

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

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Greetings Brethren,

This month features the first part of quite a long, but interesting article entitled "A Journey Through the First Degree" as featured in a Masonic Education Course published by the Pieter-Stones Review of Freemasonry. Part 2 will be featured in the June edition.

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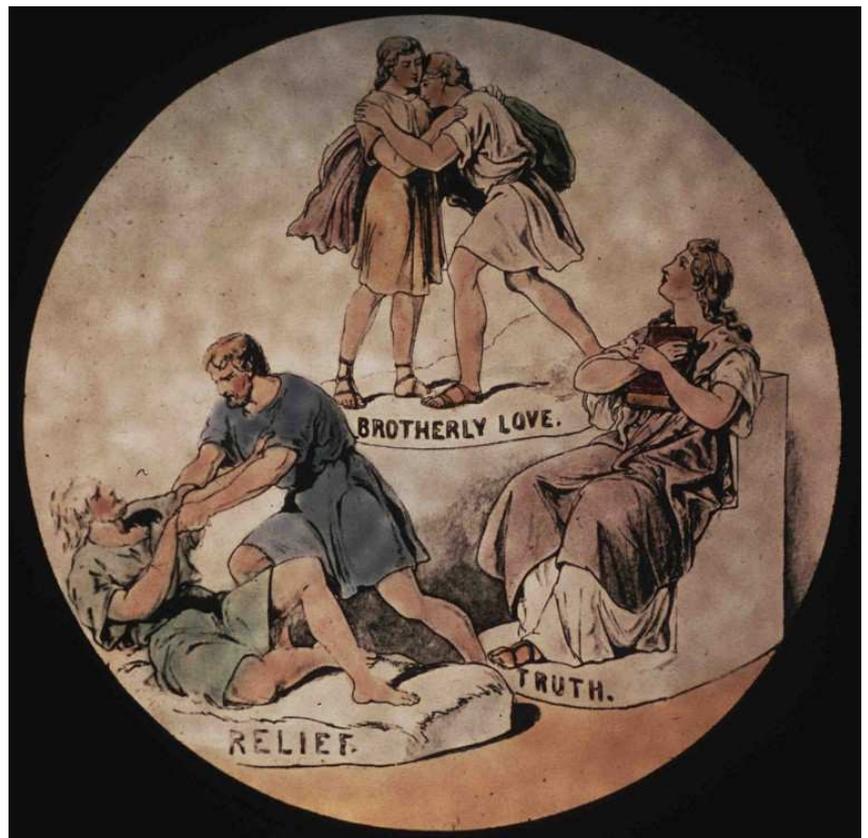
Treasurer's Note

Forget the hasty, unkind word;
 Forget the slander you have heard;
 Forget the quarrel and the cause;
 Forget the whole affair, because,
 Forgetting is the only way.
 Forget the storm of yesterday;
 Forget the knocker, and the squeak;
 Forget the bad day of the week.
 Forget you're not a millionaire;
 Forget the grey streaks in your hair;
 Forget to even get the blues -

But don't forget to pay your Dues!

Membership e-mail address list

A list of current members and their e-mail addresses is available on request.



JOURNEY THROUGH THE FIRST DEGREE—Part 1

In our Journey through the First Degree we meet a series of challenges. No doubt we all remember that first challenge: "Do you feel anything?" That first incident was designed to intimate to us that we were about to engage in something serious and solemn. We were no sooner inside the Lodge than we were faced with the second challenge: "Are you free?" Then, when we vowed that we were unfettered, body, mind and soul, the blessings of the Almighty was invoked on the proceedings. Then, without a pause, came the third and most important challenge of all: "In all cases of difficulty and danger, in whom do you put your trust?" There is, of course, only one answer, but that answer is the confession of a simple faith - the simple faith of Masonry. We do not enquire a candidate's religion, but we do insist on a belief in a Supreme Being - faith in the Great Architect of the Universe is the rock foundation on which the whole Masonic edifice is built.

Of the three theological virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, the last is, of course, the greatest - "chief among the blessed three", as we sing in our ode - but Faith is necessarily the first, the starting point in any approach to God. And so we find right at the beginning of our Masonic career a profound emphasis on a simple faith. But let us continue our journey.

We enter the Lodge room from the West, symbolizing the gateway of life, not birth, but the beginning of life. Being the gateway to life, it will also eventually be the gateway from life, but that comes much later in our story. We travel down the North side, the place of darkness, symbolizing the development of life - the time spent by the embryo in the mother's womb, or the seed in the darkness of the earth. Then we arrive in the East, where we receive the light, symbolizing birth.

