



PAPER

How to die According to Fred & Charlie



Summary: A discussion about Brotherly Love & Charity.

It had been a good 'Third'. The team had done well. Fred and Charlie waited thoughtfully at the bar.

Suitably refreshed, Charlie broke the silence:

'Fred, that Exhortation in the Third. We tell the Candidate,

She finally instructs you how to die

Well, it's not a very upbeat message is it to give a chap who has just been made Master Mason; but, seriously, what on earth does it mean? Most of us reckon when we totter into old age, dying happens perfectly naturally thank-you-very-much. Why do we need additional guidance?'

Fred shrugged:

'As ever in Freemasonry there is a little more to it, Charlie. Those words are bound up with charity. The operative masons wouldn't have needed that pearl of heavenly wisdom. Theirs was a hazardous, unpredictable and meagrely rewarded way of life. A constant pre-occupation was after-care when injured, unemployed, or widowed. Charity for them wasn't just a benevolent after-dinner raffle; it was a necessity for survival.'

Charlie protested:

'But when Speculative Freemasonry was formed many members were drawn from the professional, the educated and the wealthy. They wouldn't have needed charity.'

Fred paused:

'Let me explain. In 1737 a distinguished member of the French Grand Lodge, Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay, under pressure from the French nobility, sowed the seeds of a Speculative Masonic movement founded on a world-wide pattern of chivalry and higher ideal; not on the working practices of artisans. He proposed a series of six degrees from Entered Apprentice to Knights Templar known collectively as 'the Ramsay Rite'. Its principal themes were the noble ones of Honour, Obligation and Duty.'

Charlie interjected:

'But surely we still prize charity today alongside brotherly love and truth?'

Fred nodded:

'True, but words change in meaning, Charlie. For Ramsay charity was no longer a practical necessity to protect vulnerable Masons: it became elevated into a new moral principle by which a Freemason should be guided every minute, every hour and every day throughout his life.'

'How so, Fred?'

'Charity is the anglicised form of the Latin word 'Caritas', Charlie, which means 'Agape' or 'Brotherly love'. Charity and brotherly love mean precisely the same thing. True charity, our Brotherly love, flows from a Brother's compassionate heart and his quiet deeds, not from his weighty wallet. Fund-raising for a good cause is admirable but without personal effort it rarely becomes true charity.'

Charlie pondered:

'What can we give if not money?'

Fred:

'For most of us time becomes far more precious than money. Therefore, giving up an afternoon to visit a lonely old chap in retirement; driving a colleague to hospital rather than playing a round of golf; mowing an elderly widow's lawn; tidying up your village byways, these show Brotherly love, true Masonic charity in action.'

'In those heady days, pre-1945, when Masonic Affairs were placed next to The Court Circular in the papers, Freemasons became widely respected by the public not for their wealth, but for the care, the compassion, the kindness they showed towards their communities. Freemasonry encourages us to shape our lives with that Brotherly love, being true to our principles and to our nature, regardless of any extra personal effort. With this guidance we can achieve the ultimate ambition of the ancient philosophers; to live each life with respect and to die without regret. So, Charlie, you see the full meaning in the Exhortation therefore becomes she finally instructs you how to die regretted, having lived respected.'

Charlie smiled:

'Fred, we are very privileged to be Freemasons.'



Recommended use of Papers

Papers offer a simple, direct means of advancement in a particular aspect of Masonic knowledge. They can be used in a variety of ways:

- Read at home for private study
- Shared for pre-reading by members of a discussion group
- Read aloud in Lodge or Chapter, or in an LOI/COI/new members forum
 - Followed by 'any questions'
 - As a precursor to a discussion (in which case much more time is needed, possibly more than double that allocated to the paper itself)
 - Supported by audio-visual aids, if necessary

They can be delivered by a single person or split into bite-sized pieces and read by multiple presenters (in which case, the speaker(s) should have read and practiced the delivery of the paper beforehand).

If the paper is to be used to introduce a discussion, the presenter will need to have thought about the material, done a little research, and prepared some open questions to engage with the audience. Kipling's dictum can be of help in preparing open questions, which should begin with one of his 'serving men', as follows: *'I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew). Their names are, What and Why and When and How and Where and Who'*. Rudyard Kipling

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version and any reference to ritual will be from Emulation unless otherwise specified.

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Fred and Charlie character drawings courtesy of Eddie Wildman.

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