

CITIZENSHIP AND FREEMASONRY

by
George P. Ellis

Right Thinking Necessary. Before there can be any right action there must be right thinking based upon correct knowledge. This type of thinking and action must come from men of principle and character. There is no progress without righteousness. Men of principle withstand every assault. Lack of it makes men weak.

In the 63rd Psalm we find the words, "Because thou hast been my helper, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice". . We need this higher power to guide us as free men. Freemasonry needs to help build these ideas into the thinking of its members. The manifold problems facing us today call for the most thoughtful analysis and then for right action.

We all recognize that Freemasonry as an organization can not get into political, economic and social controversies. However, we need real leadership to guide us into honest, correct and accurate thinking. This thinking must be free from prejudice and based on honest seeking of truth in every phase of life. Prejudice is defined as "an opinion or leaning adverse to anything without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge". How clearly this defines much of what goes on as thinking. Someone has said that most people do not think; they merely rearrange their prejudices.

From the book *New Strength for New Leadership* by Erwin Haskell Schell I quote the following:

"If democracy is a normal way of life, it is the men of parts who must provide its maintenance and protection. The forty-hour week will not be for them. Fortunately, they will not want it."

It goes on further to say:

"Men privileged owe a responsibility. The principle that one's mood, no less than one's mind, should relate harmoniously and constructively to one's effort."

It goes on in another part of the book to say;

"That the beginning of wisdom is found in the principle that we are designed for struggle. We must take an active part in the business of living. Were talents so employed then a better world would result. When tempted by ease and indifference, we may remember that the natural leader is obligated to serge the led."

"If democracy succeeds or fails, it will succeed or fail at the top. It was de Tocqueville who over one hundred years ago maintained that democracy in America rested upon the twin bases of patriotism and religion. We may paraphrase his thought and say that the continuance of our democratic inspirations, whether of government, industry, or the professions, will require the presence of a devoted people and an inspired leadership."

"Such leaders there must be if the democratic way of life is to remain our way; if our free institutions are to survive. There is great need for new strength for the strong."

In the Iowa Grand Lodge Bulletin under the caption "Purposes of Masonry" appeared the following quotation:

"The Masonic fraternity seeks no control over processes of government and the enforcement of the law and, as an organization, it takes no part in solution of industrial and social problems except through the influence of its teachings upon the character and conduct of its members. The primary purposes of Masonry are to enlighten the mind, arouse the conscience, stimulate the noble and generous impulses of the human heart. It seeks to promote the best type of manhood based upon the practice of brotherly love and the Golden Rule. When these results have been accomplished the mission of Masonry has been achieved.

The teachings of Freemasonry should prepare us for leadership in correct and honest thinking. They should be leaders of thought.

It will be the purpose of this discussion to define citizenship and the responsibility of citizenship in a free or democratic society, and Freemasonry's relation to it.

In the Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Mackay under the caption, Civilization and Freemasonry, appears the following:

"Those who investigate in the proper spirit the history of Speculative Masonry will be strongly impressed with the peculiar relations that exist between the history of Masonry and that of civilization. They will find these facts to be patent; that Freemasonry has ever been the result of civilization; that in the most ancient times the spirit of Masonry and the spirit of civilization have always gone together; that the progress of both has been with equal strides; that where there has been no appearance of civilization there has been no trace of Masonry; and, finally, that whenever Masonry has existed in any of its forms, there it has been surrounded and sustained by civilization, which social condition it in turn elevated and purified

"We then arrive at these conclusions, namely, that Speculative Masonry is a result of civilization, for it exists in no savage or barbarous state of society but has always appeared with the advent in any country of a condition of civilization grown with its growth and strengthened with its strength and, in return, has proved, by a reactionary influence, a potent instrument in extending, elevating and refining the civilization which gave it birth advancing its moral, intellectual, and religious character.

