

SOME PRINCIPLES OF THE MASONIC LAW

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To deliver the opening address is to have the only opportunity given to a speaker at this Conference to exercise freedom of choice as to subject matter. I appreciate the freedom to travel whatever path may be most inviting, but I am conscious of the purpose of this Conference and of the desire to spend our time together in the practical pursuit of improving ourselves in Masonry.

Over the years the Proceedings of these annual Banff Conferences have become a useful source from which Freemasons can add to their knowledge of our fraternity, and can weigh the comments of brethren who have acquired experience in the practice of Freemasonry. Most of the topics that have been reported have had something to be said on more than one side. The variety of views expressed in debating these topics has brought more light to bear on them than any one speaker could hope to have done. This has added greatly to the value of such material as a guide to each individual craftsman in forming his own conclusions. But it is not every Masonic topic that will lend itself to debate, and it is one of these that I have chosen to speak upon tonight.

It might seem that my choice was influenced by the fact that we are sharing the beauties of Banff with the Canadian Bar Association. By sheer weight of numbers the annual convention of this Association has brought the atmosphere of law into these surroundings. But this is only a coincidence and it is not the reason for my choice of Masonic Law as the subject of this paper.

It is axiomatic that every man is presumed to know the law. And so ignorance of Masonic law is no excuse for any of us if we make a wrong decision in this field. Knowledge of the law should help to guide us away from wrong decisions, and so as we cherish our fraternity and as we are conscious of the responsibilities of our offices, we should inform ourselves of the law of Masonry. This is the true reason for my choice of this subject.

I realize it is difficult to keep a subject such as this confined within due bounds. As Bro. Roscoe Pound said, "In the house of jurisprudence there are many mansions. Bro. Albert Mackey wrote in the Preface to his Principles of Masonic Law that it would make too unwieldy a volume if he were to prepare an encyclopedia of Masonic jurisprudence so he decided to present

the principles only, in an "elementary treatise." He then produced a book of 355 pages. Lawrence's Masonic jurisprudence is a simple commentary on the Book of Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of England and it runs to 316 pages. It is an ambitious project to attempt to create the symmetry of a garden out of the luxuriant chaos of all the source material that has grown up in this field of study.

First let us define a term and fix a boundary. Law is the application of a man made system of maintaining order within a group. jurisprudence is the theoretical study of the science of law. For tonight I have discarded the use of the word jurisprudence as being a grandiose quadrisyllabic synonym for the simple and quite adequate phrase "principles of law." This paper will serve its purpose if it adds to our understanding of the principles of Masonic law and order. I am not so much concerned about knowledge of the details of our rules and regulations. If the principles are understood the details will fall into place and the risk will be reduced that we may make a wrong decision based upon the expediency of the moment.

Next let us place our subject in proper perspective. The principles of ethics are vitally important to Freemasons. But the law is not ethics - it does not stand on so high a level. Ethics is a study of the supreme good - an attempt to discover those rules which should be obeyed because they are good in themselves. The law is concerned only with what is convenient and acceptable at a particular time and place. This difference is indicated by the easy attitude of the law towards pornographic picture books such as the Playboy magazine. Ethics would consider these unworthy of right thinking people.

Ethics is concerned with motives and with the long range excellence of the individual character. Law has little interest in motives and is concerned more with broad rules that govern the conduct of groups of people in their day by day activities. If the standards of ethics prevailed the standards of law would be unnecessary. In marriage, so long as love prevails, there is little need of law to govern the relations between husband and wife. When love flies out the window the lawyer comes in the door.

Third, let us try to divide our subject into headings so that it may be more easily understood. Various authors have used a number of headings and as we hear these from time to time, I should like to run through them quickly. After doing this, I plan to confuse you all the more by using a fresh set of headings which I shall explain later.

We hear that Masonic law is either esoteric or exoteric. Esoteric law is made up of those principles of Freemasonry that are inculcated by our ceremonials. This may well be the unwritten law of the fraternity in its best sense. Exoteric law begins with the Ancient Charges and includes all of the additions and amendments made later by the Constitutions and Bylaws of sovereign Grand Lodges.

Masonic law has been divided into *lex scripta* and *lex non-scripta* - written law and unwritten law. In this sense unwritten law does not mean law that is never found in written form. It means law that was established by ancient usage and custom rather than by legislation. It is the law of Freemasonry prior to 1717. Written law defines the laws created by enactment after 1717.