In his circumambulation of the Lodge our candidate follows the path of the sun, which, of course, rises in the East, reaches its zenith in the South - at least it does in the Northern Hemisphere, where our ceremonies originate - then sets in the West, and returns to the East through the hours of darkness.

Our candidate knocks, three times at the Junior Wardens pedestal and three times at that of the Senior warden. These three knocks have a profound significance; they betoken the three degrees, which in turn represent man's approach to God in each of the three phases of nature: a physical approach, a mental or intellectual approach, and a spiritual approach. The candidate, of course, knows nothing of this at this stage, but the pattern of our three degrees is based on this fundamental principle.

We advance to the East by three irregular steps, symbolizing stepping into the unknown. The first is a timid step, full of caution; the second a little bolder, indicating rising confidence, and the third quite bold, because fear has now been dispelled. The first part of the sign of an Entered Apprentice has the same significance - reaching into the unknown.

The predominating number of this degree is three, just as five and seven are the numbers of the other two degrees, and so, as the candidate kneels he forms three squares: the first with his leg, the second with his foot, and the third with his arm. His hand in this position is an emblem of concealment - he takes a vow of concealment - and it is worthy to notice that the words used, "hele and conceal", have the same meaning: "hele: being derived from the Anglo-Saxon, the language in use before William the Conqueror arrived from Normandy, and "conceal" being derived from the Norman French that he brought with him, thus establishing a second language in England. Freemasonry here used a word from each language to make sure that it was not misunderstood. This might throw a little light on the age of our ritual.

Both these words mean to "cover up", just as does our other word "heal", which was derived from the same Anglo-Saxon word "helan". The thatchers of roofs, particularly in Cornwall and Devon, are called "heelers" to this day, and our nurseryman use that word when they cover the roots of a plant with earth, till they are ready to place it in the ground.

The obligation is obviously twofold, in as much as we may neither do certain things ourselves, nor permit them to be done by others; but the word "indite", which is not properly understood, makes the obligation threefold. Its meaning is "to direct or dictate what is to be uttered or written". If we may not permit a second person to direct or dictate what is to be uttered or written to a third person, the word has a profound significance on our obligation.

When God accused Cain of Abel's murder, he answered: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The word "indite" in our obligation shows that we are our brother's keeper. The mere passive witnessing a brother thus violating his obligation implies the violation of our own.

We are made a Mason in the body of a Lodge "just, perfect and regular". The word "just" in this instance has the archaic meaning of "correct". As it does in the investiture of the Treasurer when we use the words "just and regular accounts". What makes the Lodge "just", what makes it "perfect", and what makes it "regular"? The Sacred Volume open on the Master's pedestal makes it just, and complete. The number seven makes it perfect, as we learn in the words of the First Tracing Board, with a confirmation of that in the Second Tracing Board, as you, no doubt, remember. The warrant or charter of the United Grand Lodge of Victoria makes it regular. Without the Sacred Volume to make the Lodge just and complete, the presence of "seven regularly made Masons" to make it perfect, and the warrant or charter to make it regular, no Lodge can conduct the ceremony of initiation.

After the candidate has received the light, he takes his first regular step in Freemasonry, which he does in the form of a tau cross. When I was in India several years ago, I noticed that they used the same words as we do regarding the placing of the candidate's feet, but they added the words: "so as to form the letter T". This is quite right, as the English letter T is the equivalent of the Greek letter tau, and the three emblems in the form of an inverted letter T on the apron of an Installed Master are tau crosses. The letter tau is the nineteenth letter of the Greek alphabet.

In its original form of a cross, it is probably the most ancient of all sacred signs. It is depicted on the oldest monuments in Egypt, Assyria, Persia and Hindustan. According to Mackey, Moses marked this sign on the forehead of his brother, Aaron, when he anointed him as the first High Priest of Israel. It was this sign that Ezekiel caused to be marked on the foreheads of the righteous, who were thereby saved from death. In India it is the sign of the Brahma, the creator, the first of the Hindu Trinity, and used by Brahmins, the highest caste in that religion. It was highly revered by the ancient Druids, and is, of course, the most sacred sign of Christianity.

We form a tau cross in each of the three degrees, and when we are exalted in the Royal Arch - which it is claimed, is not another degree, but the completion of the third - we find the three crosses united in the "triple tau".

As the left-hand side symbolizes evil, we always take a step with the left foot, as symbolical of putting down evil, before we make this sign. The Latin word for "left" is sinister, which accounts for the ominous significance attributed to this English word.

The word of the degree is a Hebrew word, whose meaning gives us the key to God's covenant with Israel, of which the name of the pillar was intended to be a constant reminder, as we see from this paraphrasing of the covenant: "In the strength of Jehovah shall the king rejoice, for He will establish the throne of David and his kingdom to his seed forever". The pillar has nothing really to do with the great grandfather of David, only inasmuch as they both bore the same name, thus the name of one serves as a reminder of the other.

