

# **Desagulier and The March of Militant Masonry**

by

**W. Brother George E. Maine**

**Past Master, George Washington Lodge, No. 251, and  
Grand Orator of the M.W. Grand Lodge,  
F. & A.M. of Washington**

Deep in the soul of every man there lies a dream of conquest. In the quiet of the study a panorama of world evils passes before his eyes and there comes a feeling of restlessness, an urge to push through the confusion that is dominating the world at the moment, to eradicate those evils, and bring mankind back to a position of fundamental stability. In quick succession pictures of great leaders of days gone by force themselves upon him, and, in imagination, he sees himself join that list of the immortals.

But tomorrow comes, and with it the exigencies of the moment; the humdrum of prosaic things; business cares; the daily task which are one's master, and those world evils, which were so important when in the stillness of retrospection, fade away; the dreams of yestereve are dimmed. It is almost ever thus.

But just as in those days of world creation, when darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, "Let there be Light", so from the very earliest days of man on earth there have been other periods when darkness ruled the deep, and history is filled with the responses of Divine Providence to the world-call for leadership as down through the ages men have been chosen to lead a nation out of Egypt, to bring the light of freedom to an enslaved people.

The history of the world is the story of its great men. They have been the modellers, they have been the patterns of whatsoever the general mass of men have contrived to do or attain. All things that we see standing accomplished in the world are the material result, the practical realization and embodiment of the thoughts that dwelt in the great men sent into the world.

Some men, we are told, have become great because opportunity has made them so. Others have attained distinction because they themselves created the vehicles which carried their influence to posterity. Some of these men have received the plaudits of countless millions. Others, even some of the greatest of them, have passed all

unnoticed, their names unheralded, their fame unsung. One of these we shall discuss for a moment, one who lived at the beginning of the 18th century. Inasmuch as present day historians state that we owe much of our modern civilization to the leaders of that century, first let us prepare for him a brief historical background.

Prior to the early years of the 18th century it was quite generally accepted throughout Europe that the essential principles upon which established order everywhere rested were the supreme authority of the Church; a dogmatic Christianity; the divine right of kings; heredity, and its resultant – inequality. There were wars – much more than there was peace; wars that sometimes dragged on for generations, struggles not only between nations, but continuous strife within – strife between the kings and the nobility, the nobility and the middle classes, often between several of the stronger houses of the nobility where all sought command of the throne at the same time.

In such a struggle in England, the House of Hanover, which represented Protestantism and liberalism, was just emerging victorious over the Stuarts. Under Hanover the nobility had been granted broader privileges which made them the envy of the rest of Europe. But in France, under the reign of Louis XIV and his predecessors, had governed without consulting either the princes of the blood or the nobility, never invited them to the councils and distributed favors as one gives toys to children. For a long time the nobility had been fed only insult and humiliation, and had been employed only in the army or kept merely as courtiers.

What of Masonry at this period? Today we hear in the lecture of the second degree these words, "Our Ancient Brethren wrought in Operative Masonry". This is literally true. Masonry at the beginning of the 18th century was limited to Guilds of Operative Masons. It was these early Guilds that had erected the magnificent cathedrals of England and France, of Germany and Italy. From these cathedrals came the early fame of the Guilds that ripened into prosperity, influence, prestige.

Masons, proud of their position, kept the basic principles of building, the practices of the trade, as closely guarded secrets of the Fraternity known only to themselves. Revealed to initiates only in their tiled meetings, these professional secrets and the esoteric nature of their liturgy combined to weave a spell that later drew all eyes to Freemasonry.

