



AIMS

Other Books By Keith Stockley

Masonic Mysteries & Masonic Mystery Men
 Through the Keyhole
 In the beginning
 Dates & Events in History
 Masonic trivia
 The Ultimate Anthology
 The ABC of Freemasonry
 Milestones
 The Fulfilled promise
 Message of a Master
 The Alternate Key
 A Few Words
 Rhymes to Please for Kitchen Teas
 Who Needs a Truck?

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Publisher's Comment

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Facing the East	V.Wor. Bro. J L Cowie
Farmers Almanac - 1823	
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Old Tyler's Tales	W,Bro. Carl Claudy
The Pocket Encyclopedia of Masonic Symbols	MSANA
The Ultimate Anthology	W.Bro. K R Stockley

AIMS

"AIMS" is an acronym of the words "An Interpretation of Masonic Symbolism", and that is exactly what this little publication endeavours to achieve.

It has always been my belief that a Freemason's understanding of the meaning of Masonic symbolism is the "real" secret of the craft in that my personal understanding or interpretation of an allegory or a symbol, may be different from that of another Mason. This does not mean that I am right and he is wrong, or vice versa.

What another Freemason believes a Masonic allegory or symbol to mean, or whatever teachings these bring to him, are his and his alone and they are therefore "his" secrets.

An understanding of the meaning of the symbols one encounters in a Masonic lodge room or the interpretation of the many allegories contained in the Masonic rituals, will result in every Freemason gaining a clear understanding of some of Masonry's great fundamental principles.

In turn, this understanding will enable the Freemason to apply these fundamental principles in a practical way, to every day life resulting in a more meaningful and productive life at home and in the community. Understanding and applying these principles will change your life!

However, it is my experience that defining the meaning of Masonic Symbolism and allegory, is easier said than done and this little book is an expression of my own understanding of some of these mysteries for the consideration of all my brethren in the craft.

Fraternally,

Keith Stockley
Cowan,

March 2008

PREFACE

The contents of this little book are the result of over 20 years research into the history and mystery of Freemasonry, which in turn I have read and re-read many times over.

It is a combination of the deepest feelings and understanding not only of myself but also of hundreds of Masonic writers & researchers over the centuries.

Whenever possible I have acknowledged within the material itself and also in the bibliography that appears at the back of the book, the sources from where I have drawn opinions and information as well as inspiration.

If anyone or any source has been overlooked, it is purely an accidental oversight.

Many of the stories contained herein, are strictly that. Stories. Stories from the personal experience of the narrators and in such cases they have been included not only because of the moral and practical messages they contain, but because they are true and also motivational and very interesting to read .

Where considered necessary, some of the original writings and narratives have been re-worded slightly to up-date them and to make them more readable and stimulating, without losing the true meaning and message they set out to convey.

Keith Stockley
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Conclusion

This is the first edition - the first attempt if you will - at putting together a collection of stories, toasts, random thoughts and bits of research, to illustrate some possible meanings of Masonic symbols and allegory as Freemasons find them in the lodge rooms and in the rituals of Freemasonry.

The origins of the Order are hidden in the mists of time, but it is absolutely certain that the Craft emerged many centuries ago and that its ceremonies and symbols that may have started with the medieval mystery schools contain hidden wisdom and teachings that are as valid today as when they were first conceived with man's earliest attempts to gain self-knowledge.

This publication is my humble contribution towards interpreting Masonic symbolism. Its purpose is to widen the process of understanding that every Freemason has in his possession and perhaps to act as a light illuminating the darkness and thus enabling every Freemason to determine for himself the hidden meanings that are so indelibly inscribed in the beautiful ceremonies of the Ancient Order of Free and Accepted Masons.

It is my hope that everyone who reads this little book, will be inspired to seek further knowledge and to interpret for himself, what lies hidden in the centuries old Masonic Symbolism.

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There is a cause and a sequence in events

The following extract from the writings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius written about 500 BC seem to sum up the principles of Freemasonry.

“The ancient people who desired to have a clear moral harmony in the world first order their national life; those who desired to order their national life would first regulate their home life.

Those who desired to regulate their home life would first cultivate their personal lives; those who desired to cultivate their personal lives would first set their hearts right.

Those who desired to set their hearts right would first make their will sincere; those who desired to make their wills sincere would first arrive at understanding; understanding comes from the exploration of knowledge of things.

When the knowledge of things is gained then understanding is reached; when understanding is reached then the will is sincere; when the will is sincere then the heart is set right.

When the heart is set right then the personal life is cultivated and when the personal life is cultivated, then the home life is regulated.

When the home life is regulated then the national life is orderly; when the national life is orderly then the world is at peace..

From the Emperor down to the common man the cultivation of personal life is the foundation for all. It is impossible that when the foundation is disorderly the superstructure can be orderly. There has never been a tree whose trunk is slender and whose top branches are heavy and strong.

There is a cause and a sequence in things and a beginning and end in human affairs. To know the order of precedence is to have the beginning of wisdom”.

the steep Gallipolian Hills in the face of a tornado of shot and shell, or on the watery deep - their courage never wilted. But why?

I see the answer in the years of peace and happiness before the war. These were the men who faced dangers and hardships in fighting droughts on the vast Australian plains, who climbed her mountains to recover timbers and to till the slopes, who bronzed on her golden beaches, and lived in the wonderful surfs, all born of a noble ancestry, and had within them the unconquerable spirit of their forefathers - the hardy pioneers of this great country. Their clean healthy lives stood to them and when the crisis came they faced death with a smile, because they knew how to live.