"Have you anything to give?" Here Brethren, is our fourth challenge, and, although at the time we were prevented from accepting that challenge, now that we are Freemasons, we are bound to accept, for we have so much to give - our time, our energy, our devotion. To disregard this challenge is to condemn ourselves to lack of interest, which so often becomes that fatal attitude of apathy.

The ancient Greeks had three words - eros, philia, and agape which are translated to the same English word "love", but to the Greeks they had three distinct meanings. Eros was the love between the sexes; philia the love of man for man - brotherly love; and the third, agape, something far greater - the love of God for man, which, of course, knows no bounds. The equivalent of agape in the Latin language was caritas, and it is from this word that our word "charity" is derived, and it has the same meaning. It seems to have been somewhat degraded in the outside world, but in Freemasonry it still has that deeper meaning. We cannot hope to attain to such a love, but we can strive to emulate it to the best of our ability.

Faith, as I have already mentioned, is necessarily the first step in any approach to God, and the three degrees in Freemasonry represent our approach to God in the three phases of our nature. We belong to God, body, mind and soul. It is Hope that enables us to take the next step, but Charity, that sublime virtue derived from an emulation of God's love for man, must be the greatest, and so we depict it on our Tracing Board as the top rung of the ladder.

The North-east charge is a dramatization of this great virtue; it reminds us of our obligation to relieve the distress of our indigent brother, and this reminder is constantly repeated at the conclusion of every meeting in the Tyler's Toast. During my Masonic career I have heard several interpretations of the Tyler's Toast, but the following has so appealed to me that I have forgotten the others.

According to this interpretation the Tyler's Toast is meant to remind us of the time, when we stood on the North-east corner of the Lodge, and listened for the first time to these words "... it cannot be denied that we have many members of rank and opulence amongst us; neither can it be concealed that among the thousands who range under its banner, there are some who, perhaps from circumstances of unavoidable calamity and misfortune, are reduced to the lowest ebb of poverty and distress. On their behalf it is our usual custom to awaken the sympathy of every newly initiated Brother, by making such a claim, etc." The charge concludes with the words: "...should you, at any future time, meet a Brother in distress who might solicit your assistance, you will remember those peculiar moments when you were admitted into Freemasonry ... and cheerfully embrace to opportunity of practicing towards him that virtue that you now profess to admire."

Lodge Birthdays

Chris Kernot	11
Warrick Sands	7
Rod Neilson	5 (J)
Michael Johnston	4 (J)
Mick Benjamin	1

News from the South

Surprise news this month—UGLE has promoted W. Bro. Alan Churchill to Past Grand Standard Bearer (PGStdB) - that honour came right out of the blue and is gratefully received.

We are holding a Ladies evening at our next meeting.

A welcome visitor in the April meeting was W. Bro. Russell Chilton, husband of the newly-appointed New Zealand High Commissioner.

When we honour this toast to our distressed Brethren we think of them as being dispersed to the four points of the compass over the surface of land and water, and so we point, but not to the South, for, symbolically speaking, we are standing in the South, but we point to the other three - straight ahead to the North, left to the West, and right to the East. We do this three times in allusion to the three degrees, which in turn allude to the triple nature of man - body, mind, and soul - for man must dedicate himself to God in each of the three phases of his nature, and in each of the three degrees to represent our approach to God in that particular phase of our being.

When we find ourselves face to face with the distressed Brother, what might we be called upon to do in order to carry out this obligation?

Well first of all, we may have to thrust our hands into our pockets where we keep our money. However, financial aid may not be his greatest need; perhaps he is depressed, downcast, discouraged, and our sympathy, counsel, or encouragement could give him renewed strength to fight life's battle. He may have all the money he needs, and yet be destitute of faith, of hope, and of course, it is our duty to share our faith, our hope, and our courage with him. Our aid to this distressed Brother could take yet a third form; perhaps he is aged, invalid, blind, or otherwise handicapped, and so unable to something that we could do for him - some physical task that we could do for him with these hands.

Yes, our aid will come from our pockets, from our hearts, or from our hands, and so we indicate each in turn. And we do it three times for the same reason that we pointed three times: body, mind and soul; hand, head and heart; north, west and east. And in silence, because whatever aid we render to our distressed Brother will forever remain a secret between the giver and the receiver.

"To our next merry meeting" we say with the hands in this position. The hand in this position always symbolizes concealment, as it was thus that we took our obligation. This time it is a double concealment, representing concealment in two places. It is not only what occurred in the Lodge Room, but also what occurred here at the festive board, where we honour this toast, that is not to be divulged to the outside world.