In a firmament emblazoned with the figures of kings and nobles, of stone masons and cathedrals, on the 12th day of March, 1683, in the city of Rochelle, France, a Star was Born. There were no fanfare of trumpets, no herald angels singing, "Peace on Earth, Good. Will toward Men". But there must have been joy in the Celestial Lodge above, as Divine Providence sent into the world a New Hope. A babe came to the humble home of a French Huguenot clergyman, a son, who, when he grew to man's estate was destined to create a force so powerful that its influence carried into every phase of the lives of all who lived after him, a force which reached to the very foundation of civilization and changed the destiny of man, a force which gave to man a liberty he had never before experienced and which has been called the Forefather of Democracy.

Two years later Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had for nearly a century assured to French Protestants a religious liberty and a legal status. As a result of the Revocation thousands of loyal French were driven into exile. Among those who were forced to flee was this Huguenot clergyman, John D. Desaguliers. Escape was difficult and dangerous, but hiding his two year old son, John Theophilus, in a wine cask which was loaded on a ship bound for England, Desaguliers managed to find refuge.

It is to be regretted that so little is known of this babe of the wine cask – only the scanty Masonic records and a few contemporary notices – because Freemasonry and modern civilization owe more to him than to any other person of the 18th century.

The Rev. John D. Desaguliers became chaplain of a French Huguenot church in London and there personally guided the training of his son in the classical languages. Later, with the assistance of the boy, then only in his teens, he founded a school at Islington. Thus at an early age, this youth formed the habit of molding other's minds. He never lost that habit. He became the great pedagogue of Hanoverian England.

After the death of his father, John Theophilus Desaguliers decided to finish his studies at Oxford, where he attained fame in Experimental Philosophy, or Science. He was given the chair of Experimental Philosophy in Christ Church College and acclaimed the great authority of all Europe.

In 1713 he left Oxford for London, taking spacious quarters, and in them gave lectures. Thus he became the first public lecturer on

Science in Europe. Success immediately greeted his audacious enterprise,, because the people of London had never seen anything like this. They crowded his quarters. He became the fashion. The greatest noblemen of his time honored his courses with their attendance and him with their friendship. He became one of the most important personages of all London, the intimate of the illustrious Sir Isaac Newton. He was elected "Fellow of the Royal Society of London", chosen Curator and Demonstrator of that august Society, and it was here that Desaguliers took the great doctrines of Newton and through his experiments made them accessible and understandable to the minds of all. He invented the planetarium. His scientific and philosophical treatises and books were accepted as the standard works of his day.

The social world was so carried away with enthusiasm for his lectures that he was invited by royalty to give his experiments at court. His patriotic zeal and the quality of his endeavors won for him one of the most prominent places In Hanoverian England.

If at any time in her history England needed strong leadership it was at this moment. There had been a continuous political strife and dissension. Morality was at a low ebb. Religiouswise that nation, as perhaps the rest of the world, was in a chaotic state. Fads and isms had sprung up. Confusion was the order of the day. Darkness was upon the face of the deep.

On June 24th, 1717, as a strategic move in the political game of chess between the Houses of Hanover and Stuart, the Hanoverians, just to accomplish their own selfish ends, gathered together four comparatively unimportant Masonic Lodges lying in the outskirts of London to form the Grand Lodge of London, the first Grand Lodge of Masonry. It was on that day that Freemasonry, all unexpectedly, started on its world mission.

For at least two centuries people on all sides had been looking for such a thing as Freemasonry. Inquiring minds, irritated by the social and Intellectual discipline imposed by the Church, had been centers of resistance, around which formed societies which took issue with the Church. For a long time those forces had been turning expectantly toward Masonry. Every ism indeed had sought the influence of some one or more of the Masonic Guilds, and one can well imagine the chaos in that multitude of loosely organized associations which seemed groping without aim or purpose.

For a time it looked as though even this newborn Masonry was to fail, but in 1719 Desaguliers was elected Grand Master, and he brought to Freemasonry the life it needed. He wrote most of its ritual. He brought to it his experimental philosophy, and gave to it a touch of Newtonian Christianity, a belief in Newton's God, now and for the first time, "The Great Artificer and Creator of the Universe." The world had been openly venal and immoral. It had been attacking religion in self defense, and all the more easily because religion seemed but an ancient dogma. But here was a new idea in religion, one appealing to the intelligence instead of offering a creed, for it based upon analysis and reality. Here a contemplation of nature produced certain logical facts. It taught men to think.