We also hear of the division into changeable law and unchangeable law. Certain Masonic laws are beyond the power of any man or body of men to change. These are the Ancient Landmarks. All the rest of our laws are subject to change.

The division that has appealed most strongly to my mind is the one used by Roscoe Pound. He said, "What are the component parts of our Masonic legal systems? - I venture to distinguish three types of rules: (1) The Landmarks; (2) The Masonic Common Law; (3) Masonic Legislation - We have first the Landmarks, a small, not clearly defined, body of fundamentals which are beyond the reach of change. Second, we have Masonic common law, the body of tradition and doctrine, which falling short of the sanctity and authority of the Landmarks, nevertheless is of such long standing, and so universal, and so well attested, that we should hesitate to depart from it. The two main elements just enumerated make up the unwritten law of Masonry. A third element, namely Grand Lodge legislation - constitutes the written law of Masonry." This is an admirable and persuasive arrangement of an involved and confusing subject and I was tempted to follow the same pattern in this paper.

I think that what prompted my decision to make my own subdivision of Masonic law is that every one of the categories that has been mentioned is somewhat artificial to anyone but a student of the subject. To the typical Mason the rules that govern his conduct in the fraternity are Masonic law no matter under which category they fall. All of these rules are discovered and learned from writing in one form or another, excepting perhaps what is derived from our ceremonials. There is nothing in the substance of any of these laws to make it clear that its origin was either in ancient usage or in legislation. All of these headings are based more upon the form of the creation of a particular law than the substance of its operation.

In an effort to classify Masonic law according to substance rather than form, I venture to propose the following three divisions: Constitution, Code and Conscience. The Constitution of Freemasonry is made up of the Landmarks which cannot be changed. An illustration that comes to mind immediately is the requirement for membership of a professed belief in the Great Architect of the Universe. The Code of Freemasonry is all the laws of the fraternity that have been enacted by sovereign Grand Lodges in their respective jurisdictions. The Conscience of Freemasonry is my title for the restraints placed upon us, not by legislation but by usage and customs, by morality, and by the force of natural law. An example is the courtesy and respect shown by the members of a Lodge towards their Master.

In dealings with the first heading, Constitution, which is simply a synonym for the Ancient Landmarks, I shall be brief, as this topic was dealt with recently at this Conference. But in the context of this paper it should be said that it is an accepted concept of law to recognize a body of unalterable fundamental principles, a handful of inalienable rights beyond the reach of change. We see examples of this concept in the United States Constitution, the Canadian Bill of Rights, the Charter of United Nations and the Doctrine of the International Commission of Jurists.

The idea of the Landmarks as a body of Masonic law beyond the reach of change has its roots in the first piece of Masonic legislation in the history of organized Freemasonry, Payne's 39 Regulations of 1720 approved by the Grand Lodge of England in 1721. The last of these Regulations reads: "Every annual Grand Lodge has an inherent power and authority to make new regulations or to alter these for the real benefit of this ancient fraternity, provided always that the old landmarks be carefully preserved." Another regulation adopted in 1723 and incorporated into the installation ceremony is that "it is not in the power of any man or body of men to make any alteration or innovation in the body of Masonry." In a rather rough sense I take this to mean the spiritual body of Masonry as opposed to the physical body.

Albert Mackey is the creator of our present day concept of Ancient Landmarks. He identified these as the usages and customs of the fraternity which have existed from time immemorial (which I think is an unnecessary requirement) and the alteration or abolition of which would destroy the identity of Freemasonry (which I think is the essential requirement).

The Grand Lodge of Connecticut has an excellent definition of Landmarks which I wish I had discovered before debating this subject with M.W. Bro. Hardin some two years ago. It makes the simple statement that "the

Landmarks of Masonry are those ancient principles and practices which mark out and distinguish Freemasonry as such." I think a good working definition of Landmarks is that they are the fundamentals of our fraternity that give it its Masonic character and that may not be altered without taking away that character.

My last comment under this heading is that we are wise if we restrict the area of our Landmarks as much as we properly can. This is an area of rigid, unchangeable, fundamental law that should be kept to a minimum as there is the ever-present danger that the changing values of a changing world may render it archaic in some of its parts.