We call our place of refreshment "the South", because the cathedral builders always erected their lodge on the sunny side of the construction, which in the Northern Hemisphere is the south. It was here that our ancient Brethren took their refreshment, and so the place of refreshment came to be called the "South".

It has been well said: "Faith is lost in sight, Hope ends in fruition, but Charity extends beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity".

In the Reasons for Preparation we are told that our right arm was made bare in token of our sincerity, and to show that we are able and willing to work. This, Brethren, is yet another challenge, similar to "give", because unless we are prepared to work diligently in gaining knowledge and carrying out the teachings of the Craft, we are sentencing ourselves to the same fate as those who do not give. The important point is that both "give" and "work" imply involvement.

Again in the Reasons we are told: "There was not heard the sound of a hammer or any other implement of iron". To my knowledge there are four references to this in the Sacred Volume. The first is a warning, which is given in Exodus 20:25, where we read: "And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt build it of hewn stone, for if thou lift up thine tool upon it, thou hast polluted it". The second is an instruction, which is given in Deuteronomy 27:5, where we read: "And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them".

We know that the command was carried out, because it is recorded in Joshua 8:30-31: "Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron".

The fourth reference shows us that this law was observed in the erection of King Solomon's Temple, for in the First Book of Kings 6:7, we read: "And the house, when it was in building, was built of stones made ready, before they were brought hither; so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building".

I will mention but two things in the Tracing Board, and the first of these is a pair of things, the Rough and Perfect Ashlars. Both of these ashlar are reminders of the necessity for moral behaviour and the importance of developing the intellectual faculty. In the ritual we are told: "The Rough Ashlar is a stone, rough and unhewn as taken from the quarry until, by the industry and ingenuity of the workmen, it is modelled, wrought into due form, and rendered fit for the hands of the more expert craftsman; this represents man in his infant or primitive stage, rough and unpolished as that stone, until by the kind care and attention of his parents or guardians by giving a liberal and virtuous education, his mind becomes cultivated, and he is thereby rendered a fit member of civilized society. The Perfect Ashlar is a stone of true die or square, fit to be tried by the S. and C.s; this represents man in the decline of years, after a regular well-spent life in acts of piety and virtue, which cannot otherwise be tried and approved than by the S. of God's word, and the C.s of his own self-convincing conscience.

Dr Mackey (Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and its kindred Sciences) presents the same idea in these words: "The Rough Ashlar, or stone in its rude and unpolished conditions, is emblematical of man in his natural state - ignorant, uncultivated, and vicious. But when education has exercised its wholesome influence in expanding his intellect, restraining his passions, and activating his mind, he is then represented by the Perfect Ashlar, which, under the skilful hand of the expert Craftsman, has been smoothed and squared and fitted for its place in the building".

Dr. Joseph Fort Newton (The Builders) clothes the idea in these beautiful words: "Freemasonry insists that its members shall be men, free men of adult age and of good report; as the stones of King Solomon's Temple were hewn and chiselled and shaped and polished, far away, so that without the sound of axe or hammer, they might be softly, silently set in the place that awaited them; so in the Lodges of freemasonry the characters of its members are silently, secretly smoothed and shaped, until the rough stone becomes the Perfect Ashlar, the long pilgrimage is over, the working tools are laid down, and the finished stone finds its last resting place in the great temple of humanity, which the Great Architect has been building since the world began:

Now let me add the thought contained in the last verse of that poem by Lawrence Greenleaf, entitled "Temple of Living Stones":

"Although our past achievements we with honest pride review,
As long as there's Rough Ashlars there is work for us to do;
We still must shape the living stones with instruments of love,
For that eternal mansion in the paradise above;
Toil as we've toiled in ages past to carry out the plan;
'Tis this: the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man".

In ordinary everyday life, when we speak of a "rude or "Polished" mind, of an "upright" man, who is a "pillar" of society, of meeting on the "level", and acting on the "square", we are using words that found their origin in our Masonic Craft; and when we speak of putting someone through the Third Degree, we are thinking of an ordeal, and our Masonic ordeal teaches us that we cannot rely on our own worth, no matter how virtuous, nor yet on all the science and accumulated knowledge of mankind, but only on the sure grip of faith; all else will prove a slip and fail us in the hour of trial.

Which brings us back to the point where we started our journey, and where we answered that most important challenge: "In all cases of difficulty and danger, in whom do you put your trust?" Our answer, "In God", is a confession of faith, the simple faith of Masonry is its very cornerstone, its first and greatest landmark, the basis of its plan, its purpose, its promise. There is no other foundation - upon faith in God, Freemasonry builds its temple of Brotherly love, Relief and Truth.