Citizenship. One definition which I found in a standard encyclopedia, defines citizenship in part as follows:

"Citizen -- (Lat. civis, citizen), in its most general sense an individual member of a political society, or state; one who owes allegiance to, and may lawfully demand protection from, the government. The more general sense of the term 'citizen' is more closely in accordance with the original meaning of the word. In the free republics of classical antiquity, the term 'citizen' signified, not a resident of a town, but a free, governing member of the state, just as the term civitas, from which we derive our 'city', signified, not merely a local municipality (urbs), but the state at large. The Greek idea of citizenship is expressed by Aristotle, who declared a citizen to be one to whom belonged the right of participating both in the deliberative or legislative and the judicial functions of the political community of which he was a member. The right was jealously guarded, and was rarely conferred on those of foreign birth. In

Rome there were two classes of citizens--one that had a share in the sovereign power, i.e., were capable of attaining the highest offices of state; the other possessing only the private rights of citizenship. These, however, included the privilege of voting in the public assembly. There, as in the United States of America and some other modern states, citizenship, though usually acquired by birth, might be attained by naturalization or special grant of the State."

In his treatise on citizenship, W. L. Sheldon states:

"The status of a citizen implies the existence of

1. A political body established to promote the general welfare and collective, as well as individual, rights of those composing it.
2. Individuals who have established, or submitted themselves to the dominion of that political body.
3. Such benefit from, or participation in, the administration of that political body by the individuals composing it, that they may be designated as citizens, and not as mere subjects of a despot or an absolute monarch under whom they have no voice in administration.

"The same authority above quoted defines a citizen as 'a member of a nation or sovereign state, especially a republic; one who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it'. That definition is broad enough to make every subject a citizen of the government to which he owes allegiance, and from which he receives protection; but the term citizen, as it is commonly understood, implies membership of a political body in which the individual enjoys popular liberty to a greater or less degree.

"The word 'citizen' is never used of the people in a monarchy, since it involves an idea not enjoyed by subjects, to wit: the inherent right to partake in government.

Responsibility of Citizenship. Freedom and liberty mean responsibility. In a pamphlet published by The Foundation for Economic Education written by Betty Knowles Hunt the following statement appears:

"The answer, and the only answer, is for us to educate ourselves to the responsibilities as well as to the benefits of freedom. Perhaps, as a people, we are not morally strong enough to be free. If that is the case, then we shall certainly lose our freedom, and it will not matter much what 'ism' supplants Americanism. But this will not prove that our free way of life was not the best way. It will only prove that we were not worthy of it."

In a study conducted by the Schenectady Gazette it was learned that one out of two did not know the answers to the questions, "Who is the city manager? Who is your representative to Congress? Who makes the laws for the city?" One out of four could not, answer the question, "In what ward do you reside?" To the question, "If you had a son, would you want him to enter politics?" 57% replied they would not. And to the question, "Do you think a man can enter politics and remain honest?" one in three answered with an unqualified "no". Three days after the initial poll stories, published in two installments, the Gazette bluntly headed a story: "it is your business! Government is your business; politics is your business, most of all, voting is your business".

Mr. Cameron of the Ford Motor Company some years ago defining democracy in a broadcast said, "A personality poised in moral, intellectual and social balance is a personality approaching maturity, and when you multiply it by multitudes you inevitably have

Democracy... Democracy is not a system - it is a bloom and quality of public character... It is not the product of political organization... Democracy is produced by national character and by nothing else."

Elton Mayo in his book, *The Social Problem of an Industrial Civilization* says:

"Representative government cannot be effectively exercised by a society internally divided by group hostilities and hatreds. There is grave danger that sheer ignorance of administrative methods in the political and industrial leaders of the democracies may give rise to increasing disabilities of cooperation.

"Representative government does not work satisfactorily for the general good in a society that exhibits extreme difference in the material standards of living of its various social groups. This prerequisite is especially true when the more lowly classes work very hard for a maintenance that, is actually insufficient for their organic and social needs. History abounds in instances: the France of the later eighteenth century or England of the early nineteenth. Wisdom dictates a sufficiently high standard of material living throughout society as a prerequisite of democratic institutions."

Therefore, with freedom comes responsibility. There is much discussion going on at the present time regarding a guaranteed annual wage. Under the feudal system and under slavery in the United States there was a guaranteed wage. When men became free and had the right to pick and choose their own occupation and to work as if and when they pleased they assumed certain risks.

Labor is demanding the right to share in the profits. They have not been willing to assume any of the risks. Wages have been increased in industries of a seasonal character such as the building industry on the grounds that they need to receive extraordinarily high wages during the busy season to partially make up for the seasons when they are not employed. The unemployment compensation phases of the social security program have been introduced to partially cushion the shock of unemployment. In their demands for a guaranteed annual wage labor wishes also to continue these other benefits.

