



A Wake-Up Call!

We can be that beacon of light to society around us. We can show them the way to a better life: The Masonic way. It is simple really, all we must do is be Masons in the true sense of the word, and to be Masons, all we must do is look at the Ritual carefully to find the answers.

A wake-up call!

I look around me at this beautiful world we live in, I think to myself it's pretty scary. Terrorism continues to threaten us perhaps; wars across the world continue to claim innocent lives. At home, we have our own problems. Violent crime is still a problem, and in general we are witnessing the moral decay of our very society around us.

And then, I look at us as Masons, and I am even more terrified than ever.

We have an ability, albeit rare, but still an ability. We can be that beacon of light to society around us. We can show them the way to a better life: The Masonic way. It is simple really, all we must do is be Masons in the true sense of the word, and to be Masons, and all we must do is look at the Ritual carefully to find the answers.

To practice what we preach in other words.

When I became PG Secretary in 2010, a great deal of my time had been taken up dealing with disciplinary matters. Over a 3.5-year period, PGL had dealt with 19 separate Disciplinary cases, issued 7 Suspensions, held 7 Disciplinary Hearings, and ultimately 3 Freemasons had been Suspended Sine Die and 2 expelled from the Craft. At the time of writing there was couple still on-going and one to be concluded! On top of that there was around 2 dozen additional committee meetings, not including the *ad hoc* meetings to discuss some minor issues. In all I had created, copied and posted 373 documents relating to disciplinary matters alone. So, it's a huge amount of work! But I suppose it goes with the territory as they say!

Accepting the various differences in our Ritual, there are many references to the kind of practices we should preach!

The reference is in the N.E. Corner to the newly made Mason is told

"You now stand to all external appearances a just and upright man and a mason."

The key word here is external. We are saying that outwardly you look like a just and upright man to us, therefore a Mason, but what about those inward motives. Are you motivated by proper Masonic motives, and that is why you have joined us? So, we put him to the test to find out, and of course he passes this test. The thing is he will always pass the test, unless in his preparation he is not divested of all money a metallic substance!

In the first-degree we are told of those duties we are to observe:

"To your Neighbour, by always acting with him on the square, by rendering him every kind office which Justice and Mercy may require, by relieving his necessities, soothing his afflictions and by doing unto him as, in similar cases, you would wish that he should do unto you"

Also:

"You are to preserve our ancient usages and established customs sacred and inviolable and induce others by your example to hold them in due veneration."

Some Rituals have:

If every Br. admitted within the sacred walls of this Middle Chamber would but heed the valuable lessons here inculcated, and remember that, as a F... he is a builder; a builder not of a material edifice, but of a T. far more glorious than that of K. S.; a T. of Truth, of Honour, of Justice and of Charity. And the

emblems of the operative M.'s art indicate to him; the labours he is to perform; the dangers he is to encounter and the preparations he is to make in the up rearing of that spiritual T., that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens and where his soul shall find rest and peace for ever more.

And,

“Remember that around the altar you have promised to befriend and relieve every Brother who shall require your assistance; you have promised, in the most friendly manner, to remind him of his errors and aid in his reformation. These generous principles are to extend further; every human being has a claim upon your kind offices”

I could go on Brethren, but that, Brethren, is why I am so terrified now!

We all followed a good example. We all followed someone into the Craft because we are here as masons.

However, the Ritual does not talk about following examples, it tells us to SET them, and that, Brethren is what worries me the most.

What kind of example have we set for those who have come after us?

Have we set the example Masonry commands us to set, or have we gone astray and succumbed to the weaknesses and failings of human nature?

Have we taken our successors down the right path, or have we led them astray with us?

We hold a deadly but powerful choice in our hands. We can leave behind for ourselves a legacy to be proud of and boast

about to future generations, or we can leave behind for ourselves an epitaph to lament over and ask ourselves why?

So, what will it be: legacy or epitaph?

In, referring to the several disciplinary issues the PGL of Forfarshire had to face in less than 4 years; our actions, deeds and our example determine which choice we make.

Time is running short on us. The constant annual decline in membership tells us that there are serious problems that need to be addressed but so far we are struggling to do so.

We must act now while there is still time before it's too late. The problem is how to act.

Whenever we are not in the lodge room, Masonry must still be with us, and as pointed out above, the new Mason is charged to observe and practice masonry in the outside world.

In these dark times, and with all these dark issues facing us both domestically and internationally, let us be that beacon of light through the darkness to society around us.

Let us show them the way, the Masonic way to a better life, to induce others by our example as Freemasons, and thereby, perhaps, a better world for us all to live in; and certainly a better life inside our Lodges - not to mention a less busy time for the PG Secretary!