

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

Greetings Brethren,

Editor:
 W. Bro. Alan Churchill PGStB
 P.O. Box 235
 Port Vila, Vanuatu
 Tel: 678 55 64486
achurchill@vanuatu.com.vu
www.LOD8737.org

In this Issue	
Ashlars	2
Old Past Master	7
Humour	



Membership e-mail address list

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

Fraternal Greetings Brethren

I absolutely love the opportunity to share the thoughts of others, and my own perspective, always remembering that we all have the right to agree to disagree.

The paper this month deals with the ever present task of identifying properly qualified candidates and accepting the task of assisting them in their travels down that "Personal Spiritual Road", in search of perfection.

ASHLARS - ROUGH, SMOOTH - STORY OF A STONE by J. Fairbairn Smith

An eminent sculptor was once asked: "How do you carve such beautiful statues?"

He replies, "It is the simplest thing in the world. I take a hammer and chisel and from a massive, shapeless rock, I knock off all the stone I do not want, and there is the statue. It was there all the time."

In every Masonic Lodge room there is, or should be, the Rough Ashlar and the Perfect Ashlar. These two and the Trestle Board constitute our Movable Jewels.

What is their significance?

What do they have to do with Masonry? In our monitorial work we are taught that:

The Rough Ashlar

"is a stone as taken from the quarry in its rude and natural state" and that

The Perfect Ashlar

"is a stone made ready by the hands of the workman, to be adjusted by the working tools of the Fellow Craft."

The Rough Ashlar was not a stone that was merely picked up somewhere. It was a stone that has been selected. Some work was done upon it. It was apparently a good stone. It was a stone that showed good prospects of being capable of being made into a Perfect Ashlar. If it had not been a good stone, it would never have been cut out from the quarry.

So it is with our prospective member. He cannot be merely picked up somewhere. He must be selected. Before he is ready to be initiated some work must be done upon him. He must stand certain basic tests. He must be apparently of good material. He must be a man who shows good prospects of being capable of being made into a good Mason. If he had not been a good man, he should never have been proposed for membership.

In changing a Rough Ashlar into a Perfect Ashlar, the workman takes away and never adds to. He chips and chips. He cuts away the rough edges. He removes the visible flaws, he does not create by chemical means or otherwise, a new material. He takes that which is already there and develops it into the "**Perfect Ashlar**".

The stone from which the Venus de Milo was carved by an unknown sculptor of ancient times, lay since the beginning of time in the rocks of the Island Milo. A common, unknown workman may have cut a huge piece of marble from the quarry. But it took a master artisan to carve out the beautiful statue. It took a good piece of marble and a skilled artist to produce the Venus de Milo. Not many operators in Masonry can make a "**Perfect Ashlar**". So there are not many perfect Masons in our Lodges.

In our Ritualistic and other work, we can take away much of the roughness, remove the sharp points and obliterate the visible defects. We can produce as good a Mason as there is within our power to produce. But the essential thing is to have a good material upon which to work.

This statement is applicable to all mankind, but to us as Symbolic Masons, it is pregnant with meaning, for, was not each one, at the commencement of his Masonic career, placed in the Northeast corner, as an example stone, in the hope that the stone so placed would, in the fullness of time, be wrought into a thing of beauty acceptable to the builder?

What does the poet say of the stone?

Isn't it strange that Princes and Kings;
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
And common folks like you and me
Are builders for eternity?

Each is given a kit of tools,
A shapeless mass and a book of rules:
And each must make,
ere life is flown;
A stumbling block or a stepping stone

These are very true words.

The kit of tools, are those talents with which **GOD** has blessed us with to enable us to fulfill our mission in life.

We are told in the Volume of the Sacred Law that one man received Five Talents, another Two Talents and yet another One Talent, so the duty is for each of us to discharge our allotted task to the best of our ability, at the same time helping those who have not been so well blessed as himself.