There has been much done by certain industries to level out the peaks and fill in the valleys by many different programs of levelling out production. Much more can be done along these lines. When considering the matter of guaranteed annual wage, it is necessary to know all the factors that do influence correct and accurate thinking on this question.

The progress of society as a whole is by the accomplishments of its individual members.

John Stuart Mills said, "A State which dwarfs its men in order that they may be docile instruments in its hands, even for beneficial purposes, will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished.

There have been two antagonistic trends gaining momentum in American.

- 1st Trend sway from exploitation of geographical frontiers to exploration of economic frontiers - the advance of science and technology.
- 2nd Rise of Statism – over-regulation, control regimentation.

The great dangers of the latter are limitation of scientific advance and stagnation.

Beyond the horizon are new frontiers - economic frontiers. What is required of a person for fitness to cope with the problems is character even before brains. Trained brains and

trained hands must learn to think straight and quick as our forefathers had to shoot straight and quicker than the other fellows in the development of geographical frontiers.

Difficult to do right Thinking. In these confused times it is very difficult to do right thinking because we do not have the correct facts presented to us in a manner that will enable us to arrive at sound judgments. For political purposes opposing political parties attempt to discredit the other. In this process much bad information is fed to the public by means of the radio, the public platforms and the printed word. These arguments are set forth irrespective of their soundness from an economic or social point of view. To be a good citizen one must be in possession of accurate knowledge and be willing to face truth. One must be willing to face realities irrespective of which side of the political fence he may be on.

There are also those who represent some ideology or ism and present to the public in a very plausible manner half-truths which mislead the citizen. Many times these proposed reforms are based on fairly sound basic causes. The difficulty is that the cure in many instances is worse than the disease. The intelligent citizen is one who will follow the entire problem from basic cause to ultimate effect.

Clever programs and planned economies will not make real the social order we desire unless humanity is given the vision to see and then the will to bring it about.

To find happiness, contentment and peace is the ultimate ambition of man. Much of the demands on Management by Labor is this almost unconscious seeking. Hours and wages demands is only a means of expressing their dissatisfaction.

Albert Jay Nock in his book, *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*, says:

"That in our society the purview of legal, religious and ethical sanctions was monstrously over-extended. They had usurped control over an area of conduct much larger than right reason would assign them. On the other hand, I saw that the area of conduct properly answerable to the sanctions of taste and manners was correspondingly attenuated. One could easily understand how this had come about. Law is the creature of politics, and the general course of politics, as among others Mr. Jefferson, Franklin and John Adams had clearly perceived, is always determined by an extremely low order of self-interest and self-aggrandisement... Again, when Christianity became organized it immediately took on a political character radically affecting its institutional concept of religion and its institutional concept of morals; and the same tendencies observable in secular politics at once set in upon the politics of organized Christianity. Thus the area of conduct in which men were free to recognise the sanctions of taste and manners was still further straitened."

"The consequence was that the one set of sanctions atrophied, and the other set broke down; thus leaving human conduct bereft of any sanctions at all, save those of expedience... When the sanctions of law, religion and morals broke down through persistent misapplication to matters of conduct quite outside their purview, the sanctions of taste and manners had become too frail and anaemic to be of any practical good."

The problem of getting over a lesson so people will read understandingly is one of the great problems of our day.

Mr. Nook in his book says;

"As I said, the fact that few literate persons can read is easily determinable by experiment. What first put me on the track of it was a remark by one of my old professors. He said that there were people so incompetent, so given to reading with their eyes and their emotions instead of with their brains, that they would accuse the Psalmist of atheism because he had written, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God'. "

In an address by Virgil Jordan, President of the National Industrial Conference Board at the Citizens' Conference on Government Management in June 1939 he said:

"The current philosophy of public spending -- which prevails in practically every country -- is in fact a new intellectual and emotional offshoot of a much more pervasive and powerful primitive impulse, which I call the superstition of the State -- the belief in the magical power of government - -and which owes its resurgence largely to the World War."

