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THE MISSION OF MASONRY

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Brother Newton; Baptist Clergyman, 1880-1950, raised in Friendship Lodge No 7, Dixon, Illinois, Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Iowa and Grand Prelate of the Grand Encampment, Knights Templar. His book "The Builders" is considered one of the most notable Masonic writings of the (20th) century.

The Mission of Masonry! Years have fled, like hooded figures in hurried march, since our fathers set up their altar on the frontier, kindled its light and fell asleep, but the spirit and purpose of this ancient order remained. The forms of beauty into which the earth is rushing today are not the forms that greeted their eyes in 1840; the aspect of the sky has changed a thousand times since their eager and faithful vision looked up into it. Time has swept us on the wave of advance into a new world with wider horizons, mightier aspirations, and vaster obligations. But life is the same, unchangeable save for its onward march, the earth abideth, and the sky, though like a fleeting tent, is built anew after the same eternal model. Just so, though the forms of life alter, and new times demand new methods, the truths of faith and immutable duty of doing good abide.

The Mission of Masonry! He who would describe that must be a poet, a musician, and a seer—a master of melodies, echoes, and long, far-sounding cadences. Now, as always, it toils to make better, to refine his thought and purify his dream to broaden his outlook, to lift his altitude, to establish in amplitude and resoluteness his life in all its relations. All its great history, its vast accumulations of tradition, its simple faith and its solemn rites, its freedom and its friendship, are dedicated to a high moral ideal, seeking to tame the tiger in man and bring all his wild passions into obedience to the will of God. Unwearyingly it holds aloft, in picture and in dream, that temple of character which it is the noblest labor of life to build in the midst of the years, and which will outlast time and death. It has no other mission than to exalt and ennoble humanity, to bring light out of darkness, beauty out of angularity; to make every hard-won inheritance more secure, every sanctity more sacred, every hope more radiant.

The Mission of Masonry! When the spirit of this order has its way upon earth, as at last it certainly will, society will be a vast league of sympathy and Justice, business a system of human service, law a rule of beneficence; the home will be more holy, the laughter of childhood more joyous, and the temple of prayer mortised and tenoned in simple faith. Evil, injustice, bigotry and greed, and every vile and slimy thing that defiles humanity will skulk into the dark, unable to endure the light of a juster, wiser, more merciful order. Industry will be upright, education prophetic, and religion not a shadow, but a real presence, when man has become acquainted with man and has learned to worship God by serving his fellows. When Masonry is victorious every tyranny will fall,

every Bastille cble, and man will be not only unfettered in mind and hand, but free of heart to walk erect in the light and dignity of the truth.

Such is the ideal, and by as much as are true to it, by so much are we loyal to the benign Mission of Masonry upon the earth. Fidelity to all that is holy demands that we give ourselves to it, trusting the power of truth, the reality of love, and the sovereign worth of character. For only as we incarnate this vision in actual life and activity does it become real, tangible, and effective. God works for man through man and seldom, if at all, in any other way. He asks for your voice and mine to speak His truth to man, for your hand and mind to do His work here below -- sweet voices and clean hands to work His will and make liberty and love prevail over injustice and hate. The most precious wealth in the world is the wealth of established character; it makes all our moral currency valid. Not all of us can be learned or famous, but each of us can be pure of heart, undefiled by evil, undaunted by error, noble and true, faithful and useful to our fellow souls. Life is a capacity for the highest things. Let us make it a pursuit of the highest -- an eager, incessant quest of truth, a noble utility, a genuine worth, a lofty honor, a wise freedom that through us the Mission of Masonry may be yet further advanced.
