THE INFLUENCE OF MEN ON MASONRY

An Oration
by
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Of Washington

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"You admit that it is not in the power of any man, or body of men, to make innovation in the body of Masonry."

This is one of the Ancient Charges and Regulations to which each of us is required to assent previous to his investiture as Master of his Lodge.

Yet, men have changed Masonry. We take for granted the powerful influence Masonry has had on men. We seldom recognize there have been men who have had a tremendous influence upon the Institution.

Let us view some of these men who have permanently affected our body of tradition.

We are all familiar with the early stork of the Craft, how the guilds of the seventeenth century developed into the eighteenth century English lodges of operatives and non-operatives.

By the year 1717, there were several such Lodges meeting in London and Westminster, including the Lodge at the Goose and Gridiron Ale House, the Lodge at the Crown Ale House, the Lodge at the Apple Tree Tavern and the Lodge at the Rummer and Grapes Tavern. And on June 24, 1717, 5t. John the Baptist's Day, we find these four Lodges meeting and forming the first Grand Lodge, the predecessor of this and all other Grand Lodges, and electing Mr. Anthony Sayer, Gentleman, as the first Grand Master.

For a time it seemed that this effort was doomed to failure. Rev. William Stukeley, made a Mason four years after this event, writes in his diary:

"I was the first person made a Freemason in London for many years. We had difficulty to find members enough to perform the ceremony!'

But by the end of 1721 the Fraternity had leaped into favor among men of distinction, due, in part, to the efforts of John Theophilus Desaguliers, Grand Master in 1719, and the Duke of Montague, Grand Master in 1721, both of whom were distinguished men and Masons and fellows of the Royal Society. There was a great influx in the membership of the Craft, particularly of non-operatives, and the number of Lodges in and around London and Westminster increased greatly. Eminent and distinguished men were attracted to its ranks.

Into this scene came Rev. James D. Anderson, whose Masonic works can be traced directly into nearly every English speaking Grand Lodge in America.

James D. Anderson was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1679. His father was James Anderson, a glazier, and a member of the Lodge of Aberdeen. Anderson, Sr., was clerk to the Lodge, from the time its records commenced in 1670 for over a quarter of a century. James grew up in a Masonic atmosphere.

In 1709 he went to London and formed a congregation of Scotchmen residing in the neighborhood of Westminster and continued his ministerial duties until his death in 1739.

The date and place of his initiation in Masonry are unknown. Whether he became a member of his father's Lodge in Aberdeen or joined some Lodge in London after he started his congregation is a matter of speculation.

Historical records show that the Grand Lodge as formed in 1717 was not a body for which the Old Charges made any provision. It possessed no regulations of its own. There were other Lodges meeting in the vicinity which did not join in its formation. But as the popularity of the Craft increased, there was also a need for new legislation governing not only the Grand Lodge but also its constituent Lodges.

Consequently, George Payne, in his second term as Grand Master, prepared a set of regulations for the government of the Fraternity which was unanimously approved by the Grand Lodge at its annual communication, June 24, 1721.

Owing to the expansion of the membership, it was increasingly necessary that this legislation be made known to the various Lodges and their members. Further, many of the Masons of the time were familiar with the Old Charges and felt they were no longer suitable for conditions of the day, and also that the history of the Craft should be brought down to date.

In response to this demand, Anderson appeared before the Grand Lodge in September, 1721, and asked permission to write and publish a history of the Order. This was granted.

After an effort of somewhat more than a year and at least two consultations with the Grand Lodge, Anderson produced his work consisting of a history of the Craft, a rewriting of the Old Charges, Payne's Regulations possibly revised to some extent, and the manner of constituting a new Lodge as practiced by the Duke of Wharton, then Grand Master. The volume was published in 1723 under the title of "The Constitutions of the Free-Masons", and immediately received a wide circulation.

Although Anderson's Constitutions was really his own private enterprise, because of the approval of the Grand Lodge, it did take its place as an official document. It was taken by the Grand Lodge of Ireland as the model for their Book of Constitutions in 1730. It was reprinted for use in America by Benjamin Franklin in 1734, the first printed Masonic work in this country. It was reprinted in London and Dublin by others in 1735 and widely distributed. A new edition was

produced by Anderson in 1738, in which he made many changes and revisions, not only in the History, but also in the Charges and Regulations.

