

nize a speaker, put a question, or decide the result of a division, without referring for the manner in which these duties are performed to the usages of parliamentary law.

There are, it is true, on the other hand, some Masons, not well instructed in the jurisprudence of the Order, and not conversant with the peculiarities of the organization, in which it differs from other associations, who would apply indiscriminately the rules of parliamentary law, and thus would decide many questions contrary to the spirit of the Institution. Both of these are wrong. There is a *Mezzo termine*, or neutral ground, on which it is wisest to rest. Here, as elsewhere, a middle course would be found the safest: *Medio tutissimus ibis*—we shall consult truth and propriety by avoiding all extremes.

The true state of the case is this: Masonry has an organization peculiar to itself. Wherever this organization comes in conflict with that of other associations, the parliamentary law will be inapplicable. Where on the contrary, this organization does not differ in a Lodge from that of other deliberative bodies, the rules of order by which such a Lodge should be governed will be best found in the provisions of the Parliamentary Law. Let us illustrate this by examples.

Under the operation of the unwritten laws of Masonry a Lodge cannot adjourn, but must be closed by the Worshipful Master at his good will and pleasure. Now, in the Parliamentary Law there are provisions for the government of adjournments, such, for instance, as that a motion to that effect must take precedence of all other motions. This rule is applicable to all societies, wherein the members have reserved to themselves the right of adjournment; but is wholly inadmissible in a Masonic Lodge, where no such right exists. If then such a motion of adjournment should be made in a Lodge, it would not be necessary that the presiding officer should refer for his instructions to the provisions of the parliamentary law in reference to adjournment. He would at once declare the proceeding out of order, and would properly refuse to entertain the motion.

Again, although the members of a Lodge cannot select the time of adjournment they have an undoubted right to close at any time a debate, in which the Lodge may be engaged, when they deem it improper or inexpedient to continue the discussion. Now, there are various modes of closing a debate, all of which are defined and regulated by parliamentary law. One of these is by a call for the previous question. Although there is no positive law on the subject, yet the spirit of comity and courtesy which prevails in the institution, the authority of the best Masonic jurists, and the general usage of the Fraternity have concurred in the decision, that the previous question cannot be moved in a Masonic Lodge. All the provisions, therefore, of the Parliamentary Law, which refer to the subject of the previous question, are inapplicable in Masonry, and need not be studied by the Master of a Lodge.

But the other methods of closing a debate are not in this category. These methods are, to postpone to a time certain, to postpone indefinitely, and to lie upon the table. Each of these methods must be inaugurated by a motion to that effect, and these motions are regulated by parliamentary law, having each an order of priority and preference, and two of them being debateable as to the expediency of adoption, while the third admits of no discussion, but must be put to the assembly immediately after it is made. In all these cases, it is necessary that the presiding officer should be conversant with the parliamentary law in the