Let me underline the reason for my view with two illustrations. Mackey included in his 18th Landmark that a candidate for Freemasonry "must not be mutilated" - that is, he should be physically perfect, without maim or defect. Even as he wrote, some jurisdictions had moved away from this requirement. Mackey felt this was a deviation and he referred to it in this way: "A large number of Grand Lodges have stood fast by this Ancient Landmark, and it is yet to be hoped that all will return to their first allegiance." If this were a genuine Landmark it would now be archaic as it offends the collective conscience of most Grand Lodges.

The second illustration is from Roscoe Pound whose opinion is that Mackey went too far in his list of 25 Landmarks. The 15th Landmark is to the effect that visiting brethren are not to be received into a Lodge without either a voucher or an examination. Pound argues that the true Landmark is nothing more than secrecy and that voucher or examination are simply the customary methods of maintaining this Landmark. It is by following a similar line of thought that I have arrived at a conclusion that appears to shock at least some of my brethren when I mention it. I have no doubt that one of our true Landmarks is belief in a Supreme Being, and in His revealed word. But I do have firm doubt that the presence of the Volume of the Sacred Law at every meeting of a Lodge is a Landmark. Certainly it must be present on every occasion when a Masonic obligation is taken, but apart from this its presence is simply evidence of our belief or a symbol of our belief. The symbol is not the Landmark, it is the belief itself.

Before leaving this point, in fairness I should add that No. 6 of the Statement of Basic Principles applying to the recognition of other Grand Lodges by the Grand Lodge of England reads: "That the three Great Lights of Freemasonry (namely, the volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses) shall always be exhibited when the Grand Lodge or its subordinate Lodges are at work, the chief of these being the Volume of the Sacred Law."

But I think that this is an example of the Masonic Law that will be considered under the heading of "Code". It may be fully effective within the Grand Lodge of England, but this does not make the law a Landmark with universal authority throughout the Masonic world.

I should also like to be very clear that I do not mention this with any thought of proposing a departure from the commendable custom of having the Volume of the Sacred Law open on our Altar whenever we open Lodge. I mention it simply to underline my view that Landmarks can be kept to a minimum and need not be confused with customs that may be universal at some particular point of time no matter how commendable they may be.

This leads me into my last comment under this heading of Constitution. As a younger Mason I was disturbed when I began to discover how many variations there are in the practise of Freemasonry across the world. There are far fewer universal customs than is generally thought. Now I believe this is a source of strength to our fraternity. Laws and customs should reflect the wishes of the particular community in which they exist. Freemasonry in California for example is not the same in all its parts as Freemasonry in Manitoba. If an identical set of rules and customs and ceremonials were to be imposed upon each of these jurisdictions it would not suit either. What we seek in Freemasonry is a flexible unity of purpose, and not a cast iron uniformity of procedures.

Now for the second heading which I have called the Code of Freemasonry. I think it is fair to describe the general law of Freemasonry as a Code. With us, as with the civil law, in the early stages of our development we operated under a body of custom and tradition, and this was communicated from one to another by word of mouth. Then, as with the civil law, an attempt was made to embody this customary law in written form - Anderson's Book of Constitutions, a code that did not dare to vary the law but simply to record it. Later, as Freemasonry matured, just as with a state that has matured, legislation became well-established and accepted. Now, roughly speaking, our Grand Lodge Constitutions are sufficiently detailed that for practical purposes they are digests or codes of the laws of the fraternity.

At this point I should like to interject an extraneous comment, which is that in important Grand Lodge legislation I am skeptical of laws that are passed by narrow majorities. Freemasonry should show by example that the views of minorities receive respect. If there is a substantial minority we should hesitate to press upon its convictions with the weight of a slim majority. We should take care to balance the interests of each side with a view to harmony and in the light of what is best for the fraternity as a whole. In this

way our legislation will be distinguished by reason, restraint, logic and kindly concern for the welfare of all members of the Craft.

It is stating the obvious to say that Grand Lodge has exclusive sovereign legislative authority within its territorial jurisdiction. This is an essential principle for recognition of a Grand Lodge. It acquires this power from the time of its formation. It also acquires the laws of Freemasonry that prevailed in the territory immediately prior to the formation of the new Grand Lodge. And we should not forget that any inherited law which is not repealed or amended by the new Grand Lodge continues in full force and effect. This is why the laws of every Grand Jurisdiction in their final analysis can be said to flow from the Premier Grand Lodge of the world formed in London in 1717.

