

**Grand Lodge  
Free & Accepted Masons  
Of California  
Grand Oration 1933**

**Grand Orator  
Reynold E. Blight**

October, that delightful month of the year signifying the harvest time and telling us to forget hard knocks and be enthusiastic in our work, finds us again assembled in annual conference.

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with Him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the that cheaves run." (Keats.)

The majority of representatives here are approaching the conclusion of a period of leadership and responsibility. Years of service and experience have invested you with a fund of understanding of human needs and human frailties. Many times men, not Masons, men not given to extravagant or loose talk, men whose judgment I value, have said to me that the Masonic fraternity is one of the greatest constructive forces to steady present-day conditions. I agree with their opinion. In annual communication, then, the Masonic Grand Lodge of California is indeed an important complement of the worthwhile and fundamental citizenship of this great State.

I am not equipped to address you on the glories and traditions of Masonry of the past. I feel that Masonry must meet the challenge of the present and coming year, and these thoughts I will submit for your consideration.

During the past two decades we have witnessed a phenomenal scientific development. Many are of the opinion that human understanding has not kept pace. It now requires a brain trust to even attempt a solution of present-day economic problems created largely by over mechanical production. Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition has aided in bringing us up to date. In comparing the two Chicago fairs, one writer said "93" was a poem in architecture; "33" is a university education. President William McKinley at Buffalo in his last address stated: "Expositions are the timekeepers of progress." We also find ourselves experimenting with new theories of government, business and human relations. Experiments are necessary, but in all progress and development, for successful results it must remain true to fundamentals. We find in our fraternity the important fundamentals of human relationship. Thereby comes the challenge to Masonry. The principles and ideals propounded by our rituals and ceremonies exemplify a practical, successful and happy life. Misfortunes and adversities occur when those principles are forgotten or ignored. In the merciless competition of the present active American life we must therefore apply our code.

I am convinced that in the reconstruction work of our country the first admonition of Freemasonry must be applied if we are to endure as a powerful nation. It appeals to me as reasonable to expect the members of that organization to exercise that doctrine and endeavor to influence others to do likewise. "No man should ever enter upon any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of God," is an admonition just as important to a nation's life as to a Masonic life. Remember, it is the combination of a competency of Divine Wisdom and the pure principles of Freemasonry that make him the ideal man and Mason. A republic can be no better than its citizens. History is replete with examples of nations who experienced a rapid decline when they abandoned their spiritual faith. "Where there is no vision the people perish" is a maxim never successfully contradicted. True, our part in the drama of life is brief. If you feel otherwise, wander around through the big trees of California, which average 3000 years of age, or study the water history of this State as interpreted by the geologists. You will be surprised how you diminish in size. Keep in mind, however, that we are building for the future, and our children will carry on the lofty ideals we instill in them. A beloved American leader told us: "The things of the body are good; the things of the intellect better; but best of all are the things of the soul; for, in the nation as in the individual, in the long run it is character that counts." "Children do as their parents do, not as they say." Juvenile problems will decrease in this generation and those to come when all adults keep in mind that we should be building a spiritual

temple and fitting our minds as living stones to be used in that eternal home. Then will come success and prosperity, because spiritual faith brings confidence, which Cicero defines:

"Confidence is that feeling by which the mind embarks in great and honorable courses with a sure hope and trust in itself."

It is not startling to realize that in transportation verbiage the world is getting smaller. Inter-communication is now a matter of minutes, and we listen to world events and addresses on international issues almost daily. How is this enlarged picture affecting us? The numerous frictions and "isms" of the Old World are infecting our public life more and more. It is human nature to learn rapidly the words of songs one hears sung frequently. The need for a 100 per cent Americanism is therefore a vital one. Our brother, that outstanding American of all time, Theodore Roosevelt, aptly phrased it when he proclaimed "There is no place in this country for hyphenated Americans." The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States breathe Masonic principles embedded there by our forefathers, and we of this fraternity must insist on an unqualified loyalty to our government. Let us refresh our hearts with the words of one we annually honor in February. In his farewell address Washington said: "The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad, of your safety, of your prosperity, of that very liberty which you so highly prize.... It is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; . . . Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections."

We have further discovered that we cannot evade the fact that we are our brother's keeper. Even though prosperous times brought us independence and pleasures, yet our persons and property were not safe. Crime prospered in proportion to our prosperity; an unfair advantage was tolerated if the profit was sufficient to make it worth the chance; the government became less effective, and finally when we awoke to find our material values gone, the surrounding environment was not at all to our liking. During the time we were self-centered the country became disorganized. We are endeavoring to again develop a vigorous and healthy American life. To get this picture vividly, visit a few of the Citizens Conservation Corps camps. There you will see young men who had nothing to do except walk the streets now' getting the real American spirit and regaining strong personalities which enact the thought of the following verse:

"Life is but one long vacation,  
To the man who loves to work;  
Life's an everlasting effort,  
To the man who likes to shirk.

"To the earnest faithful worker,  
Life's a story ever new;  
Life's just what we try to make it—  
What is life to you?"

With bad elements present in the neighborhood, no home therein is safe. We cannot separate our children or our interests into one little parcel and ignore the interests or the children of the others. Disease germs are no respecters of doors, windows or boundary lines. Moral influences are the same. "No man liveth unto himself alone."

In the vast orchestra playing the symphony of life each can express himself through his chosen instrument. The tones he produces, however, must blend into the harmony of the music. If played alone or out of time the effect is discordant. Many who placed their all in material wealth and lost have committed suicide. The collapse of material values has left many people unbalanced in numerous ways. Social readjustment must follow as our citizenship regains its natural balance. As this balance is regained it will develop a new social life. Masonry is purely a social relationship, teaching men the right principles of living. The opportunity is here for it to do a wonderful work. In Masonry there is no question but what I am my brother's keeper. Why not

endeavor to stamp this new social life with those fundamental principles of our Institution which have proven so worthwhile to us?

Today's challenge, then, to our fraternity is to apply more completely its principles within our ranks; that duty we owe to God, that loyalty we owe to our country, that fellowship we owe to our neighbor and brother. That doctrine, in real action, will influence scores of others beyond the boundaries of our organization, not only of the present generation but also the coming generation. We are charged to assume that leadership in the present recovery program.

"We are all blind until we see  
That in the human plan  
Nothing is worth the making if  
It does not make the man.

"Why build these cities glorious  
If man unbuilt goes?  
In vain we build the world unless  
The builder also grows."