

ORATION

Delivered at
Consecration of
VICTORY MARINE LODGE

No. 6160

FREEMASONS HALL

October 31st, 1945

The Rev. R. STAFFORD MORRIS, M.A.
Provincial Grand Chaplain

CONSECRATION OF THE VICTORY MARINE LODGE

No. 6160

Wednesday, October 31st, 1945

3 p.m.

Oration

R.W. Provincial Grand Master and Brethren

THE THING WHICH we are about to do today, by its very nature, must be characterised by a certain solemnity, as must all new undertakings or fresh endeavours. They begin without a past, with its successes and failures, to look back upon. There is only the future to look forward to—and that is unknown.

Whether it will be marked by success or failure depends, to a large extent, upon the quality and security of the foundations laid at its beginning. The time of the laying of those foundations must, then, provide a moment of deep solemnity and significance to all concerned.

The Consecration of a new Lodge in Freemasonry is one such new adventure. The founders of this new Lodge are conscious that they are setting their hands to a task of great responsibility ; for not only is the future of the new Lodge in their keeping, but the great traditions of English Freemasonry in the Province and beyond it will be upheld and even enhanced by the success which we all hope will attend their undertaking. We, who have the privilege of Consecrating this Lodge, are conscious, too, that it is no light matter upon which we are engaged, but the solemn duty of setting the seal of fulfilment upon the long-cherished desires of certain good and true Masons, to establish a new centre of Masonic influence and practice in the Province.

The Lodge is to be known by the title of Victory Marine. Victory, because it is founded and consecrated in this year of Victory, and Marine, because the whole of its founders obtain their livelihood, directly or indirectly, in connection with the sea.

It is impossible to dissociate the thought of Victory from the thought of the men who go down to the sea in ships. We can never forget the part that such men have played in the world struggle that has just ended. The fortitude, the heroism, the tremendous sense of duty, and the self-sacrifice which so characterised the men of our Royal Navy and Merchant Navy in the perilous years of war will ever provide an epic story in this Island's history, and will be the continuing pride of every one who has the remotest connection with shipping and the sea.

The name of Victory Marine is a proud name for any Lodge to bear and I am sure that the members of this new Lodge, now or in the future, will ever consider it so.

You, R.W. Prov. Grand Master, have often referred to the consecration of a new Lodge as the launching of a new ship. Such a thought is peculiarly appropriate today, for it is indeed the good Masonic ship "Victory Marine" which is to be launched.

I would ask you to think for a moment or two of what happens at the launching of a ship. Once the appointed ceremonies have been performed and its name given to it, there comes the tense moment when the supporting stays, that have kept it in its place on the slipway, are removed, and gradually the great vessel begins to move, slowly at first, but gathering speed as it goes on its way to take a first plunge into the water which henceforth is to be its home and sphere of action. But that is not all; being launched, its fate is not to be an isolated unit, ploughing its lonely way upon the seven seas, for in due time it will steam forth to join some fleet of warships, or its sister ships in the Line of some great Shipping Company.

Imagine the feelings in the hearts of those responsible for its design and construction, and the anticipations on the part of its first Captain, Officers, and Crew.

Two things must I think inevitably characterise their feelings at such a moment—Faith and Hope—Faith or *Belief* in the new vessel's power to ride out the storms and in its capability of performing and doing well the duties for which it was built, *Hope* that all may go well with it; that it may soon overcome any initial difficulties, and get into full working order, and above all, that

between officers and crew there will grow up such a bond of fellowship and union in service, which will make one and all strive their utmost to make her, what the true sailor most desires, a happy and efficient ship.

Some such feelings, too, I think must be in the hearts of all concerned in the founding and consecrating of this new Masonic Lodge today. It is in Faith that this Lodge has been founded. A strong and virile belief that as Brethren working together in accordance with the fundamental principles of our Masonic Art, they will carry on and extend that knowledge of Freemasonry which has inspired so many Brethren of the Fraternity in the past, and still continues to do so today, is the firm belief of its Founders. Hope, too, plays its inevitable part in their feelings at this time : hope that the new Lodge will surmount any initial difficulties and soon get into full working order ; hope that soon the true spirit of Fraternal Brotherhood, so fundamental a part of our masonic life, will soon knit together officers and brethren and create that which is the desire of all Masons, a happy and efficient Lodge.

But I want to suggest to you brethren that these feelings of Faith and Hope should carry a deeper significance for us as Masons today than mere concern with the future of this new Lodge, as such. I suggest that they should be related also to our thought of Freemasonry as a whole, and its place in the world of today.

I spoke of the Victory which has just been won. A Victory in armed warfare of the most terrible kind. There is another Victory still to be won, the Victory of establishing a true and lasting peace. I think it is true to say that all thinking men, out of their experience of the past six years, are convinced that peace, true peace, can be established in the world, only if men are prepared to acknowledge and practice certain fundamental things :

1. That a Supreme Being rules and governs all things.
2. That obedience to His will and laws is the only true way of life.
3. That Brotherhood and co-operation among the nations is the only principle upon which a peaceful and prosperous world society can be founded.

To gain the ascendancy of these fundamental ideas is to gain victory in peace. Because, by its very nature and the principles upon which it is founded, as well as by the fact that it is to be found in most countries of the world, Freemasonry must have an inevitable place in this struggle to establish peace.

Freemasonry must not be content with any kind of self-centredness. It must by its very nature be playing a part in the future development of human society.

It becomes therefore the duty and responsibility of every responsible Mason, every Lodge, every Province, to deepen Faith in all that Freemasonry stands for, and to Hope continually that it will never be found wanting in the opportunities which lie before it, of helping the world itself to be a happier place.

I feel sure, R.W. Prov. Grand Master, that the founders of this new Lodge will not only bear these thoughts in mind, but will inculcate in every member of the Lodge active understanding of the meaning of the Order to which they belong and the great and grand place which it can and must have in the world of today.

May the G.A.O.T.U. give His blessing to them in all their labours, and help them to build up such a temple upon the foundations laid today as will be a constant satisfaction to themselves and a continuing credit to Freemasonry as a whole.