

## Relief and Truth

Presented at Hullet Lodge 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Last October I spoke, in Wingham, on the subject of Brotherly Love. Tonight I would like to talk about “Relief and Truth”.

Some say that Relief is the same as Charity. But are they the same or is there a difference? The dictionary says that;

- Relief : is “freeing from danger, distress or pain; “to set free from emotional tension, anxiety or fear” to “give money, food or clothing to people, to alleviate privation”.

Another description is interesting, to which I will speak later and states:

- Relief; extent to which a 3 dimensional carvings, sculptures or map features are represented as raised above the general plane.

Charity on the other hand although similar has some differences as demonstrated by the definition in the dictionary;

- **Charitable**: “using Christian charity in human dealings, generous in giving to needy, or tolerant of judging others.
- **Charity**: Spiritual love for others, virtue by which we love God above all other things and our neighbors as ourselves.

***An organization dispensing relief.***

Masonic interpretations, which come straight out of the works, say it is “the distinguishing characteristic of a Mason’s heart”, and

“that a Mason’s Charity should know no bounds save those of prudence”, or that it “comprehends the whole”. Along with the Charity Lecture this shows just how important Charity is to our fraternity.

Now Relief and Charity sound very much the same, with slight differences, but Masonically I believe they are the same. The exception being that we as Masons are NOT a Charity such as an organization dispensing relief. But as Masons we should be doing the things represented in all these descriptions. Financially we are always ready to give money or other assistance to help to those in need. We should always be dealing with people in a charitable manner, and always be ready to assist those in need of emotional assistance whether from anxiety, fear or just needing a cheerful ear to listen to. A belief in God is the First question asked of a candidate and our belief in equality instructs us to treat everyone as an equal. I find that our time together before a meeting or after a meeting in the banquet room always brings to me a certain feeling almost of relief, as the Brethren collect together in brotherhood just talking together as men all believing in the same philosophy, all trying to follow the same principles. And as in the second explanation above Masons standing out in the sculpture of life, carving out a different philosophy and laying out a map for all to follow, which is “raised above the general plane”.

“The Masonic way is to give without remembering and receive without forgetting”.

There is a Masonic story about the Brother on his way to lodge getting stuck in a flooded part of the road. A farmer came out with his tractor and pulled him out and on seeing his Masonic Apron case on the seat, said “I hope you make lodge on time”. The Brother who was driving the car asked “ Is that why you helped me, the driver, because I am Mason?”

The farmer answered, “No I helped you because I am a Mason.” That is why Relief or Charity is a distinguishing characteristic of a Mason because it is something given without looking for a return in fact most times, given without any publicity or need of acknowledgement.

Truth, when I think about it, seems to be simple to explain and understand. One explanation said, “Truth, was that which is in accord with fact and reality”. Unfortunately philosophers had to stick their oar into the subject and confuse one with “criterion of truth” and “theories of truth” and whether it was subjective, objective or absolute! They talk about Correspondence theory of truth, Coherence theory, Constructivist theory, Pragmatic theory but the best of all was the Consensus theory, which says, “That agreed to, or might come to be agreed to”. Now if we get a

consensus of enough people to say the sky is green, would that be the truth?

To me truth is as in the simpler explanation given above. In another order of Masonry there is a debate on what is greater;

- The strength of wine
- The strength of the King
- The strength of women

After much debate by three wise members of the court, each who chose a different one of the topics, a fourth individual was asked his opinion. He stated that although the strength of the wine could not be denied nor the power of the King, and woman having brought the king into the world, also was of great strength, that none of them were comparable to the strength of Truth. The other things were mortal and transient while Truth alone is unchangeable and everlasting. That, is the Truth that I think we, as Masons believe in. In the words of Albert Pike;

“It is also true, that Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. To be true, and to seek to find and learn the Truth, are the great objects of every good Mason.”

Finally my Brethren, in these three great principles of Freemasonry, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth we find what Masonry is truly about.

- In Brotherly Love we learn to regard the whole human race as one family, equal, and all creatures of the Almighty.
- In Relief we learn to give assistance to those of the human race who are in need of it, materially, morally and spiritually.
- And in Truth we learn that philosophically the search for truth is the real object of Freemasonry. And that Truth is unchangeable and everlasting.

Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Remember them my Brethren, and live them.

Thank you my Brethren