as he believes in GOD and a future existence. Collectively perhaps it might be said that Masons understand what is commonly referred to as religion, better than religion understands Masonry. Among the various religious denominations in America are those who suspect Masonry to be a threat to their domain. It would be a great source of satisfaction to me to be able to convince all dedicated religious leaders that Masonry offers the most fertile soil for them to cultivate. Just as we choose from many makes of automobiles as a means of conveyance to our earthly destination, we are most serious in the faith that will enable us to finally arrive at that House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

Having an appreciation for the sophistication of today as compared with yesterday is not at all difficult. As a boy the wall telephone was a luxury in our home, the telegraph amazed us all and the worlds commerce plied the oceans powered by the sail. While I don't consider myself as an old man, it seems we have traveled quite a way, with the Tellstar conveying the word and the scene to my living room just as they are. A debate between statesmen in Washington, London and Paris, as if on stage in your home town, while the atomic powered vessel sails round the world numerous times without the need to refuel.

Small wonder that man has been impressed with his technological skill, and most of us have been quite content to help to pay the bill, until, our ego carried us a bit too far and we asked "Is there a GOD." Herein lies the danger to us all, and it had to come to this. Lest we put our trust in man we have the council of Solomon, the wisest of all; "There is nothing new under the Sun"- and he said this over 900 years before Christ. So I appeal to you not to let sophistication interfere with indoctrination.

Shall I humble you further? I'll quote from St. John: "The wind may blow where it listeth and we hear the sound thereof, but we know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, and so is everyone born of the spirit." Or if you prefer: "Man born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble, he cometh forth like a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not, seeing that his days are determined, the number of his months is with thee. Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass."

The greatest safeguards for the prevention of letting our pride destroy us are found in our Ancient Landmarks, and most important in this world of flux, **THEY CAN NEVER BE CHANGED.**

The immortality of the soul cannot be proven by science, nor demonstrated by the powers of logic, but only by faith, and its own instinctive consciousness that it is not material nor dissoluble like the body. Science can no more perform the functions of faith, than faith can decide

in matters of science. To believe and to know are two terms that can never be confounded, nor can they rightfully oppose each other in any antagonism whatever. Science is absolutely impotent in deciding if we are right or wrong in believing a dogma. Faith, in itself, considered as a physiological fact, is evidently a necessity and a force. GOD can only be defined by Faith. Science can neither deny nor affirm that HE exists. The true certainty is the reciprocal acquiescence of the reason, which knows, in the sentiment, which believes, and of the sentiment, which believes, in the reason, which knows. The definitive alliance of reason and faith will result from their absolute distinction and separateness, but with their mutual control and fraternal concurrence.

Masonry is defined as a system of moral advancement, veiled in allegory and taught by the use of symbols. Abraham Lincoln thinks of the Tree as the symbol of character and the shadow as our reputation. Only in the light of day is the shadow to be found, just another reason to take our Masonry out into our daily lives. Some young man may be observing you and measure the Lodge by the impression you make upon him.

I must assume that questions that disturb me are of some concern to you. Do we think that our lives should be devoted to submission to the leadership of others, or should we strive to become leaders ourselves? Do our fellow men convince us that we are qualified? Or do we decide for ourselves? Having decided our role, that of leader or subject, we must then determine the direction to travel and possibly envision a goal. This transitory life provides little time for each of us to make these decisions, become qualified, then meet the complexities and changes each era of man's progress on earth presents.

Today's decisions might be simpler when viewed in the light of tomorrow, but we must make them here and now. First we must realize our grandchildren's lives will mirror the effectiveness of our stewardship today. History affords satisfactory assurance that mortal man is capable of tyranny or love, oppression or compassion, freedom or slavery, with far reaching consequences.

These are indeed critical times. We have every right to consider them as such for the pages of history record no period in which world-wide confusion, intrigue, hysteria, falsehood, etc., have been so effectively employed against the masses of peoples throughout the world. Nations lie against nations, striving to force their way of life into common acceptance. After lies and propaganda have been promoted repeatedly, even the perpetrators begin to confuse their dribble with facts. Modern communication devices have made of what was formerly considered shocking propaganda, commonplace in our time. We may conclude that people have been talked out of their liberty with far too much regularity.

The best defense against mass hysteria and mass hypnosis does not begin with a treatment of nations or states, it begins with the desire of each individual to preserve his own dignity, as a duty to GOD, His Country, His Neighbor and Himself. When a man is sovereign over himself he is not vulnerable to the glamorous flauntings of attractive dogma, he brings his sentiment and his reason, his GOD given talents to bear in his judgment of pertinent matters that are vital to the welfare of himself and mankind. Sincerity and plain dealing are necessary to convince such a man regarding justice and equity, he is not to be categorized into some division of gullibility, nor is he to be dominated by mortal man, only by GOD who spake him into existence.

A nation of such men, armed with vigilance, will prove that "Rational Liberty is the Mother of Freedom." The cry today should not be, what is the matter with our Nation. rather, what is the matter with ourselves? An improvement in the spiritual and moral fiber of ourselves as individuals, will pay a dividend to our Nation not approached since 1776. Perhaps we shall not be greater than our neighbors, but we will be better than ourselves.

It has always seemed natural for man to seek to dethrone the champion. Our nation, so richly endowed was given its birth by the founding fathers, it was welded into a union by their successors, today it remains to be seen if our nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. This is our challenge, as we stand before the world as the "Champion of Freedom," perhaps its last bastion, the TRUTH is our armor, it has made us free and it shall keep us free. The TRUTH as tried in the crucible of time, that indispensable ingredient to the dignity of man, the foundation of every virtue.