Thus each of us will be assisted in carving out the "Grand Design" of being happy and communicating happiness and thereby being more "extensively serviceable to our fellow creatures"

The shapeless mass is man's character, and each one of us is his own Architect, Builder and Material, and like our predecessors, the Operative Masons, we each must show our craftsmanship in working our a "Perfect Ashlar" fit to be tried by the square of his own conscience.

The book of rules is the V.O.S.L. "That great light that will guide us to all truth, direct our steps in the path of happiness, and thus, point out the whole duty of man"

Let us pause for a moment and earnestly ask ourselves, which are we making?

a Stumbling Block or a Stepping Stone???

If an Man's life is such that he cannot "join in the grand design of being happy and communicating happiness to others," then he is a stumbling block, not only to himself, but to all those with whom he is associated.

If that man is a Freemason he should study the ritual and discover the inner meaning, in order that he can learn to perfect his personal stone.

Let us trace, from whence comes this perfect stone!!!!

An ancient charge provides that a mould stone shall be given to a visiting Operative Mason to enable him to demonstrate his craftsmanship. The stones selected were individual stones from the quarries to suit the requirement of the material building.

As Speculative Masons, we obtain our mould stones from the quarries of life. Thus, when we receive an application for admission to our Lodge it is our duty to carefully scrutinize all the credentials of the applicant from every angle, so that only approved material is admitted to the Craft.

Freemasonry can and does improve good material, but it cannot make bad material good.

As with the Operative Mason, poor material would have endangered the material structure. So with us as Speculative Masons, a faulty Ashlar will endanger the Spiritual temple we are endeavoring to build.

Having found, by the strictest inquiry, that the applicant, or mould stone, is suitable, we have, by those inquiries knocked off some of the irregularities which surrounded him.

After his initiation, he is represented as the "Rough Ashlar," that is, the stone is no longer a mould stone, but approximates a cube which still requires a considerable amount of "dressing" before the "Perfect Ashlar" which is within it can be brought to light.

The candidate is presented with the tools he requires to "knock off the rough knobs and evanescence," of his character.

Later on he finds that, although the common gavel and chisel are suitable for reducing the roughness, they are not capable of achieving perfection.

As a Craftsman he receives another set of working tools, one of which is essential to perfection, namely, the **SQUARE**, and here he learns that it is only by continual grinding and many applications of the square that the stone can be brought to a true die, or cube.

In his capacity as a Craftsman and as a man of the world, he is continually coming into contact with his fellows and he learns to control his passions and to recognize the rights of others, with the result that the stone he is working upon, namely, his character, is gradually taking shape as a **Perfect Ashlar**.

Later, he is called upon to hand his tone over to the **Builder**, who cuts a beveled hole at the top, so that the stone can be attached to a **LEWIS** and be hoisted up ready to be place on the base assigned to it by the Builder.

Thus, he is reminded that the rope, the lewis, and the crane represent the all sustaining power of **GOD**, and that if he has discharged his duty faithfully and in accordance with the precepts laid down in the V.O.S.L., he may rest assured that when his final summons comes he will find that

*"the great Builder will have prepared a place for him in that **Great Spiritual Temple** not made with hands eternal in the Heavens."*

Finally, let us consider this "**Perfect Ashlar**" from a geometric point of view.

Looking at the "**Perfect Ashlar,**" as it stands in the Lodge we notice that it has six equal and exactly similar sides, and that no matter how it is placed down on the level, it must stand on one of its faces and present a similar face to the observer, from any point of view.

It is the only geometrical body which requires no support from its fellows but when placed in line with similar cubes, demands its own space, and lines up with the others on top, bottom and sides.

Comment

I ask the reader to note that this paper was written in 1925, (75 years ago) which clearly demonstrates, to me, that the philosophical challenges facing each of us today are no different to those that were being experienced in 1925 and probably back through all of History.

We are indeed blessed that papers, such as this one, have been saved and we are privileged to be able, through the power of the Internet to be able to give them the exposure they so justly deserve.

Freemasons Frogs & Centipedes

A centipede was happy until a frog, in fun, said "Pray which leg comes after which???" This raised her mind to such a pitch, she lay, distracted in the ditch, considering how to run.