Desaguliers brought back into Masonry many of those who had been in the habit of neglecting it. Further he introduced into Fraternity a group of the greatest noblemen of England. He it was who inaugurated the idea of making speeches at the end of Masonic banquets. Again, he restored the ancient custom of presenting at the conclusion of banquets those emphatic toasts which played such an important role in the formal life of England. These took the place of our contemporary political discussions and created the political atmosphere of the day.

Fashion is one of the most powerful of social forces. Freemasonry under Desaguliers became the fashion. The very elite of England quickly rushed to the order. Its Grand Masters were selected from the highest of the nobility. Powerful indeed became our Brotherhood and one definitely designed for the temporal influence by reason of the importance of its leaders.

Those who developed this new order enjoyed a success that surpassed their fondest hopes. Their aim had been a strong central Lodge around which the other Lodges in and about London, then working in an incoherent manner, could be grouped. But around this new movement the nobility, the clergy, the army, the middle classes, all the forces of the nation, gathered in a single body. So astounding a revolution of the human spirit had not been witnessed since the explosion of primitive Christianity. England found a national unity and as a consequence, England became for the entire civilized world a perfect example of enlightened government. The exact formula, suited to the amount, had been found.

Fifteen years after its formation the Grand Lodge of London had become the center of all English Freemasonry, and after thirty years dominated the Masonry of the world – thanks to one man!

The latter days of Desaguliers appear to be clouded in mystery, perhaps in sadness. One report has it that misfortune overtook him, and that sorrow and poverty were his fate. Cawthorn, in a poem, entitled the "Vanity of Human Enjoyments", intimates in the following lines that he was in very necessitous circumstances at the time of his death:

*"How poor, neglected Desaguliers fell;  
How he who taught two gracious kings to view  
All Boyle ennobled and all Bacon knew,  
Died, in a cell without a friend to save,  
Without a guinea, and without a grave."*

What matter it as to his end? It is what he did while here that is the measure of the man. He took an old dying order and gave to it a philosophy which was peculiarly his own. He added a touch of science, and then a practical concept of the Great Architect and Organizer of the world; into this he breathed a prayer and Speculative Freemasonry was born. Through the force of his own personality he brought to this new institution the important men of England, royalty, the nobility, the elite, the great minds. Because of the purity of its principles, and because of the importance of its early leaders brought in by Desaguliers, Freemasonry since his day has been a living thing, pulsating with the very best that is to be found in man.

His life was a veritable fountain of light, a beacon to show the way for countless generations. John Theophilus Desaguliers has, even in death, ruled nations. Was it not as though the Supreme Grand Master spoke to men's minds through him and said, "What is the cause of this confusion?"

With all this information before us may anyone question that Freemasonry had a political and religious mission in England during the first half of the 18th century.

By 1750, then, England had found a new equilibrium in both politics and religion. Freemasonry had played a great part and had become strong socially and financially, with a world wide influence. With these Assets it went on triumphantly leading its crusade.

In France Louis XIV was dead and the crowd in Paris had laughed and here and there had lighted bonfires to celebrate its joy. English fashions, which had enchanted the French nobility and had held sway over the minds of French writers, now made it easy for Freemasonry

to establish itself in France. English Freemasonry, desirous of achieving a triumph, seized the opportunity to cross the channel. The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of London did not disdain to take his colleagues to Paris to encourage the zeal of the Lodges which were established there.

Temperamentally the French were an entirely different people from the English. Freemasonry to be acceptable to the French had to be noble, not professional; mystic rather than scientific. England sought the dignity in Masonry, France the bizarre. In England, it was the trowel: in France, the sabre – in the many new degrees added by the French.