For 150 years Anderson was accepted without question. His was the first Masonic book printed. Preston's Illustrations of Masonry, to which I shall advert later, in its historical portion is based upon Anderson. One Masonic scholar has said if we had not Anderson's Constitutions, we should have had no narrative at all of the Masonry which dated from 1717. His version of the Charges has become firmly rooted in our modern rituals and monitors. His work also played an important part in creating a standard of Masonic jurisprudence during the last two centuries. The 1723 edition has been officially recognized by this Grand Lodge in Section 2908 of the Code wherein an adherence to the Constitutions of 1723 is a prerequisite to the recognition of a foreign Grand Lodge.

There are those who minimize Anderson because he did take liberties in executing his work. He rewrote the Old Charges, in his own form, instead of merely compiling them from his sources. His historical facts are often in error or are the result of his imagination.

Whether his actions were justified or not, the fact remains that his work has become a foundation stone of the speculative system.

Three parts of his volume have been reprinted as an appendix to our Code. They are: The Charges of a Free-Mason, The Old Regulations of 1721, and the Manner of Constituting a New Lodge as practiced by the Duke of Wharton.

The Old Charges laid down rules for the government of the individual Maser in his profession. How much we have drawn upon them may be shown by a few quotations which ring familiar in our ears.

The first Charge says:

"A Mason is oblig'd, by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; . . to be **GOOD MEN AND TRUE** or Men of Honour and Honesty..

The second Charge:.

"A Mason is a peaceable Subject to the Civil Powers, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concern d in Plots and Conspiracies against the Peace and Welfare of the Nation, nor to behave himself undutiful to inferior Magistrates; . . .

And in the third Charge:

"The Persons admitted Members of a **LODGE** must be good and true Men, freeborn, and of mature and discreet Age, no Bondmen, no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report."

In respect to the General Regulations as written by Payne and reproduced by Anderson, we are dealing with what is clearly an innovation in Masonry. The Old Charges may be regarded as a rewriting, in modern form and language, of documents which had long been in possession of the Craft. But the General Regulations dealt with problems which had only recently arisen. As previously stated, there were other Lodges in London beside the four old Lodges. These other Lodges had no difficulty in being recognized for it was merely necessary that they adhere to the Grand Lodge. But in view of the increasing membership the question arose whether it was possible to form entirely new Lodges which would be recognized. To meet this situation, Payne proposed his General Regulations.

The first eleven Regulations dealt with particular Lodges; the remainder with the Grand Lodge.

At least one of them, Regulation XIII, has given rise to a controversy which apparently can never be satisfactorily resolved.

Regulation XIII provided that Apprentices must be admitted Masters and Fellow-Craft only in the Grand Lodge except by dispensation.

Some Masonic students contend this passage indicates the existence of three degrees of Masonry at the time. Others claim there were then only two degrees and the third degree was invented or separated from one of the other degrees sometime between 1723 and 1738. The latter cite as their authority Anderson's edition of 1738 wherein the distinct phrases, Entered Apprentice, Fellow-Craft and Master Mason are used.

In any event, the use of these phrases was certainly a potent factor in the expansion of the ancient ceremonies of the Craft into three degrees. Anderson copied these three titles from the Masonic phraseology at Aberdeen. They had no previous existence in English Masonry and it is, therefore, Anderson to whom we are indebted for the names of our three degrees.

In a great part, these Regulations are in force in our own Grand Jurisdiction.

Were it not for Anderson's printed work, it is hard to tell in what form we would have Masonry today. Indeed, without it, Masonry might never have survived.

To Anderson, therefore, the debt of modern Masonry is great.

Prior to 1717, the secrets of the Craft were given to the candidates in such form and language as were within the command of the presiding Master. These lectures could be filled with Masonic history and traditions, clearly and adequately explained, or they could be sketchy and inadequate, depending upon the capacity of the particular Master.

About the same time Anderson's Constitutions were published, Anderson and Desaguliers gave some semblance of form and order to the ceremonies

of admission by arranging the lectures into question and answer form. The Grand Lodge was favorably impressed, adopted the form and ordered it to be given in all Lodges.

During the next fifty years, various revisions in the ritual were made by scholars of the Craft.

It was during this period that William Preston was born at Edinburgh in 1742. Made a Mason in a Lodge of Scotchmen in London in 1763, within a few short years he was the Master of his Lodge.

