



14th ANNUAL ADDRESS OF
HONORABLE J.A. NELSON
M.:W.: GRAND MASTER

My Dear Brethren, Greetings:

With my heart filled with joy and thanksgiving to my God for His many blessings and to express to you my gratitude for the confidence and respect that you have shown to me in electing me to the highest office in your gift.

I am indeed pleased at this hour to attempt to render to you a complete account of my stewardship during this Masonic year. In doing so, I am not in the least unmindful of the mercies of our Heavenly Father, and I hope to receive His continued blessings, and your confidence. I have faith in God, whose child I am, that He will lead me to victory; likewise that He will land the old Masonic ship safely in the harbor of love, peace, union and prosperity.

I realize that the year just closed has brought us nearer to the closing of our earthly existence; then let us not, my brethren, be like ungrateful children who so soon forget the kind blessings of their parents and go heedlessly on to destruction, but let us prove worthy of the blessings of our Heavenly Father, for the battles of life are one of continuous work of joy intermingled with sorrow. Therefore, we must fight for the right against the wrong until the battle is ended and the victory won. Then we shall lay our trophies at the feet of our most powerful Sovereign Grand Commander.

Our work must needs be at all times constructive therefore, let us unify our actions and so build the walls. Those of us who can not use the trowel or plumb, let him bring the mortar and stone to the workmen upon the walls, for the very foundation of our ancient and beloved institution is (laid) by uncouth men.

I read with great disgust the attempt of the National Compact Masons against the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ohio, but was pleased to have read in the same Grand Lodge Proceedings that the demurrer of the Ohio Grand Lodge was sustained. Therefore, my fellow craftsmen, let us not think the victory won, nor at once sit down, for the constructive work shall not be done until thou obtain the crown.

In Freemasonry we must look well to the future, and build upon the true Masonic foundation, for the eyes of the world are looking to us for more light. So those of us who have been brought to that mystic light ought to stretch out our desires beyond that brief span of our official existence and so live.

This is a good argument for others, to strive to enter into the Masonic fold. My brethren, however sad and dreary the thought of dying unwept for by any one, or unhonored by any survivors, and entirely forgotten as a man and Mason, as soon as removed from sight; however difficult is the struggles, we must fight on if we are actors upon the Masonic stage and want to become more prominent in the Masonic world.

We must not try it within some narrow circle, for all men are looking to us to lead them into the true light. Therefore, we should let our virtues be adorned in their fairest and loveliest colors, so that when we shall have departed to that spirit land, where our immortal natures shall still live after their earthly tabernacle shall have crumbled to their original state of dust, the world may know that we once lived.

The fame of a Mason, however earnest he might have striven to keep in the public consideration, is in general a very narrow and circumscribed one. If he is useful, if he defends the right against the wrong, if he succors those who are ready to perish, if he guides those who are wandering from the path of right, if he counsels the ignorant, when he shall have run his course and sleeps in the arms of Jesus, his loved ones shall have a tomb around which shall stand many friends, widows and orphans, weeping at the loss of so great a man and Mason.

Oh my brothers, dost thou know just how much good thou mayest do by working in union? Have you at any time thought of how much devastation is caused by our haste, spite and the malicious violation of the Masonic law?

So in the midst of passion let us fight in love, leading the bitter participants to the paths and measures of peace, for a more secret, sweet and overpowering beauty appears to men when their hearts and minds are open to the sweet sentiments of peace, love and virtue. When they are instructed in what is above given them, they learn that their being is without bound. Low as he now lies in evil and weakness that which he venerates is still his own, though he has not realized it yet. He should, for he knows the sense of that Grand Masonic word, though his analysis to render an account of it, when in innocence, or by intellectual perception he attains to say, "I love the right, the wrong I hate, but truth is to me beautiful." Virtue thou art mine; save me, for thee I will serve. Therefore, by brethren, let us look well to the East from whence cometh the light. Build high and perfect the walls of love and peace.

NECROLOGY

In certain of our sacred ceremonies it is said that in the midst of life we are in death; therefore be not of tomorrow, for thou dost not know what a day shall bring forth. "Why should we stand and fear to die? What timorous worms we mortals are: death is the gate to endless joy, and yet we dread to enter there. The pains, the groans, the dying strife frighten our approaching souls away, and we shrink back again to life, fond of our prison and our clay."

Death has come, cutting short the earthly existence of our beloved brethren. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." On the 30th day of May, A. D. 1917, A. L. 5917, death summoned our R. W. Bro. Walter Lawson, Grand Marshal.

Bro. Lawson for five years filled his station with much credit to himself and with honor to his craft. We mourn the loss of so eminent a Mason throughout this Grand jurisdiction.

On June 1st, A. D. 1917. A. L. 5917, Bro. John Keyes passed to the world above. Bro. I. Grant of Cascade Lodge No. 8 also departed to the great beyond. We mourn their loss, Truly we may say: Dost thou know that three great men hath fallen today?

Let each one of us strive to enter at the straight gate, my brethren, for Christ is just on the inside, and there we shall also meet our departed brethren. "Thou art gone to the grave; but we will not deplore thee, though sorrows and darkness encompass the tomb. The sorrow has passed through its portals before thee, and the lamp of His love is thy guide through the gloom; thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee, since God was thy ransom, thy guardian, thy guide. He gave thee, He took thee, and He will restore thee, and death has no sting, since the sorrow hath died. Rest on my brethren, until life's dream is past, for all in Jesus only sleep."