The first Code was Payne's 39 Regulations of 1721 which were intended to state the law as it was, without innovation or amendment. Next was Anderson's Digest, approved by a Grand Lodge Committee in 1722 and adopted by Grand Lodge in 1723. This is the first Book of Constitutions in the Masonic world. The great variety of Masonic Codes flowing from this first Book of Constitutions is proof of the claim that law is not merely a static body of rules but an organic body of principles with an inherent power of growth.

Here we come to something that has intrigued me very much as it has upset some preconceived notions I held about the Masonic law of Manitoba. I think it follows logically that if we are to do a proper job of research on a question of Masonic law, we should take three steps. First, we should examine the Code or Book of Constitutions of the Grand Lodge in which the question arises. If the answer is not found there, we should next examine the Code of the Grand Jurisdiction that formerly held territorial jurisdiction over the area to discover the law at the time the new Grand Lodge was formed. If the answer is not found there, then step number three requires us to examine the law inherited on the formation of the so-called mother Grand Lodge. Ordinarily this carries us back to the laws that prevailed many years ago in the Grand Lodge of England. Let me show that this is not simply a pedantic exercise.

In the Grand Lodge of Manitoba each Annual Communication deals with matters that affect every Freemason in the jurisdiction. These are decided by the votes of the members of the Grand Lodge then present. My understanding of the practice in Manitoba is that each member of Grand Lodge is free to vote according to his own personal opinion or conscience, rather than according to the instructions of his Lodge. Our Constitution is silent on the point, but this practice appeals to logic. If the vote of a

member of Grand Lodge were controlled in advance by the will of his Lodge, it would make an empty mockery of the subsequent discussion of the motion at the Communication.

Previously I had no doubt that this was the Masonic law of Manitoba. Now I have a doubt, which I have not yet had time to resolve, and this is the reason why. Mackey's 12th Landmark is "the right of every Freemason to be represented in all general meetings of the craft, and to instruct his representatives." Pound describes the right of the Master Mason to instruct his representative at Grand Lodge as undoubted Masonic law. This may well have been the law inherited by the Grand Lodge of Manitoba and never dealt with by our Constitution. If it is impractical and unsuitable, as I think it is, then we should deal with the question of legislation.

Another example is the right of a Master Mason in good standing to visit any regular Lodge. Again, I have not had time to consider the laws of the Grand Lodge of Canada in Ontario as they stood when the Grand Lodge of Manitoba was formed, nor the laws of the Grand Lodge of England as they were when Manitoba's mother Grand Lodge was formed. I had previously been satisfied that the right to visit was subject to the duty of the Master to preserve harmony in his Lodge. Logically this view seemed to be supported by the practice of requesting permission to enter the Lodge. Now I am not so sure. Mackey's 14th Landmark is "the right of every Freemason to visit and sit in every regular Lodge." Pound thought so highly of this right that he almost included it in his much smaller list of Landmarks. Lawrence wrote in 1908: "It should be understood clearly that, welcome or unwelcome, every Freemason has an inalienable right to visit any and every Lodge he pleases." My mind is clear that this right is not a Landmark-it is not essential to the character of Freemasonry, and so it is subject to Masonic legislation. At the same time, however, there is no doubt that it has been the Masonic law of England and it may have entered Manitoba through our inheritance of Masonic law at the time our Grand Lodge was formed. If we feel that the Master should be entitled to refuse admission to an unwelcome visiting brother, perhaps this, too, should be dealt with in our Constitution.

Here is another to consider. Article 12 of the 39 Regulations of Grand Master Payne became part of the law of the Grand Lodge of England in 1721 and this gave the Grand Master a second casting vote in the event of a tie. In Manitoba we have not repealed this regulation by direct legislation, although we do say a motion is lost if there is a tie vote. In practice we go even farther in failing to follow this regulation, for although our Constitution provides that every member of Grand Lodge present shall vote, our custom is that our Grand Master does not vote. I think the custom is commendable as the Grand Master should be completely impartial. I shudder to think of

forsaking this practice and placing our Grand Master in the position of having to vote to break a tie. Any motion that were passed so narrowly would not deserve to have the force of law out of respect for the substantial minority opposed to it. It would put the Grand Master in a most unpleasant position and to be clear that we do not want this to happen to our Grand Master, and that we do not agree with this old regulation, we should repeal it by our own legislation.