In spite of ban of King, in spite of Papal Bull, Freemasonry during the last quarter of the 18th century became soundly entrenched as a part of the social life of all France, not, however, as a body cooperating with the State as in England, but more as a personal adventure. Its presence could be detected everywhere; in Parliament, in the army, in the monasteries, in school and at court. As in England, its leadership generally remained in the hands of the high nobility. Ten of the most influential aristocratic dynasties of France were engaged in spreading the Masonic message. Here, too, as in England, men were called upon to study this new religion of Freemasonry, which was reported to be older, more beautiful, more philosophic than any of the organized churches.

For centuries French classes had been separated by old prejudices and habits. Every few miles the traveler found himself in a different atmosphere. where habits, dialects and social customs had changed. Each province, each city, had its own measurements, its own justice, its own points of view. Freemasonry, alone, remained everywhere the same and everywhere welcomed its children without prejudice as to country, race or religion. Instead of the old spirit of class which had formerly bound together all of the noblemen of France, Freemasonry organized and substituted a good-fellowship which broadened to include all ranks and estates. This it was that made it the greatest social force of the century.

Loose a great social force like this in a country whose King had said, "The State – it is I", and the results are likely to be as unforeseen and as shocking as the new electricity Benjamin Franklin was then demonstrating to the world.

A political revolution is never the matter of a moment. History has shown time and again that before political revolutions great intellectual and moral revolutions must first have been effected.

Certainly, revolution had not been the conscious aim of Freemasonry in France; no socially minded person likes revolution; no benevolent soul accepts lightheartedly its miseries. But consider what happened. Freemasonry in France preached equality. This is a basic Masonic principle and wherever Lodges met, members of the privileged classes, of the aristocracy, bowed solemnly before the symbols of equality. The acceptance by the French nobility of equality before a common altar turned the influence of Masonry toward the intellectual and social revolution which preceded the political one in that country. The very Freemasonry which had so intrigued the nobility of France that they gladly spread its doctrines saw its teachings absorbed in the cry of the people, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity", and eventually helped to destroy that same nobility.

Indeed, may we not feel that Freemasonry played a most important political and religious role in France during the closing years of the 18th century?

What of Freemasonry in the Americas?

Prior to our own Revolution thirteen small Colonies were separated by such distances that it took a letter three weeks to travel from Boston to Georgia. There was no uniformity in the administration of those thirteen separate governments, or in their religious affiliations, or social standards. There were the merchant class of the North – the great land owners of the South. There were the Puritans, the Quakers, the Catholics, the Dutch, English, Scotch-Irish, Germans and French. All rivals and jealous of each other. There was no unity.

Freemasonry alone, undertook to prepare a common foundation. It spread throughout the Colonies among a prominent class of people. Contact between American Lodges became closer and closer each year, and any Mason traveling found a welcome in the Lodges he visited. There he met the best citizens who were glad to help him in both social and business ways. As a result a virtual social and economic aristocracy of Freemasonry was established in America on a national scale, with a feeling of American unity, without which American Liberty would not have developed – without which there would have been no United States of America.



Benjamin Franklin had been the first great American apostle of Freemasonry and had busied himself in organizing not only the Society but also a Colony-wide Press with a strong Masonic influence. From 1750 to 1773 all the Masonic newspapers and Lodges were united in resisting the encroachment of the English Government. Americans remained faithful to English civilization, but they were fast becoming conscious of an inevitable national unity. Freemasonry, in the meantime, was still the only meeting ground for the exchange of view of the Colonies.

Boston was the center of discontent in America. Feeling ran high in the Puritan capital. The Merchants were angry with England because of restrictions imposed on their trade. All were ready to pay the price to get rid of English custom officials. It took but a spark to produce the conflagration.