As he has for most things, Dr. Newton (The Builders) has something apt to say about the simple faith; and so I will conclude this chapter with his words: 'Out of this simple faith grows by inevitable logic the philosophy which Freemasonry teaches in signs and symbols, in pictures and parables. Stated briefly, stated vividly, it is that behind the pageant of nature, in it and over it, there is a Supreme Being, who initiates, impels and controls all; that behind the life of man and his pathetic story in history, there is a righteous will, the intelligent conscience of the Most High. In short, that the last thing in the universe is mind, that the highest and deepest thing is conscience, and that the final reality is the absoluteness of love; higher than his faith cannot fly, and deeper than his thought cannot dig".

The other reference I wish to make to the Tracing Board is not to two things like the Ashlars, but to three things, the pillars. They warrant a chapter on their own.

Continued next month

KNOCKS (DEGREES)

The Masonic degree knocks, in series of threes, are not considered to have any symbolical significance despite claims to the contrary by some Masonic students. They are used for the basic and practical purposes of providing a lodge properly tyled, indicating the degree in which work is proceeding, advising of brethren seeking admission or denoting alarms.

In attaching different knocks for the 3 degrees in Freemasonry, this is merely to afford a means by which one degree may be distinguished from another. It is to be noted, however, that the knocks of the degree are not standard in all jurisdictions.

It is believed by some that the employment of such knocks may have been derived from ecclesiastical practice. For example, in relation to the enthronement of a bishop, a new appointee to such a position is required to knock 3 times on the western door of a cathedral to seek admission for the ceremony of his induction while a similar ceremony obtains at the consecration of a new church.

The following lecture was presented by W. Bro. Chris Kernot (Charity Steward) in the April meeting

Charity

We have all of us, every single one of we Masons present, heard these following words, in the Charge in the NE...

"I shall immediately proceed to put your principles, in some measure to the test, by calling upon you to exercise that virtue which may justly be denominated the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart... I Mean CHARITY.

But what does it mean, this word?

The Oxford Dictionary describes it as:

The voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need
Help or money given to those in need and
Kindness and tolerance in judging others:

Within the Lodge, while the Lodge is NOT a "Charitable Organisation" per se, Charity is expected to be exemplified in our Charitable nature towards one another, and it naturally extends, that this Charitable nature, within our global group of Masonic Brothers, will automatically embrace the larger brotherhood of all mankind.

Why is charity so important in Freemasonry, that it is held in so high a regard as to be considered the Cornerstone of Masonry, *THE* Characteristic that so distinguishes the true Mason's heart of Virtue?

Many hold the charge to the Badge as being crucial in decisions regarding the Lodge, however, without Charity in our hearts, as the driving principle, the tenets of the Charge to the Badge are rather meaningless.

Within Charity, and on these very walls, are words which must be brought to bear, within the word and to add to its meaning.

What is charity if there is no "Love" in it, Truth, justice, Mercy, Honour.

None of these fabulous words that grace our walls have any meaning, no true meaning, if they are not backed up by and intertwined with our charitable nature.

Is Charity, an action, without emotion, or an emotive response to a situation that is presented? Of course, it is an emotive response, a chosen personal outcome, an outcome that for each of us, is different.

But these differences in how we view charity is a difference *between* ourselves as Masons.

We are constantly faced with "Charitable Outcomes" perhaps on a daily basis, Recently, large ones have included Earthquakes in NZ, & Bush Fires in Australia, while here in Port Vila alone: School fees, Promedical, Women's Refuge centre the list seems, and probably IS... endless, and these are easy to cope with, virtually requiring a simple judgment in mind, and a swift and ready hand in pocket.

The harder questions relating to charity, however, relate to judgments we have made already, concerning a person or an event.

If we have decided that something or someone is unforgivable, that our forgiveness is the only way a person or event can be rectified, it is this choice, for choice it is, which should be analysed from a *Charity* angle.

(Now, in our own, incredibly, individual minds, this is a very personal thing, not all of us, see an event or person the same way, and therefore, we all have a completely different view or judgment on what is required to be applied to each situation).

How can being Judgmental about someone or something be considered as having a Charitable angle?

I feel that Charity, can be paraphrased as being *For Giving*, then surely the true meaning of the word *Forgiving* is related to Charity, and that being *Unforgiving* is synonymous with being *Uncharitable*.

Being angry, being jealous, being Sad, being selfish of freely giving to others of our positive emotions... all these negative emotions or actions are at their heart, uncharitable.. but it would take some realization that this *is* a possibility, to be aware of that possibility, and then to take a look at ourselves, and the underlying principles that have been shaping our view, from a charitable perspective ... and to see if perhaps there might be some new value judgment arrived at.