"The most profound consequence of that catastrophe -- the most devastating in history -- was not the destruction of life and wastage of wealth, but the demoralization of individual character, the destruction of personal self-reliance, independence, and integrity, among great masses of men. The corollary of this spiritual retrogression has not merely been economic chaos, instability, stagnation and depression, or international conflict, but an enormous expansion in the power of the State and increased dependence upon it. The universal submergence of the individual by the State, the replacement of the spirit of humanism by Statism, and the reversion to feudal conceptions and principles, have already gone so far that in some countries the very existence of the human personality is denied, except as a part and for the purposes of the State..... In its very essence Statism is a social retrogression, a creative devolution, a return to an earlier order of life..... Our economic system is a living organism, not a slot machine, which will yield an inexhaustible supply of chewing gum so long as pennies are put into it, and certainly it will never yield several pieces for each penny unless someone is cheating. Behind every dollar spent by anybody - government or citizen - there must be a definite amount of real work done by somebody if the dollar is to be worth anything. To get this work done is the ultimate and inescapable problem of the State and society. The plain fact is that, despite the collection and printing and spending of billions of dollars by government, we are not getting this work done, and the obvious conclusion is that something else is needed to get it done."

The over-emphasis on the purely economic side of life has led us to many unwise experiments. The demand for social and economic security is the desire to be free from fear and anxiety - freedom from uncertainty and doubt. We do need confidence - assurance. However, freedom is more precious than material things.

No university calls attention to the fact that material provision is only one of the duties of civilization, the other being the maintenance of cooperative living.

People are Worried. It has been found that every one thousand employees will each year show twenty disabilities due to diseases of the nervous system and from the general population where industry must draw its manpower it has also been found that 7% of all presumably healthy people exhibit symptoms of nervousness and neurasthenia. Much of this is due to worry and fear. Under this nervous strain we are likely to give up valuable liberties for a little social security.

In our relations with the employed worker we find that imaginary grievances are more difficult to deal with than real ones. "Labor movements live on feelings of grievances."

Elton Mayo in his book, *The Social Problem of an Industrial Civilization* says:

"Social skill shows itself as a capacity to receive communications from others, and to respond to the attitudes and ideas of others in such fashion as to promote congenial participation in a common task."

"It is a short step from friendship to tolerance to distrust and hatred when the normal social relationships disintegrate."

The great task for those in the position of leadership is to bring about better understanding between all groups.

Business Partially to Blame. Business has only itself to blame for much of the present legislative trend. All too often it has treated labor as a commodity to be bought and sold without regard to essential human values. The human values will not be denied. Businessmen must choose whether they themselves will shoulder the responsibility or whether they will force government to do so. If we are to save our democratic way of life we must remove the causes that threaten to injure and even kill it. Democracy is not self-sustaining. Selfishness will defeat it. It will only endure if we respect the other fellows' rights.

We will again have the old problem of unemployment. How many of the unemployed are due to the transition from an old declining industry to a new one? What can we do to readapt men of skill to find their places in the new industries? How should we train our young people to find their places in our economic and social life where they can make their greatest contribution based upon their aptitudes and talents?

With the development of machines for handling the heavy burdensome work of industry common labor is not needed to the degree that it formerly was. Everyone to find a place in industry must have at least some skill. We must train men to fill these jobs.

Management is continuing to introduce machines to reduce the number of men necessary in our production processes. This presents a social problem that will either be solved by intelligent business methods or we must look for more and more government controls.

The cost of distribution is an unsolved problem in our economic system. Production costs must be reduced to make more goods available to more people. The cost of distribution must be reduced in order that the costs added after the goods are produced are not so great as to make them prohibitive to many people in the lower income groups. It is a social responsibility to see that goods are furnished to satisfy the needs of mankind. Business is a means to an end and it can only justify itself and only justify the system under which it works to the extent that it is efficient and does serve mankind to the greatest extent possible. Will we wait for a law to force us to correct these problems or will we undertake to solve them ourselves? It is a social and patriotic responsibility for business to be efficient. It is equally a social and patriotic responsibility for labor to produce and cooperate.

Economic Pioneering. Economic pioneering has just begun. It is more challenging and more rewarding than the conquest of a continent, because it is a test of intellectual manhood as the earlier pioneering was a test of physical maturity and stamina. A good citizen is one who will become properly informed and then find the place where he can make the greatest contribution in the settlement of the many economic and social problems which

are facing mankind today. Industry is the key to tomorrow. Only production can lick the problems of security. Then with proper distribution many of our present problems may be solved.