St. Andrew's Lodge, while not the wealthiest Lodge of Boston, could well be termed the most active. It was headed by a famous surgeon, Joseph Warren, an intimate friend of Franklin and a man whose intellectual renown and political influence had spread throughout the Colonies. Here belonged Paul Revere and John Hancock. St. Andrew's Lodge held its meetings at a tavern called "The Green Dragon, or the Arms of Freemasonry". The Green Dragon also was the meeting place for others who damned the English and denounced the new tax which had just been imposed upon tea imported into the Colonies.

On Thursday afternoon, December 16th, 1773, the members of St. Andrew's Lodge proceeded to the Green Dragon for their regular communication, but the minutes show that they must have been busy elsewhere. Suddenly, out of the Tavern appeared a band of redskins strangely masked and shabbily clad. Rushing to the docks they boarded some sloops, proceeded to three English Merchantmen in the harbor, threw overboard 342 cases of tea; returned to the sloops; regained the docks, marched to the Green Dragon with song and hurray, and entered the Tavern. But, strangely, no redskins were thereafter reported to have left. History has never disproved that Joseph Warren was the host of the Boston Tea Party.

Have You ever attempted to picture the assistance given by the Masonic order to the Colonial Army? We scarcely need chronic condition; untrained country lads with short enlistments; a quartermaster corps that failed to supply clothes, food or guns; a militia that was never dependable. What was it that held this army together, that could turn it around after a long retreat through the

Jerseys and march barefoot men through ice and snow to a Trenton midnight attack and give our country the best Christmas present it ever received? Nothing but the spirit of one man, who had earned the confidence and worship of the entire army – himself a member of the Masonic Order since the age of twenty-one, and acquainted its colony-wide influence as "the cement which binds us together."

Into this Colonial Army of Washington came those famous Lodges of the Line. He visited them personally – in one Lodge, tradition says he raised LaFayette. Can we picture the scene, perhaps in a tent – the great drum in the center, covered with our flag, as an altar, three bayonets, disengaged and stuck in the ground, holding burning tapers in their sockets for the Lesser Lights?

These ten or eleven Lodges of the Line served well in their stations and places. In them alone was concentrated the work of the Red Cross, Salvation Army and Y. M. C. A. of a later conflict. They kept alive morale, they restored courage, they inspired hope. The indomitable spirit of Washington found its greatest ally in the Militant Masonry. May it not be that when, as President, he accepted the Mastership of Alexandria Lodge, he was making formal acknowledgment before the world of the debt the United States owed to Freemasonry?

When Benjamin Franklin was sent to Europe to seek the aid of France in the struggle against England, on all sides the American Minister found a people filled with enthusiasm for his country, and kindly disposed toward him, but who adhered strictly to the policy of avoiding war.

His cause seemed hopeless. However, the Colonies could not succeed without the help of France, and Franklin would not be denied. He surveyed the situation and concluded that Freemasonry was the means to attain his end. A new, brilliant and very influential Lodge had but recently been organized, the "Lodge of the Nine Sisters". Franklin joined this Lodge, and what he now accomplished was a stroke of genius.

M. de Voltaire was the hero of the French public. He had spent his whole life battling error and had won the acclaim of the nation. From Royalty to tavern waiters – they worshipped him. He was the realized idol of everyone of them; of all Frenchmen, the most French.

It was in this Lodge of the Nine Sisters Voltaire was initiated under the direction of Franklin. At the close of the initiation these two great men,

overcome with emotion, embraced each other. This made such a profound impression that its story was on every tongue and wherever they appeared together they were requested to embrace again.

Franklin became Master of the Lodge of the Nine Sisters and was now in a position to use his skill. The native ingenuity of Franklin has never been surpassed. Soon the Lodge was spreading abroad slogans and epigrams to influence public opinion in favor of the Colonies, and, largely due to the influence of Masonry, France was induced to assist America.