He was an indefatigable worker, studying everything he could obtain on Masonry. He possessed a marvelous memory and retained the details of anything he ever real. He had the happy faculty of making friends and of imbuing them with his own enthusiasm for Masonry.

It was as Master of his Lodge that he commenced to rewrite the lectures of Anderson and Desaguliers as revised from time to time. While writing his lectures, he constantly discussed them with his friends, revising them all the while. Finally, after many years of study and preparation, he delivered the first lecture in 1772 before a meeting of outstanding Masons including the principal Grand Lodge officers. In the same year he published his "Illustrations of Masonry", containing the exoteric part of his lectures. His Illustrations is the predecessor of our present day Monitor.

Preston and his friends then began to disseminate his lectures throughout the English Lodges. They ultimately received the sanction of the Grand Lodge and were adopted as its standard work.

Preston's esoteric work was brought to the United States just before 1800 by two English brethren who were members of the Lodge of Instruction founded by him in London. They communicated the work to one Thomas Smith Webb, an influential Mason of New England.,

Webb was an extremely intelligent and talented man and was intensely interested in Masonry. He had studied Preston's Illustrations, and wanted to revise them because of their prolixity.

Thus, he came to publish in 1797 the famous "Webb Free-mason Monitor" containing Preston's lectures rearranged in a more simple and convenient form.

His work had a profound influence upon Masonry in the United States. Webb taught his system to Benjamin Gleason. Gleason visited England, exemplified these lectures and the Grand Lodge of England pronounced them correct.

In 1817 John Barney received the Preston lectures as taught by Gleason.

This work was ultimately brought through Barney to the Grand Lodge of Washington, and was adopted as its standard work in 1886.

Thus it is that Masons, not only in this jurisdiction, but in other jurisdictions of the United States, are indebted to both Preston and Webb for the rituals which are practiced today. These two men, more than any others, had a greater influence upon our forms and ceremonies, and can truly be called the fathers of our modern rituals.

Anderson vitalized Masonry. Preston and Webb propagated it. It remains for our twentieth century Craftsman, Roscoe Pound, to interpret it.

The contribution of Roscoe Pound to Masonic scholarship has been in organizing and making intelligible Masonic jurisprudence and Masonic philosophy. His student can easily perceive the relation of Masonic law to law in general. He can appreciate the universal aspects of Masonic legal problems. Pound has also connected Masonic thinking with the general thought of the time and place in which Masonic philosophers did their work. He has advanced a twentieth century Masonic philosophy.

Let us review the essence of his jurisprudence and philosophy.

Politically organized society has a body of developed rules for human conduct, which enables it to reconcile conflicting interests, conserve values and eliminate waste. Masonry likewise has a body of rules, developed slowly through experience, designed to secure interests and conserve values in our organization.

The Masonic lawyer works with the Ancient Landmarks, Masonic common law and Masonic legislation. The Landmarks constitute a small, but not clearly defined body of fundamentals, beyond the reach of change; Masonic common law, a body of tradition and doctrine, falling short of meeting the test of a Landmark, but of such long standing and so universal that we should hesitate to depart from it; and Masonic legislation, the written rules of local action as developed at the annual communications of our Grand Lodges.

The first two elements may be called the unwritten law of Masonry, resting in tradition handed down from time immemorial, and in doctrinal writing such as treatises of Masonic legal students and decisions of Grand Masters. The traditional element is the more important one because of the reliance placed upon it to meet all new problems, interpret legislation and furnish Principles of new legislation.

Pound acknowledges, as we all do, the indebtedness of the Fraternity to Albert G. Mackey, the first to expound a systematic statement when he published his "Principles of Masonic Law" in 1856. Pound's method is to examine Mackey's work, particularly his twenty-five landmarks, and to demonstrate by a critical analysis what may be recognize as Landmarks and what as Masonic common law.

There have been some who would deny the existence of Landmarks as such, and assert that at least down to the time of Mackey, the term was one floating about in Masonic writing without any definite meaning. It is true that prior to Mackey, dogmatism with respect to the Landmarks cannot be found, and our present views have been largely influenced by his writings.

But it now appears clear that, at least from the time of the revival to the present, there can be traced a notion of unalterable, fundamental principles and groundwork, and of a body of Masonry beyond the reach of innovation, to which Mackey, at least, applied the term Landmarks.

