

"DIVESTED OF ALL METALLIC SUBSTANCES"

The Builder, December 1917

The alchemists of the Middle Ages employed alchemical terms to express their grand philosophy. Some Masonic authorities claim that much of our ritual is derived from the ritual of the alchemists of the Middle Ages. A knowledge of the meaning of the terms they employed is necessary to understand their philosophy.

Thus one of their favorite expressions was "base metals."

"Base metals" stood for base passions, and to be divested of metallic substances is to rid ourselves of base passions.

As our work is to transform the individual from a lower state to a higher state, and as our goal is ultimate perfection, the first thing then an individual must do, in order for him to rise above the animal plane, is to divest himself of his metallic substances, or his base passions. For the ideal of every individual is to reach a higher estate of being, a purer life, and how are we going to perfect ourselves, to rise from our animal state, if not by self examination and by ridding ourselves of our base passions?

What are these base passions? They are prejudice, anger, wrath, jealousy, envy, greed, fear, hate and lust. These are the arch enemies of every individual. They are the enemies, the devils or evils that keep us down to our animal nature, that bind us hand and foot to our low state, a slave to our baser feelings.

That is why we demand, at the outset, that the candidate, before he seriously takes up the work of the degrees, that is, the degrees of his growth and self development, free himself from his baser passions, the shackles, the things that bind him to the animal. How is he going to advance to the next degree, or to a higher plane of being, unless he removes the fetters that bind him down to these demon passions?

O, Brother, examine yourself, and see if you are free from these base passions, see if you are in truth divested of all metallic substances? You are not a free man, a real man, if you let your base passions tie you down to the animal being. Are you free from prejudice, are you free from anger, from greed, from hate and the rest of the brood?

Honest self-examination yields results. It will enable you to become acquainted with yourself, it will enable you to find out some things you never knew about yourself. "Man know thyself" was written over the portals of ancient temples. Very few men know themselves, their real selves.

O, brother, look within thyself, thine own temple, and discover the rubbish within. If you are honest with yourself, if you desire to give yourself a fair chance, you will begin to divest yourself of your base metals. One by one you will cast out the base passions, and uncover the goodness within yourself that lies deeply buried. Do not think this can be accomplished in a short time. It will require a great deal of effort and struggle. But be patient. "Patience and perseverance" are necessary. As you proceed and root out the passions, one by one, you will gain strength and power, and a feeling of peace will come over you that will repay you for your pains.

Bro. A. W. Witt, in the Kansas City Freemason.

----O----