One more picture: On a hill looking out over the blue Mediterranean one day just after the turn of the 19th century sat a young man, one who had gone to Europe from the Americas to complete his education. In the spirit of the moment he had become a member of the Masonic Fraternity. Imbued with the spirit of equality and liberty that was sweeping Europe he resolved that his country should rid itself of the yoke of Spain. He returned to his America, and today six nations, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Equador, Colombia and Venezuela call Simon Bolivar "The Liberator".

Freemasonry has had its political role even in Catholic South America.

Since the great Revolutionary period, when Freemasonry furnished both ideals and leadership, it has seemed content to be for its votaries a source of philosophy and light, holding before them an inspiration for kindness, for friendliness, for brotherhood. During the past few years, however, since the Great World War, something new has crept into our lives, a change we scarcely understand.

Abroad – Is there not enough in the panorama which is passing before our eyes to force upon us the consciousness of the change which is taking place? And when we do stop to consider, do we not sometimes ask ourselves if there is anything certain but change? If our winds have not been too dulled by the continuous shock of the times let us pause and look. Ethiopia – Spain – China --Austria – Russia and Japan – Germany and Czechoslovakia – Memel – Albania – German and Italian aggression – a world-wide armament race – the scrapping of treaties – the invading of weaker nations. Does that picture, make sense? And if it does is not the sense horrifying?

And what about the situation at home? Here we have labor troubles – the machine gun – the gas bomb – strife on every hand. All about us we see an attempt at intellectual and moral revolution, which in the

past have often led to political revolution. Darkness is upon the face of the deep.

Is there not a glorious opportunity for the type of Masonic leadership we have had before? Or is it true instead that all human things have an end, and that even our institution of Freemasonry has been forced out of its place in the sun?

Is it not time that we gave a bit of thought to what is happening to Freemasonry throughout the world – in Russia – Germany – Italy – Austria – Spain – Czechoslovakia? Most of these nations desire to force their own form of political existence upon us. The forces which have created havoc in Europe are desperately striving to accomplish their ends in America and at this moment.

It was but a few weeks ago that American newspapers carried the story of the trial of the directors of the German-American Settlement League. One of these directors, while upon the witness stand, was asked by the prosecuting attorney to salute the Stars and Stripes, and he responded with the stiff gesture of the Hitler salute. When the prosecutor thundered at him, "Is that the American salute?", he responded, "No. But it will be!"

Recently hot over the wires came these words spoken by Mussolini of Italy, "No matter how things go we wish to hear no more about brotherhood, sisterhood and such other bastard relationships, because relationships between states are relations of force and these relations of force are the determining elements of their policy".

Let us not laugh at that old adage, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance,." There never was a time when we needed to be more alert and watchful than now.

It is not necessary before such a group as this to recapitulate what has happened to Freemasonry, to Christianity, to democracy in parts of Europe. In many places personal liberty has disappeared – democracy has passed away. Man may no longer worship as he desires – Christianity stands with its back to the wall; and Freemasonry, which can exist only where there is personal liberty, has been banned and members of the Craft persecuted for their connection with the institution.

Darkness is upon the face of the earth.

The world is in the throes of a struggle between democracy and totalitarianism; the essence of the former is Justice; that of the latter, Force. The aggressive brutality of totalitarianism appears to be riding the crest of a triumph.

Democracy has been the great goal of man for the past two centuries. It is recognized as that form of society which is inspired above every other with the feeling and consciousness of the dignity of the individual man. It is the embodiment of personal liberty.

Totalitarianism teaches contempt for human kind. Its terrorism degrades and destroys peoples. It corrupts character, releases every evil impulse, turns men into cowardly hypocrites and shameless informers. That is why dictators love terrorism. The totalitarian state subordinates every phase of public life itself. What we call culture – religion, art, research, higher morality, free human thought – falls under the crime of treason whenever it pursues truth through to independence. Totalitarianism sacrifices the individual to the power of the State.