In Pound's opinion, only seven of Mackey's Landmarks are acceptable. These are, belief in God, belief in the persistence of personality, the Book of the Law as an indispensable part of the furniture of every Lodge, the legend of the third degree, secrecy, symbolism of the operative art, and that a Mason must be a man, freeborn and of age.

The remainder are placed in the category of Masonic common law because they do not meet the test of true Landmarks.

The third element, Masonic legislation or written law, has no legal barriers except the Ancient Landmarks which are subject to differences of opinion. Section 3 of our Constitution states that the powers of this Grand Lodge are limited only by the Ancient Landmarks of Masonry and its own Constitution and Laws.

But while a Grand Lodge may legally be unchecked in its legislation except by the Ancient Landmarks, it is, however, restrained by various moral forces, such as the reports of committees on foreign correspondence which analyze and criticize the activities of other Grand Lodges, the influence of Masonic education where a better acquaintance with our tradition makes our lawmakers more cautious, more intelligent and more effective, and above all these, the inherent principles of Masonry which teach that our measure is reason and not pure will.

In the field of philosophy, Pound has set down a concise statement of the systems of five of the great Masonic philosophers, representative of their times, and has also advanced his own theory of a twentieth century Masonic philosophy. All this has been done without the platitudes found in the writings of many so-called Masonic philosophers. His exposition reaches down to the fundamental points of philosophy, and has made it easy for us to appreciate the setting in which each philosopher worked, the answer of each to the fundamental questions of Masonic philosophy, and how the efforts of each should be evaluated today.

Masonic philosophy poses three fundamental questions:

1. What is the nature and purpose of Masonry as an institution? What does it seek to do? What ought it to seek as its end?

2. What is-and what should be-the relation of Masonry to other human institutions, especially those directed to similar ends?

3. What are the fundamental principles by which Masonry is governed in attaining its end? What ought those principles to be?

The systems of Masonic philosophy are of two types, intellectual systems, the systems of Preston, Krause and Fichte, and spiritual system, the systems of Oliver and Pike.

The philosophy of Preston is found in his lectures. It is of particular interest to the American Mason because it is the only one with which he is ordinarily familiar.

Preston's theory was, in his period when there was little or no public education, that the attainment of knowledge would result in human perfection. He thought that by making the lectures epitomes of all the great branches of learning, the Masonic Lodge would be a school in which men might acquire the knowledge by which they could achieve all things. If man had knowledge, all social problems would be solved.

The result of Preston's idea is seen particularly in the lecture of the second degree containing a resume of the knowledge which was sought in his day. When we appreciate the times and circumstances under which he wrote, we can understand and explain the presence of the Fellow Craft lecture, inadequate and out of place as it is today.

Preston answers the fundamental problems of Masonic philosophy as follows:

The purpose and end of Masonry is to spread knowledge among men, and, if knowledge is diffused, man will be perfected: Masonry achieves its

purposes both by symbols and by lectures in which the Mason is admonished to study and acquire learning, and in which he is actually taught a complete system of organized knowledge.

This philosophy does not seem acceptable for modern times. Knowledge is not the sole end of Masonry, although it is one important end.

Preston expounded knowledge; Karl Christian Friedrich Krause expounded reason. Krause is the great legal philosopher of the early nineteenth century. It is natural that his Masonic philosophy is considered in its relation to law.

Law is an instrument of the state, originally designed only to limit violence, but later seeking not only to preserve order but to do justice. But there is beyond this a higher goal, the perfection of man and society. Law alone is inadequate for this task. It must work with morals, religion, science, the arts, industry and commerce. Law and morals are distinct but their aim is one.

Krause answers the three problems of Masonic philosophy thus:

The immediate purpose of Masonry is to organize the universal moral sentiments of mankind and the sanction of human disapproval with respect to departures from those moral sentiments. Its ultimate purpose is the perfection of humanity.

Other institutions of humanity, especially government and religion, aim also at human perfection. Each should work in harmony with the others to the great benefit of them all.

Masonry deals with the internal conditions of life governed by reason. Its fundamental principles are measurement by reason and restraint by reason.

Another German philosopher, of the same period as Krause, is Johann Gottlieb Fichte, whose Masonic philosophy is also based upon reason, although it differs in details from Krause.