I forgot where I first read this jinglet, but are not we Freemasons playing centipede?? On one hand we hear the croaking of what ails Freemasonry, while we metaphorically lie distracted in the ditch of our own indolence.

Our troubles would pass away, like clouds in a summer sky, if we started living Freemasonry instead of just talking about it. The Charge to the newly installed Master contains the essence of Masonic instruction: It is as follows;

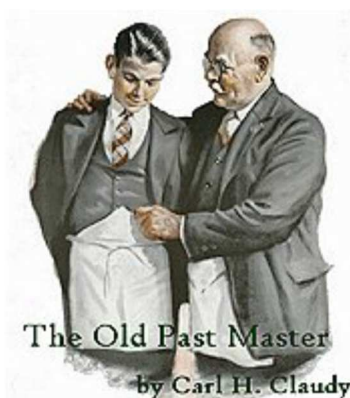
"When a man is said to be a Freemason, the world at large may know that he is a man to whom the burdened heart may pour forth its sorrow, to whom the distressed may pour forth their suit, whose hand is guided by justice and whose heart is expanded by benevolence"

Let us get up out of the ditch and get to work. There's lots to be done.

Presented by J.P. Myers, British Columbia –in the California Freemason (no date given)

Thank you, as always, for allowing me into your homes, it is truly an honour.





The Old Past Master— BROTHERLY LOVE

"Brotherly love?" commented the Old Past Master. "Oh, yes, the lodge is full of it. It is curious the way it manifests itself, sometimes, but when you dig down deep enough into men's hearts, you find a lot of it.

"A lot of them never show it, then," said the Very New Mason.

"Oh, no, certainly not! Men don't go around demonstrating their affection like a lot of girls, you know," answered the Old Past Master. "But you don't have to see a demonstration to know the feeling is there. The trouble with so many young Masons is their misunderstanding of the term 'brotherly love,' though high heaven knows the words are sufficiently easy to understand.

"'Brotherly,' now, means 'like a brother.' I know a lot of brothers hate each other, but they don't act like brothers. There have been cowardly soldiers, and forsworn ministers, and corrupt judges, but when you say a man is 'like a soldier,' you mean 'brave and true'; when you say he is 'good as a minister' you mean one who 'truly does his honest best.' When you say 'upright as a judge' you mean 'as straight as the best of judges.' And when I say 'brotherly' means 'like a brother,' I mean like a brother who is acting as a good brother likes to act.

"As for 'love' there are more definitions than there are words in my mouth (which are several). But in connection with the 'brotherly' the word means that true affection which first considers the good of the person loved.

"Masonry teaches brotherly love. Many of its scholars are a long way from 100 per cent perfect in their lessons. But a lot could get an 'E' on their report card if the Lodge gave out evidence of scholastic standing!

"For instance, there was B'Jones. That is not his name, but it will serve. B'Jones undertook to do a piece of work for a hospital. It took him a year. At the end of the year his business was in shreds and tatters. He had one of those businesses that needs a man's personal attention.

"His attention had gone to his hospital, which, by the way, was built and flourishes, to the everlasting credit of his city. It ought to be called the B'Jones hospital, but it isn't.

"A lot of his brethren in his lodge got to know about B'Jones. They called a meeting, called it the B'Jones meeting, issued stock in the B'Jones association, bought the stock, started B'Jones off all over again, and let him pay them back as he could. All this, without B'Jones ever asking for help.

Brotherly love, my son, in the best meaning of the word.

"There was poor old Smith. Smith, during his lifetime, came to the lodge every night. He wasn't very bright, was Smith. He could't learn the work and had no presence. Couldn't make a speech to save his life, so he never was called on at banquets. He never did anything audible, but he was always on committees and he always passed around refreshments and he attended every funeral, and he was always down ahead of the meeting to see if the room was clean, and if it wasn't, he'd sweep it out.