Masonry is the subjugation of the human that is in man, by the divine. It is the conquest of the appetites and passions by the moral sense and reason, the continual effort struggle and warfare of the spiritual against the material and sensual.

As the Mason advances from one degree to another, he develops a desire for further light in Masonry. Often the light may shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

I am sure all of us are aware of the constant struggle in every man's nature between light and darkness, good and evil, success and failure, etc., and though none of us may be licensed to account for the importance GOD places in our ability to cope with these opposing forces, their constant recurrence in our daily lives compels us to deal with them in a manner that we hope meets HIS approval. Simply put, it is the struggle between the divine will, implanted in man by GOD, and the natural will, prone to vice and error, and caused by the frailty of the flesh.

Nothing great has ever been built, without an opposing force against it. Consider the birth of our nation; against tremendous opposition, our founding fathers pledged their lives, their property and their sacred honor, won the struggle, then met in solemn engagement to debate and compromise, and ultimately perfect a constitution that has been proclaimed by legal authorities to be "the greatest governing document ever written by the pen of man." All that remains is the test, eternally, for each generation to preserve, through our militancy and eternal vigilance, this great heritage of ours.

Do you measure light from the absence of darkness or darkness from the negation of light? Are you a success because man can point to no instance in which you have failed, or have you neglected to participate through fear that you might? Have you enjoyed the serenity of those who exert the talents wherewith GOD has blessed them? Do you think of a thing as just because GOD has willed it, or that GOD wills it because it is just? Would another mortal man's answers satisfy you or are you sovereign over yourself?

My Mother was fond of reminding me that GOD works in mysterious ways, HIS miracles to perform; yet most of us have been guilty, on occasion, of permitting our finite minds to question HIS infinite wisdom in permitting so much evil to exist here on earth. I suggest we consider for a moment the lowest form of animal life, the amoeba, that lies on the bank of the pool, consumes nourishment, waxes fat, grows strong and multiplies. Here let us pause for a moment and reflect, could this description apply to man? Perhaps ourselves? Surely the manifold blessings and comforts which surround us, and the talents HE endowed to man, combine to make an investment on which HE should enjoy a rich return. Clearly visible on today's horizon is our need to unite all of the world's GOD-fearing men into one sacred band, or society of friends and brothers to dispel the godless tyranny of communism.

We realize that in the eyes of The Great Creator, our lives are but "a speck on the horizon of eternity." But each of us is important to Him, so important as to be brought into the world by His Hand, nourished each day by His Divine Providence, and ultimately harvested for His Kingdom. We feel that man cannot live by bread alone, and that He was concerned about our spiritual and moral edification, when He stated through The Son of Man, those prophetic and dogmatic words, "You will know the Truth and the Truth will make you free."

As your name is dropped into that vast crucible, that melting pot that we know as America, may we hope it contains enough spice of independence to counter the dregs of apathy, placed there by regimented thinking and mass indoctrination so popular in the world today.

So you are an individual. Difficult isn't it? So many forces of so many different natures, vie with each other to make of you a conformist. This organization would lead you, and hold you, in a particular religious faith; while that one enlists your political support, and still another may pull at you to perpetuate a racial image. All these and others dictated by your fraternal associations, business and vocational interests etc., place the burden upon you to conform to their requirements and, still, if you so desire, try and remain an individual.

Many of us carry the vision of the strong, independent spirit that carried the 49ers across mountains, plains, rivers and deserts to establish their homes and their futures, on the remotest frontier of our blessed land. Their concern, during this trek, for associations and organizations, was limited to the simple requirement of common defense against the elements and the pirates confronting them on their journey. Only the indispensable, fundamental and humble principles and tenets, gained passage for them. Faith in GOD, Hope for success of their venture and sufficient love for each other to form a band to penetrate this vast wilderness.

Once established in a fertile land, only time was needed for the organizations to appear, demanding their loyalty to this and that, until an organization of ones own self was required, lest his convictions go out with the tide. The organizations were here to stay, they had followed man in all his crusades. He must choose those that he identified with, "for to himself he must be true."

As we view the world scene today, we are grateful that our nation rates first among the forces of freedom. Men of every land seem eager to obtain United States citizenship and participate in our many privileges. For a nation to reach this position of leadership in less than two hundred years, there must be a reason. I believe this reason to be the separation of church and state; that each may proceed in its duties without interference from the other, where the religious faith you support, is your choice as an individual, and where the legislative representative to your government, has to have your vote to be empowered to act.

We find ourselves confronted with strife in many fields, Communism -how to judge who among our allies are sincere and dedicated to freedom, and who would appease it for material gain: Civil Rights-how to implement it in to all our lives, for freedom must be earned, not bequeathed; Technological Change-how to make it serve men, all men; Social Adjustment-care for the old, the very young and those to whom life has not been kind; Tolerance and Understanding-a searching for issues upon which men of all creeds can agree, rather than contend; and Education-for true enlightenment is a great ally of Freedom.

The success of our country's future depends, not on mass regimentation and indoctrination through modern communication media, but upon a nation of individuals who can think for themselves. Having been indoctrinated in the principles and tenets of Masonry, it is up to the individual Mason to combat the sophisticated, unwarranted departures from time tested conventions, to guard against any allurements to vicious practices. This, in one sense, I believe our Grand Master felt, when he asked us to increase our "Candlepower."