The last example is not directly in point but I find it interesting and I understand it will be referred to Manitoba's Committee on Constitution and Revision for a report. In our Constitution we provide that a ruling of our Grand Master at an Annual Communication of Grand Lodge at least on a point of order, and some think it goes beyond this, may be over-ruled by a two-thirds vote of the members then present. There are two schools of thought in regard to the office of Grand Master - one that the Grand Master existed before Grand Lodge and so is superior to it, the other that the office was created by Grand Lodge and possesses only such powers as Grand Lodge gives to it. I favour the second school of thought and those who share this view will agree that this legislation of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba is valid. But it does not necessarily follow that it is wise. Here is a quotation from the report of the Committee on Correspondence of the Grand Lodge of Maryland in 1849: "an appeal from the decision of the Grand Master is an anomaly at war with every principle of Freemasonry, and as such not for a moment to be tolerated or countenanced. The penalty for abuse of this great power by a Grand Master will arise from the pangs of his own conscience and from the loss of his Brethren's regard and esteem." Is it any wonder I find Masonic law interesting.

The third heading I have described as the Conscience of Freemasonry. The material under this heading is more intangible than under the previous two, but I think it is equally as important for an understanding of the principles of Masonic law.

All the law required to decide every question that might conceivably arise within the fraternity simply cannot be set forth in a code. If it were possible in the first place, the result of such an endeavour would be a volume so cumbersome that it would be seldom read and little understood. A good code is not the result of over-minute law making. Ehrlich, a modern German author on jurisprudence highlights the weakness of a code in a society that is always changing. He over-emphasizes his point with a colorful analogy. "To attempt to imprison the law of a time or of a people within the sections of a code is about as reasonable as to attempt to confine a stream within a pond. The water that is put in the pond is no longer a living stream but a stagnant pool, and but little water can be put in the pond." There must be

more than a code of law to govern relations between men. I think we all accept the fact that much of our conduct is governed by a sense of honour and of duty, rather than by the less effective rewards and punishments that are set forth in a code of law.

In this area of Masonic law, I have a theory that is based in part on the historical development of our fraternity. You may recall that at the beginning of this paper I mentioned that law is not ethics, and that the problems of law are solved on a lower level than the standards of ethics would require. The theory I have to suggest is that Masonic law is a blend of law and ethics and that questions of Masonic law are determined on a higher level than the standards of civil law require. This is why I like the heading of Conscience for third part of Masonic law.

We should keep in mind that the system of Freemasonry we are considering had its origin in 1717. This was the Age of Reason. Men believed in the words of Socrates, that the greatest good was knowledge, and the greatest evil was ignorance. They believed that reason and knowledge were the universal solvent for the troubles of the world. They believed that by armchair deliberation it was possible to construct a universal and unchangeable body of law that could apply to all countries, using as its foundation the reasonable nature of man. They believed that what ought to be could be made synonymous with what is. They believed that if reason established a moral principle it could simultaneously establish a legal principle to govern man's conduct. In other words, they believed in the law of nature.

The story of natural law begins with the philosophers of ancient Greece, continues through the pragmatic lawmakers of Rome and ends with the theologians of Christianity. The Greeks related law with justice and ethics. Plato's Republic is an attempt to establish justice through the wisdom of the philosopher-kings. The Romans preferred a code of positive law to theory but they recognized in their code certain unchangeable laws created by reason. The Christians gave strength to the theory of natural law by claiming for it a divine origin. This made it possible for law to prevail over the Divine Right of Kings by establishing the concept that while the monarch might be above the changeable rules created by man's will, he was bound by natural law, that is by the unchangeable rules sanctioned by divine origin.

In England Lord Coke claimed that not only the king but parliament was under the law and that if parliament were to enact a statute "against common right and reason" the statute would be void. This doctrine was confirmed by the courts of England in the 18th century but the idea has now withered on the vine.

Today the theory of natural law carries very little weight in the law of nations, but Freemasons should be aware of the part it played in the history of mankind. For example Bodenheimer wrote "no other philosophy moulded and shaped American thinking and American institutions to such an extent as did the philosophy of natural law in the form given to it in the 17th and 18th centuries." Here is an extract from an American judgment in 1798 that we would not find repeated today. "I cannot subscribe to the omnipotence of a state legislature. An act of the legislature (for I cannot call it a law) contrary to the great first principles of the social compact cannot be considered a rightful exercise of legislative authority."