We must keep opportunity open for everyone who is willing to make his contribution. We cannot keep alive a system of free enterprise if many of our people are to find it impossible to find a place in the system where they can work and produce.

Selfishness under any System. We find as much selfishness under socialistic and communistic systems as we find under the so-called capitalistic system. The type of system that is employed will not determine its success. We often times find in such altruistic groups as the church, philanthropy and education as much selfishness as we find in our economic activities. The greed for power is often - times greater and more potent than the greed for money. Because of this selfishness we often find that many of the programs which are undertaken to correct existing evils become a greater evil than those they sought to cure. In most instances the cure has become worse than the disease. It is not necessary for someone to have less because someone has more. Each should have the opportunity to create something for himself. The world needs such constructive people. Our constant desire should be to see how much we can give, not how much we can get.

Need for Research. There is great need for a thorough research into all of the problems facing our economic life. We need to study the human values involved. We should have the courage to face realities and solve the problems on the basis of sound economic and social principles rather than for some political or other purpose. Some of the economic problems we are facing and which need to be so studied are:

1. Labor relations.
2. Adaptation of the machine technique to richer individual life..
3. Control of dislocations of employment.
4. Control of relations of business and government in a so-called democracy.
5. Business and political leadership of the highest order.
6. The world of inventions.

Trained hands must have the same dignity as trained minds. There is a definite shortage of skill and creative mastery of tools that marked the first great economic development of the country. Yet every parent thinks that his child should have a white collar job or be a member of one of the professions. Unless this type of job is the kind where the young person can best serve mankind, his aptitudes and skills should be directed to that place in the economic system where he can make the greatest contribution.

Need for Cooperation. There is a great need for cooperation between capital, labor, consumer, government, school and church. Each has its place and responsibility. Each has so many unsolved problems that no one has the right to criticize the other until he has cleaned up his own doorstep. Each group has made mistakes. Each must now try to serve mankind in his own field.

Business vs. Government. Business may have bungled its task so as to shake the foundations of the capitalistic system but depend upon it the bungling of government will be far worse. We must choose which it will be, industrial self-government or government of business by politicians.

Labor Needs New Leadership. Labor needs new leadership. Much of the difficulty between management and labor is due not to basic problems but much of it is caused by self-seeking

racketeering so-called labor leaders. Some of the grievances of labor are real. Many are not.

The Church. I am sorry to say it but the church has not met its full opportunity. Christianity has not been able to present a united front because it has allocated itself to become weak as a leader due to arguments on doctrines and technicalities. The church has been unduly critical. It has pitted the poor against the rich, the employer, and employee. I think neither of these is Christian. The church needs to preach - the Golden Rule.

Current Sifting and Testing. Current sifting and testing and re-directing of economic thought has given men of leadership a new role and a vast opportunity, it is no less than a place of leadership in developing a better concept of social responsibility - not socialism but a social responsibility based upon Christian ideals. In these most difficult days we need a real appraisal of the real values of life.

The great trouble with us is that we have not reflected upon our experience. We do not think through the problem. We allow our thoughts to vanish before they are completed.

There is no industry or business without social problems. They are not so much concerned about things to do. The problem is what will be the social and economic effects of these changes. What we need today is an adequate science of society, scientific processes of analysis and workable solutions.

New Appraisal of Values Needed. We need a new appraisal of values.

If there is any meaning in life, if life has a purpose, human personality is the real value. If not, then all this struggle and grief is not worthwhile. If we believe in a God our task is to build a life. There are moral laws in the universe. Every activity in the world should be directed towards the development of great lives, great human personalities. Under the Christian tradition there is no place for dictators. We need leaders which we pick to guide us for a while. We do not create these leaders to be supreme rulers. There is no place for class in Christianity or in Free Masonry. We must eliminate selfishness under any system. The Golden Rule is the only hope.

If through Freemasonry our minds have been enlightened, our consciences aroused, noble and generous impulses of the heart have been stimulated and if as Freemasons we seek to promote the best type of manhood based upon the practice of brotherly love and the Golden Rule, we can give effective leadership in the solution of these many problems. We should help keep the sense of real values straight. Freemasons are "Men of Parts". Men privileged owe a responsibility. Will Freemasonry meet the challenge?

*The above address was delivered in Edmonton on September 2nd,
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MW Bro. A. D. Cumming.*