Why has the very first act of each totalitarian state been to crush Freemasonry within its borders? The answer is that Force respects and fears our ideals. For two centuries Freemasonry has been the greatest social power on earth. A dictator fears Freemasonry's democratic teachings and its strong religious motif incompatible with terrorism.

Then, is it not about time that we cease trying to talk ourselves into believing that Freemasonry is neither a political institution nor a religion? From the very day of the father of the institution, Desaguliers, it has ever been a political and religious institution.

Partisan politics? Never! Sectarian religion? Never! But it received its birth as a part of political plot, and from that day, it has never hesitated to take its place in the affairs of government. Freemasonry has never shuddered at war or even at revolution if personal liberty was at stake.

Shall our institution become nothing more than a beautiful instrument of abstract calculation, a materially mechanical philosophy? God forbid! Let us keep it in contact with life, with concrete productive reality.

Are we asleep? Is that spirit of Masonry of old just lying dormant, or has it passed out of existence? Is there not enough of the old fire left to offer even a word in self defense?

There, was a day when this institution of ours took a definite place in world affairs. There was a day when it was the meeting place for minds opposed to tyranny. Have we forgotten?

Did we ask a moment ago if there is anything certain but change? There is one answer. In the beginning – God. Today – God. One and the same, unchangeable forever. Even though darkness may be upon the face of the deep, the Spirit of God still walks upon the face of the waters. The quality of personal liberty has not changed. It is still the highest earthly goal to which we may aspire.

In the early days of American history man came here to worship as he pleased. Later, it was oppression, a disregard for right and justice that produced an American revolution. The great Commander of the Colonial forces was fighting for personal liberty. It was the belief of Washington and his army that liberty, democracy, religion walked hand in hand. It was their faith that the Almighty Ruler of the Universe was battling alongside of and for the cause of democracy.

During Revolutionary and pre-revolutionary days the institution was not a party; it was not a sect; it was not a school. But it bound men together in a feeling of brotherhood. It led and it guided. It was a society of ideals, and that society was the power of powers that could make and unmake kings, direct the course of empire, and give birth to our own democracy. What has become of that Freemasonry that could be called a meeting place for minds opposed to tyranny when today a small minority may work its will upon a nation?

Where else is there all institution big enough, powerful enough, and with sufficient influence to overcome the growing threat of Force? Where else is there an institution without an axe to grind, which is unselfish enough to be trusted with a responsibility such as faces the world today? Is there any other such power but Freemasonry?

We been called the most efficient social power on earth. Then is it trite for as to remind ourselves that the price of greatness is responsibility? Is it disloyal to the Freemasonry of Desaguliers, of Voltaire, Franklin, Washington and Bolivar to urge that Freemasonry again reach out to take its proper place in world affairs?

The time has come when our members should no longer sit and bask in the sunshine of a glorious philosophy. There is work to do.

If Freemasonry is worth anything, if personal liberty is the precious thing we think it is, if the heritage of worshiping as one pleases is still of any value, then Freemasonry must again assume the responsibility of preparing for that leadership which is to bring Light to this generation.

Not in every period of darkness has Divine Providence answered the call for leadership. But it has come when man has placed himself in the proper position to receive and follow leadership. There must be a nation of seekers of the Light before there will be bringers of the Light. It is then that leaders rise to work the will of Providence.

The Institution of Freemasonry has the respect of the civilized world. It is the one society which is powerful enough to create fashion for the present as it has in the past. Then let us as Masons stand before the world and say what is in our minds. Let each member of the Fraternity in this country in no unmistakable terms say to all mankind, "I believe in God Almighty, and in the United States of America. Personal liberty is here to stay. Man shall worship as he desires. Democracy shall not be forced out of its place in the sun." Then will the Institution continue to fill its world mission. Then will Freemasonry maintain its place as the most efficient social power on earth. Then can we tune our ears to the heavens and hear, "Your faith is well founded. Fear no danger."

***Delivered before  
The Grand Lodge of Washington  
June 1939***