"He gave the best he had in service. Well, Smith died. Men do, you know; and awful lot have, already. At the funeral, we found out Smith left an invalid wife and two half grown children and no assets. It's the lodge's business to take care of such, and we did it. But three men in the lodge with more money than ability to keep it to themselves, subscribed enough cash to put the boy through a good business school and the girl through a normal school, so they could earn their own living. Charity? Nonsense! The lodge attended to the 'relief.' The three attended to brotherly love. They just remembered what old Smith was and how he gave, and so they turned to and gave. Actually, Smith did most of the loving. The three just acted in reflex to Smith's loving heart, that so cared for his brethren and his Lodge he was always engaged in brotherly work. "Do you know Brown? Brown runs a garage. Also, Brown ran a temperature until the doctors took him off to the hospital to cut out his something-or -other. Well, the garage was about to cash in. Garages don't run themselves, and there wasn't any one we could hire to run it. So six brothers of this lodge spent two hours a day each at the place, looking after it. We didn't do a very good job, I'm afraid: Brown says we are the worst garage keepers in the world, but we saved the shop from being wrecked and looted, and Brown thinks Masonry means something. One reason we did it was because of brotherly love in spirit of the fact that sitting around a cold garage selling gasoline is about the uneasiest apology for loafing I know!

"I could talk all night about it. But what's the use? Those to whom 'brotherly love' is just words won't listen to what I say and those who know what they really mean don't need to hear it."

"Well, I am glad I heard it!" answered the Very New Mason.

"Then," went the Old Past Master, "get it firmly fixed in your mind, young man, more than one man has gone into a lodge and curled his lip when he learned that he was supposed to be a brotherly lover, and turned around and wept when he found that he was being loved like a brother by men he didn't know cared what became of him.

"Masonry works miracles all the time, and the commonest of them and the one she works oftenest is teaching hard-hearted citizens to be soft-hearted Masons; teaching men the real meaning of the words 'brotherly' and 'love' until they, too, become teachers."

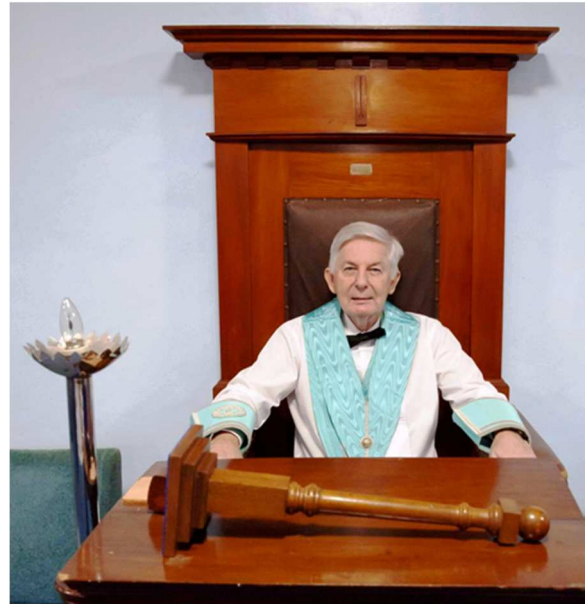
Lodge Birthdays

Chris Kernot 17
Warrick Sands 13
Michael Johnston 10 (J)





Senior Warden W. Bro. Maurice Masuino



J Junior Warden Bro. Greg Walton



Worshipful Master John Patterson

Photographs courtesy of W. Bro. Russell Chilton

Humour

Teachers and police officers do have their moments!

- 1. Since my last report, your child has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.**
- 2. I would not allow this student to breed.**
- 3. Your child has delusions of adequacy.**
- 4. Your son is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.**
- 5. Your son sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.**
- 6. The student has a 'full six-pack' but lacks the plastic thing to hold it all together.**
- 7. This child has been working with glue too much.**
- 8. When your daughter's IQ reaches 50, she should sell.**
- 9. The gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.**
- 10. If this student were any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week.**
- 11. It's impossible to believe the sperm that created this child beat out 1,000,000 others.**
- 12. The wheel is turning but the hamster is definitely dead.**