FRATERNAL RELATIONS

Our relations with all sister jurisdictions remain harmonious. I am glad to say that nothing has arisen to disturb the peace or to muddy the fraternal stream,

GRAND REPRESENTATIVES

I have commissioned as Grand Representatives from the Grand East of Washington to all foreign jurisdictions a worthy brother and P. M. from every lodge in our jurisdiction and I am exceedingly glad to say that almost 33 1/3% of all Grand Lodges in America have responded in a similar way. We could not hope to do any better in so short a time. My correspondence has been regular and large.

WORK OF THE GRAND LECTURERS

By reason of the lodges taking undue advantage of both the Grand Lodge and Grand Lecturers; that is to say, there being no direct law which forces a lodge to permit the Grand Lecturers to make an official visit. The lodges, as a rule, refuse to permit the Grand Lecturer so to do. Answering in each case as an estoppel, the lodge is without funds.

Now, then, my dear brethren, if you do not provide some way for the Grand Lecturer to visit each lodge once a year, and permit the lodges to stop him in this way, why, then you had just as well abolish the office of the Grand Lecturer. Yet, I do not see how you can do so, for he is very much needed in our Most Worshipful jurisdiction and should therefore be supported.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That if not inconsistent with Masonic usage, that some steps be taken looking forward to the stopping of some very ugly practices on the part of the Order of Eastern Star Chapters, if they expect from this Grand Lodge any aid or encouragement. There appears a disposition on the part of some to slander not only their own sex but to drag Masonry down to the lowest ebb.

First: I recommend that the tenure of office of Grand Master be extended to two years instead of one, for the reason that one year is too short for any man to accomplish very much good.

He enters the office with a theoretical knowledge of his duty and just at the time he gets a working knowledge he is forced to retire, but this must be done by an amendment to the present Constitution.

Second: I recommend that the lodges in investigating the fitness of the person or persons cease that careless way or manner that is so often resorted to. Going to the person and inquiring of him only as to his moral fitness, forgetting the fact that the men are few and far between who will, to strangers, tell of their short—comings. Therefore, in order to find out the true character of one who makes application to any one of our lodges, let us not only quiz him but seek the information from some other person who happens to be acquainted with said applicant. Thereby we shall not get into our lodges so many unworthy, ignorant, stupid and immoral men.

Third: I recommend that in order that this Grand Lodge shall be better able financially to carry on its business, and to aid the widows, orphans and the worthy distressed, M. M. better cared for, that the annual per capita tax be raised to \$1.50 instead of \$1.00 as it is now; for this, my brethren, I think is verb much needed in our jurisdiction.

Fourth: I recommend that your Charity Fund be 35 cents instead of 25 cents and that said charity money be not used for any other purpose than that for which it is raised, or paid.

After writing several letters to R.W. Bro. G.N. White, trying to persuade him to send the Grand Lodge books to Bro. T.H. Jefferson, the Grand Secretary, at Everett, Washington, and getting no response from Bro. White, I wrote to P.G.M. Bro. John N. Payne, asking him to use his influence with Bro. White in trying to persuade him to send the books, but Bro. White refuses to do so.

In April 1 visited Portland, Oregon, met Bro. White in person, and asked him to let me bring the books back with me. He refused to do that. I then asked him to send said books to Bro. T.H. Jefferson before the Grand Lodge meets in July. He promised me that he would send them not later than June 1, 1917, but up to June 20, 1917. he had not sent them. I failed to understand the cause of his action. I cannot accept any flimsy excuse as valid. I therefore recommend that this M. W. Grand Lodge now in regular communication suspend R. W. Bro. G. N. White from all rights of Masonry, for neglect of an official duty and insubordination, for five years. He should he expelled for all time to come; for unless this Grand Lodge takes drastic action with him, we shall at all times have the same wanton violation of our laws.

- I recommend that this Grand Lodge reimburse R.W. Bro. E.H. Holmes the amount that he has expended in getting Grand Lodge Roster. For not one of us wants or will work and spend our money just to please others without some reimbursement.
- I recommend that this Grand Lodge see to it that all the lodges in this jurisdiction pay up in full their back Grand Lodge tax.
- I recommend that this Grand Lodge shall stand by and enforce its laws at all times, disregarding the Masonic standing of any men who wantonly violate the Grand Lodge laws, or any lodge that shall wantonly violate the Grand Lodge laws. My brethren, let us at once cease the practice of standing with a Master Mason or lodge that is wrong. We cannot expect to make any great gain in the Masonic world by agreeing with the wrong, for the eyes of the Masonic and the uninitiated world are upon us. Men are looking to us for truth and light.

I have striven to perform my duty as God gave me light to see it. I realize that I am not faultless, and am therefore subject to make mistakes. But my mistakes are not those of a malicious nature but mistakes of the head and not of the heart.

Now, may the blessings of our God rest with us and all regular Masons. May peace and love prevail. May ever moral and social virtue cement us. I am

Fraternally yours,

J.A. NELSON,
Grand Master