Fichte postulates that as a result of the demands of society, based on the division of labor, each individual is trained in his narrow profession or vocation or walk of life, whereby he becomes one-sided and thereby incapable of furthering the highest possible development of humanity. Man needs an all-around development by which he is freed of all prejudices and obtains mastery over ideas. Masonry furnishes such a development.

Masonry is not to supersede other human activities but is to supplement them. It attains its ends by means of instruction which supplies the deficiencies of the one-sided training in society.

Pound now turns from the philosophy of Masonry in its relation to education, morals and law, to the philosophy of Masonry in its relation to religion as expounded by Dr. George Oliver.

Oliver flourished in the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century as a clergyman, a diligent student, and a prolific writer upon antiquities and Masonic subjects.

He answers the three questions of Masonic philosophy in this manner:

The end of Masonry is one with religion and science, and it is through these three that we know God and His works.

Masonry achieves its ends by preserving, handing down and interpreting a tradition of immemorial antiquity.

The fundamental principles of Masonry are essentially the principles of religion as the basic principles of a moral world. In Masonry they appear in traditional form. For example, toleration in Masonry is charity in religion; universality in Masonry is in religion love of neighbor.

At the same time these philosophies were developing in England and on the European continent, an American exemplar, Albert Pike, was developing a philosophy of Masonry in the United States.

Pike was the apostle of liberty of interpretation, holding that each should make his own Masonry for himself by study and reflection. His philosophy deals essentially with symbolism.

His answers to the three fundamental questions of Masonry are:

The immediate end of Masonry is the pursuit of light, the attainment of the fundamental principles of the universe. The ultimate aim of Masonry is to lead us to the absolute-the final unity into which all things merge.

Masonry seeks to interpret other human institutions to us, to make them more efficacious for their purposes, by showing the ultimate reality of which they are the manifestation.

The ends of Masonry are achieved by a system of ancient allegories and symbols upon which we are to reflect until they reveal the light to each of us. Masonry preserves these symbols and acts out these allegories for us.

In developing his own twentieth century philosophy, Pound appreciates that Masonry must not be held to one purpose, but must be of all men and for all men, of all time and for all time. It must have in its body something which can be used today, although it might not have been used yesterday, and it may not be used tomorrow.

Such a philosophy must not be dogmatic, but must serve the needs of time and place. It must seek an end, have a purpose and base its conception upon the history of human institutions.

All social, political and legal institutions are manifestations of civilization. The development of each individual as a civilized and cultured man results in the higher civilization of mankind.

Such a theory has a sound basis iii human institutions and in particular in our own Institution. The earliest and simplest institution of social man is the "men's house"-a separate house for the men of the tribe. Here young men make their entrance upon the duties and responsibilities of tribal life.

This primitive institution develops in different ways. Sometimes it becomes a religious center and later a temple. Sometimes it becomes a barracks for fighting men. Sometimes it becomes the primitive secret society. As this society develops, the men's house becomes a secret lodge. Here we may find the first Masonry.

In the men's house are the germs of civilization. The development of the men's house is the development of civilization and its end and purpose are to preserve, further and hand down civilization.

Pound answers the three questions of Masonic philosophy:

The end of Masonry, in common with all other social institutions, is to preserve, develop and transmit to posterity the civilization wrought by our fathers and passed on to us.

What other human institutions do along lines of caste or creed or within political or territorial limits, Masonry seeks to achieve by universality-by organizing the universal elements in man that make toward culture and civilization.

The ends of Masonry are achieved by its insistence on the solidarity of humanity and on universality, and by the preservation and transmission of an immemorial tradition of human solidarity and universality.

So conceived, this tradition becomes a force of the first moment in maintaining and advancing civilization.

The fact that the Institution of Freemasonry has been able to accept the influences of men such as Anderson, Preston, and Pound, is significant. It demonstrates that Masonry is a living organism. When an institution becomes static, when it can no longer adapt itself to the conditions under which it exists, it fails to accomplish its purpose.

So, while Masonry is essentially traditional, its future lies in the fact that it can change itself so as to impart its lessons under the conditions of the moment. Its future lies with the men who have

the courage to re-interpret where re-interpretation is necessary, to reform where reformation is necessary, yet at the same time preserving the fundamental character of the Institution.

So long as it retains these characteristics it will be a living, active force in the development of humanity in the centuries to come.

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