

THE TROWEL

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MY BROTHERS: Mine it is to speak of the Trowel--that instrument which, occupying an important position in the work-chest of the operative mason is, as our ritual suggests, the especial tool of the Master Mason; made use of by operative masons to spread the cement which unites a building into a common mass, but utilized by the Free and Accepted Mason for the more noble purpose of spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection, that cement which unites us into one sacred band or society of friends, among whom no contention should ever exist, but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who can best work and best agree. What instrument could be of nobler significance? What implement of more glorious inspiration?

Through the use of the trowel, spreading the cement, the single bricks and stones, once a chaotic mass, now stand united and solid, to form this noble edifice which we dedicate this day to the cause of God and Masonry. Through the symbolic service of the Masonic trowel, spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection, we, the individual members, once as separated and chaotic as these stones which house us, are as firmly bound together in a union which dedicates us one for all and all for one. . . What were this structure, which we solemnly consecrate, had not the trowel been honestly wielded, or if the cement and mortar should fail it? What were our brotherhood without the bond of love and affection to bind us close? And only as long as this bond continues to unite us, only so long will this Temple stand a true shrine of Masonry and of God. Only so long will our Brotherhood be a real brotherhood, worthy of its consecration and its vows.

Do we need this lesson? Does this thought require the especial emphasis we would wish to give it? Truly, none more. None to which mankind has beer. more impervious in all times and all ages.

Three thousand years ago, on Judea's plain, the prophet of the Lord proclaimed: "Behold, it shall come to pass in the latter day that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established at the top of the mountains and exalted above all hills. And all nations shall flow unto it. And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall there be war any more." For two thousand years, not the one seer alone, but all

prophets and ministers of Judaism and Christianity together have united to emphasize the same ideal. They have urged and re-urged the truth on the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all his children. Out of such conviction they have hoped to bring to dawning the day of universal peace.

But look about us today and see the result. Where is the brotherhood, the affection, the peace, the understanding? Do not bigotry, hatred, superstition, ignorance and jealousy flourish as ever before? Are not differences in creed, color and birth, on the slightest provocation, still found meaningless excuse for savagely warring nations, as for many of their supposed superiors in culture? Does not the whole modern world panorama but demonstrate that whatever our lip service to the ideal of God's fatherhood and Man's brotherhood, whatever the hymns and prayers that have arisen from our temples, the songs and prayers were not from the heart but from the lips of man only?

As Master Masons, who have taken the obligations of the three degrees, brotherhood is our ideal. We have vowed to eradicate darkness, hatred, superstition and misunderstanding from out our own lives and from out the world as far as lay within our power. Recognizing no particular creed within our Lodge room, hailing as brothers the followers of all creeds who are worthy of such recognition, we have taught ourselves, and we hold before the world the constant example, that men of different creeds can stand and work together for a common purpose. Living in a world of discord, in which brotherhood, love, sympathy and justice are, all-too-often, nothing more than words, it is urgent beyond expression that we continually reimpress our vows upon our hearts and minds, that we may never lose them from our lives. Most urgent of all is it for us to spread their influence as far and wide in the world as our united power will permit, that thus we may do our share to end the reign of bigotry, hatred and superstition. Thus will we do our part to help hasten the dawning of the day when the glorious brotherhood and peace dream of the prophet shall be realized.

As men and Masons we understand that this task is not easy of accomplishment. But as men and Masons we have faith in God, in our fellowmen, in ourselves. We know that the attainment of the goal is the sure promise of the morrow. In this faith we live and labor on.

But note this one thing more, my Brothers. Those who wrote our ritual did not harbor the foolish notion that initiation into Masonry would in some mysterious way, in a

single moment, through a single act, change the entire nature of the initiate, to make him in a moment the perfect servant of God and man that his obligations require of him. We are not told that as the result of entering the Masonic fraternity a man must be at once, so filled with the spirit of brotherhood that the spirit of false contention CAN never again find lodgement within his breast. We are told that it SHOULD never again be found within him. The demand is made of each of us who comes to this Altar to take the obligation, that he shall continuously thereafter strive to eradicate from his heart the prejudice, error and misunderstanding that may have filled him in the past, that at last the moment may come when he is a Mason in reality as well as in name. But the burden of making ourselves such true Masons is placed upon our own shoulders, and nowhere else. To us ourselves and to no others the task is assigned.

It is these high and noble purposes, my Brothers, of which the Trowels are here emblematic. These the ideals, of which they stand to remind us upon our Altar. As we consecrate these trowels anew, this night, unto their holy office, unto these same holy purposes may we, at the same time, re-consecrate ourselves. To these ideals may we vow renewed fidelity.