

Reber:

My notes of ball last  
Christmas: You asked for  
them: I omitted them +  
have just run across  
them

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Geo A Treadwell

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I am highly honored by being allotted the pleasure of responding to this toast, and so, for the time being, at least, the spokesman, if not the official representative of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana. In passing, I might say that sometimes I wonder if it always remains clear to us just what the Grand Lodge is, what it stands for and what are or should be the designs upon its trestle board.

The Grand Lodge of Louisiana has a dual, if somewhat overlapping existence, - fraternal and legal. As a self-perpetuating body, we oftentimes argue that it is composed of the constituent lodges, thus-called in its Constitu-

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tion, -but from its other provisions, that stipulate that its members consist of its actual officers, Past Grand Masters, and the installed masters and wardens of lodges, we may conclude that the word constituent is used in its dictionary meaning of "having the power to elect or appoint" rather than that of "serving to make up" and that our Masonic government is not democratic in the broad sense of the word, but representative, -the principle of government upon which our nation is founded, according to the Constitution of the United States, and that the Grand Lodge is not composed of the lodges but solely of the representatives, elected or appointed, of the lodges.

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Whatever the Grand Lodge is, what it stands for is more pertinent and important. If we refer, however, to the constitution which governs its existence as a fraternity, in an endeavor to determine this specifically, it is singularly silent on the subject, except by indirection. It may, that document says (note, not must or shall) make laws and regulations necessary for the government and regulation of lodges and brethren and for the propagation and advancement of the true principles of work of Ancient Freemasonry, not inconsistent with the old charges of the Free and Accepted Masons of 1723 or with the ancient usages and landmarks

of the Order.

The act of the legislature of Louisiana, in 1816, which governs the legal existence of the Grand Lodge is, however, more specific. Before providing that those who are and who may become members of the Grand Lodge are deemed to be a body corporate and politic and that all regular lodges are bodies corporate and politic in name and deed as long as they remain under the power and jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge and abide and conform to its actions, and ~~no longer, the act specifically~~ recited that the petition therefor states that the Grand Lodge is founded on the ancient usages of the Society,

the principles of which are charity and universal benevolence and that the enactment is made to the end, therefore, that charitable institutions may be promoted.

When we say "charity", many if not most of us almost automatically picture what may be more nearly correctly described as alms-giving. We dole a nickel to a beggar, oft begrudgingly, and feel a glow from within at our charitable act, as we deem it to be, and if we repeat it in monetary amounts proportionate to the several situations, either directly, or indirectly and impersonally through others-- the church, the community chest, the lodge, or what not, we feel that we should be numbered

among those whom the world pleases to call benevolent. But is this correct? I hope not, because if that is the case our Grand Lodge and the lodges which are also incorporated under it have fallen into evil ways and can hardly justify their existence. No longer,--and I am speaking of the last few years;--no longer can the Grand Lodge and its constituent lodges deal out dollars and cents in any material amount to even their own (and I am thinking of that word "universal"). In what some few, always, and in what many, with the acumen derived from the aftermath of events and general economic conditions, think was over-enthusiastic optimism as viewed in the bright light

of prosperity, before bedimmed by the cold gray dawn of the morning after which inevitably came we ~~down~~ become ~~un~~chained, financially, ~~where~~ future generations have for the most part succeeded to us who meet in this symbolic gathering today.

Fortunately, however, and in justification of our existence, charity and universal benevolence are not ~~so~~ circumscribed and limited in their meaning; to the contrary, their scope is as boundless as the firmament and as unlimited as thought itself, untrammelled in circumscribed action, can be. The word charity, as Mr. Webster informs us, like most words, has several meanings. If you will

look, as I did, you will find that the first definition given is "Christian love". Just ~~to~~ those two words- no more and no less- Christian love. Now what is given for benevolence?

"the disposition to do good- love of mankind." Nothing there, particularly about almsgiving, is there? No, indeed. The charity and benevolence ~~is defined as the disposition to do good~~ ~~defined~~ thus defined and thus indicated in our jurisprudence, comprises and includes more spiritual things, though temporally applied; the encouraging word to the one forlorn; the cheery smile to the saddened one; the companionship to the lonely; the sympathetic ~~grasp~~ grasp to the sorrowing; the doing of something

for the unfortunate; rather than the giving of something; all these and more are comprehended and not circumscribed by financial conditions, but are within the scope of masons in the practice of charity and universal benevolence.

All Masonry, both the blue lodges which in the parlance of the educator we may call elementary and necessary as a basis upon which to build further and more particular knowledge, and the so-called higher degrees, which we may in the same parlance call secondary, meaning that they must follow in more refinement and be superimposed upon the base, is objective, not subjective. It seeks to impart its teachings by personifying abstractions and for the

most part does so by the recital of parables and allegories as though the occurrences had actually taken place, in addition to the reenacting of historical facts. Whether ~~the~~ historical recitals or merely allegoriaal, the presentations of Masonry are designed to ~~see~~ teach but one truth; that truth that instigates and inspires charity and benevolence of thought and deed in each and every implications. No- where in Masonry is this lesson taught 'better ~~and xxxxxxxxxxzzyzxxxxpzzkxkzixkx~~ than in Templarism; nowhere in Masonry is this lesson better exemplified than between and among templars. Of course you need the Grand Lodge for without it y-u could not be, but the message

I am trying to put over is that, too, the Grand Lodge needs you; needs you, or I should say speaking as individuals, us, in this day of mental and moral chaos, which has not left the ranks of Masonry, even, unscathed, to exemplify for the benefit and encouragement of the faltering member of the lodge or of the Grand Lodge, ~~the doctrine of the doctrine of brotherly love, and brotherly affection,~~ of whatever race or creed, the doctrine of Christian love, which Masonry teaches should be common to all, and ~~of~~ the love of mankind, the corollary which of necessity is enfolded therein.

For the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, therefore, I do not hesitate to extend to you all its felicitations, its good wishes, and its hope for a prosperous future for all Masonic bodies and Knights Templars in particular.