Buddha said: "The Charitable man is loved by all; his friendship is prized highly; in death his heart is at rest and full of joy, for he suffers not from repentance; he receives the opening flower of his reward and the fruit that ripens from it. The charitable man has found the path of salvation. He is like the man who plants a sapling, securing thereby the shade, the flowers and the fruit in future years. Even so is the result of charity; even so is the joy of him who helps those who are in need of assistance."

Confucius said: (slightly paraphrased, 'cos he talks funny) "Love is to conquer self and turn to courtesy. Could we conquer self and turn to courtesy for but one day, all mankind would turn to love. The signs of love are ever courteous of eye and ever courteous of ear; to be ever courteous in word and ever courteous in deed. To behave as though a great guest were come; to give others the experience, at our hands, and of our minds and words, that we would absolutely and truthfully prefer to receive ourselves from them; to breed no wrongs in any home. To be respectful at home, painstaking at work, faithful to all. Love is to mete out five things to all below heaven - modesty and bounty, truth, earnestness and kindness. Modesty escapes insult;

bounty wins the many;

truth gains men's trust;

earnestness brings success and kindness is the key to men's work."

The immutable law of the Great Architect of the Universe requires that besides respecting the absolute rights of others, and *being* merely *just*, we should naturally "*do*" good, *be* charitable, and obey the dictates of the generous and noble sentiments of our souls. Charity is a law because our conscience is neither satisfied nor at ease if we have not relieved the suffering of the distressed *and* the destitute, if it is within our ability to do so... If we are uncharitable in the face of a *Charity Moment*, we find ourselves physically or at the very least, mentally, performing awkward body language in the middle of the conflict of a beggar holding out his hand,

while we hold out on the possibility of charity towards the man or woman behind the hand, seeing only the hand, and not the humanity attached to it – and at another level, our own potential “Attachment” to that hand, from a charity perspective, had we chosen the charity option.

To be charitable is an obligation for us as the almoners of God's bounties with which we have been bountifully blessed. But this obligation is perhaps little, if not paired up with our other obligation to be just. Charity stems from neither rule nor limit and its beauty, its most beautifully felt moment, consists in the absolute liberty with which it is given, without condition or pause.

To be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; to relieve the necessities of the needy; and be generous, liberal and hospitable; to avoid the temptation of “Eye for an Eye”; to find absolute joy in the good fortune of others, and sympathize with them in their sorrows and difficulties; to always attempt to live at peace, with all men, and to repay theoretical injuries with benefits and kindness; these are the sublime dictates of Charity through our own humanity, our own charity, we are connected not only to all our Masonic brothers, but to all our neighbours on this planet, and the universe - the hand that receives our charity, the mind that receives, the hearts and emotions... that benefit from our charity, are in some sense, our own.. so why would we *not* give generously, in all facets where we may.

With thanks to W. Bro. Chris for a thought-provoking lecture

From the Archives

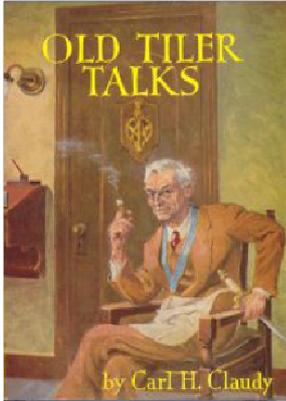
The Australian Keystone April 1898

Every Masonic Lodge should have a ledge historian so that a proper record of the events transpiring in connection with the lodge can be kept.

Dead counsellors are the most instructive because they are heard with patience and reverence.

There is no room in Masonry for jealousy and false ambition. But the true Mason loves his brother, rejoices with him when he rejoices and weeps with him when he weeps.

Sociability is eminently a Masonic attribute, but sociability alone never did and never will furnish any part of the foundations of Masonry.



Old Tiler Talks— Foolish Questions

"Jones is a nut!" remarked the New Brother to the Old Tiler. "I went with him yesterday to look up an applicant for membership. I didn't know much about such things, so I let him do the talking. And the questions that man asked!" "What did he want to know?" "First, he wanted to know what kind of job the applicant held, how long he had been there, where he had worked before, was he satisfied, did he like his boss, how much he made and whether he saved any of it or spent it all!"

"Quite right, too," commented the Old Tiler. "He wanted to know if the applicant was a solid citizen, able to pay his dues and unlikely to become a charge on the lodge. Chap who holds a job today and leaves it tomorrow for another is apt to be an applicant for charity."

"But that's one of the things a lodge is for- charity," said the New Brother. "To its members who are in need, yes," answered the Old Tiler. "But no lodge willingly takes in members who may need charity. Masonry is not a crutch for the indigent. It is a staff for those who go lame in life's, journey, but when a man starts out lame he has to get crutches from some other institution."