Today the theory of civil law is, in the words of Hobbes, that "authority, not truth, makes the law." Today, in general terms, we accept the principle that the legislature is omnipotent. Today, in law, we no longer attempt to find universal truth or universal rules to govern all men at all times. Our concept of the law is simply to make it satisfy the maximum of wants with a minimum of friction. The law of the state has moved beyond acceptance of the restraint of natural law, but moving beyond a point does not necessarily mean moving to a higher level. For myself I think the law has moved to the lower level of expediency, and it has separated moral concepts from legal concepts.

Masonic law does not need to follow the path of the law of the state. We should be as cautious about applying the rules of civil law to Freemasonry as we are about applying Roberts' Rules of Order to our proceedings. In Masonic law we need not separate moral concepts from legal concepts. In fact, our ceremonials require every Freemason to obey the moral law. We have a duty to obey the moral law. We have a duty to keep and perform every Masonic obligation and to act in accordance with Masonic principles, outside the Lodge as well as within. If we fail to perform any of these duties we are guilty of a Masonic offence. This is the Masonic law and it is clearly at a higher level than the law of our country.

Let me underline the difference between civil law and Masonic law by two examples. In June of this year, Mr. Justice McInnes of the British Columbia Supreme Court (*Regina vs. Bird*, 1963, 38 DLR 354) held that under the present state of our civil law the dictates of natural justice did not require the Chief of the Vancouver City Fire Department to show cause for dismissal of an employee nor to conduct a hearing of any description whatsoever. The rule of law is that the right to a hearing arises only if it is one of the terms of the original contract of employment. I think any Freemason would consider that on ethical grounds this falls below his standard of what is fair and just.

In the same month in Ottawa, the much criticized Federal budget was introduced by the Minister of Finance. One point that has escaped comment is the re-introduction of ministerial discretion into that part of our Income Tax Act that deals with corporate dividend-stripping operations. Ministerial discretion had been eliminated seventeen years ago after the report of a special committee of the Canadian Senate. This was because there is no proper review of the exercise of ministerial discretion. Here is what the Courts have had to say on the point (Moreau vs. Federal Commissioner of Taxation, 39 Comm. L.R. 65): "His reason is not to be judged of by a court by the standard of what the ideal reasonable man would think. He is the actual man trusted by the Legislature . . .

It offends the Masonic standard of justice that a mans conduct is not subject to review, and need not be controlled by the standards of a reasonable man. This is one of the principles of natural law.

Lord Moulton once expressed a theory that appeals to me. In very short form it is this. All human conduct falls into one of three categories or domains of action. At one extreme is the area of complete freedom of choice. It makes no difference to anyone if I choose apple pie or raisin pie for dessert. At the other extreme is the area of positive law. I must stop for the red light even if the cross road is completely free of traffic. In the centre is the area of conscience. Here there is no law to govern our course of action and yet we do not feel that we have complete freedom of choice. We govern our conduct by our personal standards of moral values. I might be able to lie or cheat or steal and get away with it, but I do not because of conscience. This is described as the domain of obedience of the unenforceable. Lord Moulton goes on to say that the test of a strong society is the amount of human conduct that falls within this area of conscience. The amount that can safely be left to the people to be governed by their standards of morality. A weak society is one where an ever increasing amount of human conduct must be controlled by the arbitrary rules of positive law.

I believe that the area of conscience will always form a large part of the Masonic law. This is why the standard of conduct is higher for a Freemason than for a member of the community. Rules of law take us only part of the way. Conscience carries us the rest of the way. After all, the purpose of the law of our fraternity is not simply to enforce the will of the majority. It is to conserve values within the craft-to make secure the proper interests of all of its members. Law and order and a high standard of values are vitally important to the well-being and general good health of any community. We are vitally concerned with the good health and vitality of the Masonic community. Each one of us has given our fraternity a considerable amount

of our time and whatever talents we may possess. We have each made up our minds to strengthen Freemasonry as much as we are able. To do this we need to understand the nature of the fraternity. A working knowledge of the principles of its law is part of this process of understanding. This will help us to appreciate better and to uphold those things which are an essential part of the fabric of Masonry - those principles of morality and of right living and of brotherly love that have been tested and proved by the experience of our predecessors, and that we should never forsake in the name of expediency. These are the things that will maintain our fraternity as a firm rock in the shifting sands of the modern world. These are the things that make Freemasons the leaders of their communities, influencing others by the power of a good example. May they always have our loyalty and our whole-hearted support. (Applause).