"He asked, 'Why do you want to become a Mason?' that seemed to me an impertinence. A man's reasons for wanting to join Masonry are no business of ours."

"Is that so!" answered the Old Tiler. "Son, you know so many things that are not so! I have been on the petitions of a great many men and that is always my first question. I have heard many answers. Some men want to join because their fathers were Masons. Some think it will help them in life. Some frankly say they want to make friends so they can be successful.

Others think that Masonry will help them in their religion. Still others want to be Masons because they want to belong to a secret society."

"But why is that our business?"

"A man who wants to join a fraternity because his father belonged, is good material," answered the Old Tiler. "He wants to imitate his father. As his father was a Mason it is probable that he was a good man. If the applicant desires to imitate a good man, and thinks we can help him, his motives are worthy. The man who wants to become a Mason to stiffen his religious belief is not a good candidate. Masonry demands no religion of its applicants, merely a belief in Deity. A man with religious convictions which are slipping and looks for something to prop them up, should go elsewhere than the Masonic Altar. Asking nothing but a belief in God, we have a right to demand that that belief be strong, well-grounded, unshakable, and beyond question.

"The man who says he wants to join the Masonic order because he wants to belong to a secret society doesn't get asked and more questions! He is through right there. Masonry is no haven for curiosity seekers. The chap who thinks Masonry will make him friends who will help him in his business gets nowhere with a good committee. Masonry is not a business club. Imagine a man going to a minister and saying: 'I want to join your church so I can sell lawn mowers to your members.' Would the minister want him? Masonry is not a church, but it is holy to Masons. Masonry is a bright and shining light in a man's heart which must not be sullied by profane motives. To attempt to use Masonry for business is like using the Bible to sit on diverting from the proper purpose that which should be held sacred.

"The man who answers that question by saying, 'I have always heard of Masons as men who receive help in being good men; I would like to have the privilege of becoming a member,' is approaching the matter in the right spirit. Masonry doesn't hunt the man, the man must hunt the lodge. And he must hunt with a pure motive, or cannot join any good lodge, with a good committee. The motive is vitally important. We want to know if he can afford \$50 for a fee and \$5 a year for dues. If they have to rob their children to join we have no use for them. We want to know if a man stands well with his fellows outside the lodge; if so he is apt to stand well with them inside. If he has few friends and those of doubtful character, the chances are he is not good timber for us. "Masonry is what we make it. Every good man who comes into a lodge helps the fraternity. Every insincere man, every scoffer, every dishonest man who gets into lodge, injures the fraternity. Masonry can accomplish good in the hearts of men only as it is better than they are. When it becomes less good than the average man, the average man will not want to join, and Masonry's power will be gone.

"The price of liberty, so we are told, is eternal vigilance. The price of quality in a lodge is eternal care by the investigation committee. An important job, it should be approached with the idea that the future of the lodge and of Masonry to some extent rests on the man making the investigation. "Hm. Thanks. See you later."

"You're welcome- but what is your hurry?"

"Got to find Jones and tell him I'm the nut. Then ask the Master to let me go with him again and see if I can't see something else in his questions besides foolishness!" answered the New Brother.

KNOCKS (ON WARDEN'S SHOULDERS)

In the initiation ceremony, each candidate is required to knock 3 times on the right shoulder of both the Senior and Junior Warden during the course of his initial perambulation. While it is difficult to know exactly what the original symbolism of this procedure was intended to be, one commonly-held belief these days is that it represents the application of a text from scripture included both in Matthew vii, 7 and Luke xi, 9, reading: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you'. In some jurisdictions (but not ours) the alarm at initiation is indicated by 3 distinct knocks at the entrance to the lodge, and the above symbolic explanation could also be attached to that ceremonial commencement.

The Best Event in a Mason's Life

I heard three knocks at the Temple door
And then it was opened wide.
I felt the grip of a Mason's hand
As I slowly passed inside.

I was lowered on bended knees,
As a prayer was said for me,
And then I was helped to pass around
For the Brethren all to see.

All to me was like black of night,
As my leader took me round,
And my racing heart I heard more clear
Than the organs solemn sound.

My faltering footstep here and there
Were halted on my way,
As several questions were put to me
As I struggled not to sway.

Then moving on I took three steps
And again I had to kneel
Whilst my left hand pressed a compass point
For my naked breast to feel.

With my right resting on The Law
I took my obligation
And I swore I'd be a Mason true
At my initiation.

Some word were said which I could not hear
Though wishing that I could see,
Then after a knock that echoed wide
My sight was restored to me.

I shall not tell more of what I saw
Or much of what was spoken
But I saw the sign and heard the word
And felt the Masons token.

I'll tell you this that I heard a charge
(Which later I learned by heart)
As it told me all that a man should do
As a Mason, from the start.

It matters not if you pass the Chair
Or reach the highest station,
The best event in a Mason's life
Is his initiation.

CABLE'S LENGTH

Reference is made in the first degree ceremony to a possible burial taking place 'at least a cable's length from the shore'.

As used as a unit of marine measurement, the exact length of a cable is one-tenth of a nautical mile, representing 608 feet (approximately 185.2 metres).

While the Oxford English Dictionary gives the length of a cable as about 100 fathoms, i.e. 600 feet, which is close to the basis used in marine charts, the position is confused by the fact that, at different times, a cable has been regarded as having greater lengths than 100 fathoms.

In the symbolic circumstances in which the cable's length is used in Freemasonry, however, these differences in measurement are not of significance.

Free Will and Accord

Candidates for Freemasonry are required to seek admission to the fraternity of their 'own free will and accord'.

In most organisations, it is considered praiseworthy for a current member to use his influence in obtaining new recruits or applicants for membership. This, however, does not apply in the Masonic order.

Each candidate for Freemasonry is required to declare that he voluntarily offers himself for membership unbiased by the improper solicitation of friends against his own inclinations.

It is strict requirement in Masonry that there must be no obvious improper persuasion applied to non-Masons to join the fraternity; each candidate is expected to approach Freemasonry on his own initiative. A decision on this matter could, of course, be related to a candidate's personal perception of the way in which Masons of his acquaintance regulate and live their lives in exemplification of Masonic principles.

The First Freemasons

In times of old date, when (as stories relate)
Good men to the gods had admission,
When those who were grieved might with ease be relieved
By offering a humble petition;

Some few, why remained in their morals sustained,
Submissively made applications
To build a retreat, if the gods should think meet,
To shield them from wicked invasion.
Delighted to find thence were yet in mankind
Some laudable sentiments planted,
Without hesitation they gave approbations
And instant their wishes were granted.

Then for artists they sought, and famed architects brought,
Who the various employments were skilled in;
Each handled his tools, and by science and rules
They straightway proceeded to building.
Fair Wisdom began first to sketch out the plan
By which they were all to be guided;
Each order she made was exactly obeyed,
When the portion 'of work she divided:

The great corner-stone was by Charity done,
But Strength was the principal builder;
When for mortar they cried 'twas by Friendship supplied,
And Beauty was carver and gilder.
Having long persevered, a grand temple they reared
A refuge from folly and scandal,
Where all who reside are in Virtue employed
Nor fear the, attacks of a Vandal.

But if in their rage they should ever engage
In the attempt, 'twould be always prevented;
The door is so high, 'twould be madness to try,
And the wails are all strongly cemented.
The gods all agreed 'twas an excellent deed,

And to show the affection they bore `em,
A treasure they gave, which the tenants still have,
Scoured in their sanctum sanctorum.
Thus blessed from above with a token of love,
Each brother with joy should receive it;
Safe locked in his heart, it should never depart,
Till called for by Heaven that gave it.

SOME IDIOSYNCRACIES OF ENGLISH

Don't sweat the petty things, and don't pet the sweaty things.

One tequila, two tequila, three tequila, floor.

Atheism is a non-prophet organisation

If man evolved from apes and monkeys, why do we still have apes & monkeys?

Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?

I went to a book-store and asked the saleswoman, "where is the self-help section?"

She said if she told me it would defeat the purpose.

What if there were no hypothetical questions?

What do you do if you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

If a turtle doesn't have a shell, is it homeless or naked?

If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to be silent?

One nice thing about egotists; they don't talk about other people.

Does the little mermaid wear an algebra?

How is it possible to have a civil war?

Kiss me quick.

Paddy was going home from the lodge meeting one evening, when a frog on the pavement called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess".

Without a word, he bent over, picked up the frog and put it in his pocket. The creature spoke up again, louder this time, and said, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a beautiful princess, I will stay with you for a year and do anything you want."

Paddy took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it and then returned it back to the pocket. The frog then cried out desperately, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a princess, I'll stay with you forever and have your children!"

Again Paddy took the frog out, smiled at it benignly and put it back into his pocket. Finally, the frog asked, with tears in its eyes, "What IS the matter? I've told you I'm a beautiful princess, that I'll stay with you forever and do anything you want. WHY won't you kiss me?" Paddy said, "Look, Oi'm a Master Mason.

A girlfriend just takes up toime when I could be learning lectures. But a talking frog, now that will get me a free drink in the bar !"