It seems to me that the object of all the Working Tools of each degree, is to impress upon us how to live. They teach us so to divide the day that refreshment, rest, civil duty, prayer, meditation, charity will all have their proper place in our lives; to control temper and envy, and to encourage good disposition; to exercise discipline and to educate ourselves; to be moral and just; to practice the brotherhood of man; to be men of integrity and uprightness; to follow the line of conduct laid down for us in the V. of the S.L.; to realise our responsibilities in regard to thought, word, and action; and above all, to believe in, and act according to the laws of, our Divine Creator.

All these injunctions are directed towards our preparation for the Grand Lodge above. This is the great teaching not only of this Degree, but of the whole of Freemasonry, for Masonry is more than a beautiful ritual, more than a wonderful philosophy, more than a “system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”; it is a life - something to be lived. We can only appreciate the glory of Masonry when it becomes a part of our lives.

I believe brethren that our mission is to show people how to live. May I express the hope that you brethren who have tonight entered into the fullness of Masonry, may be long spared to express in every phase of your lives, the great principles for which our Order stands so that you may not only live well yourselves, but show others how to live.

same devotion and courage as that Grand Master of old whom our brother was made to represent tonight.

I like to think that Hiram Abiff died a great death, because he lived a great and noble life. I recall the heroic death of Captain Oates on the return march from the South Pole with Captain Scott and his companions. Weakened with sickness, short of provisions and caught in a terrible blizzard many miles from their base, Captain Oates could see that in his weakened state he was only a hindrance and that the only possible hope for the succour of his companions was for them to push on without him. With a cheery remark that he would be absent only a few minutes, this great soul passed out of the little tent to what he knew only too well would be a frozen death in the eternal snows of Antarctica,

Captain Scott wrote in his diary, "It was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman." Captain Oates was able to walk so heroically to his death in an attempt to save his companions simply because he had lived a noble life. He had the right spirit within him. He possessed a great soul. Born of a noble mother, he inherited those qualities which make a great and heroic man; throughout his life he had lived cleanly and acted gallantly, so that when the final crisis came, he was able to face it heroically.

After all brethren, the greatest thing in life is not what we get, nor what we say, but what we do and how we live. If through life we do nobly, live honourably, cultivate peace and happiness, then at the end of life we too shall be able to follow the example of that great and good man Hiram Abiff. Let us remember the words of Shakespeare:-

*"Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once."*

Someone once said that the Diggers taught the world how men should die. Surely they showed how men can face death with a smile and a cheer. Whether on the shell-swept fields of France or the frozen trenches of Flanders, or on the burning sands of Palestine or climbing

Facing the East

*Adapted from a talk delivered by V. Wor. Bro. J L Cowie FAIS
P.M. Lodge Ferndale No. 400 NSW and the ACT—and included in his
Book, "Facing the East" published in 1934.*

The East has always held a special significance in religion, mythology and Masonry. Throughout history, creation writers, poets, philosophers and theologians have regarded the east as being a distinctive symbol.

The rising sun in the east, consummated the first day of Creation - brought Light and Order out of darkness and chaos.

But the Glory of the east at the Creation is sadly dimmed by man's sin in the Garden of Eden. We read in *Genesis 3: 24* how God drove Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden after their sin and how "*He placed at the East of the Garden of Eden, Cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of Life.*" God selected the East on which to place his symbol of anger, danger and retribution.

Ezekiel, the Prophet, in *Chronicles 8/15-16*: gives an account of his vision of the Sun Worshipers - a form of idolatry. He states, "*Behold at the door of the Temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about 25 men, with their backs towards the Temple of the Lord and their faces towards the East; and they worshipped the sun towards the East.*"

To the Christian the East will always have significance as on the first Christmas morning when Christ was born, the bright star appeared in the east, and out of the east came the Wise Men.

In addition we read in *Chronicles 7:2*, how St. John in relating his vision of the Heavenly City, saw the angels "descending from the east, bearing the Seal of the Living God."

The ancient Egyptians also regarded the east with special significance. In his work *"Egypt of the Past"*, Erasmus Wilson describes how discoveries amongst the ruins of the City of An have revealed a magnificent temple built by the Egyptians some 2000 years BC dedicated to Ra, the God of the Rising Sun and to Tun, the God of the setting sun.

Ra, the God of the rising sun, was one of the most revered idols of the ancient Egyptians. Obviously the east held for them, as well as for many other ancient races, a special import.

Amongst many ancient civilizations it was the universal custom to bury their dead with the feet pointing towards the east, so that the dead would be able to witness the dawn of the resurrection.

The Mohammedan in the desert faces the rising sun to offer up his morning prayer.

Amongst the ancient Roman Catholics it was the custom to face the east when repeating the Creed and the placing of the altar, in all Christian churches and cathedrals, in the east is to remind worshippers of the Resurrection of Christ and all that great event in Christian religion implies.

In Masonry too, the east plays a striking and significant role and conveys a huge depth of meaning. The correct position of the Lodge building is East and West, with the Chair of K.S. and the Altar placed in the east, the entrance in the west.

When the candidate enters the lodge room he is facing the east. He receives the benefit of his first Masonic light in the east. He is facing east, on bended knee, when he acknowledges his dependence on and a belief in God and ultimately he receives the full light of Freemasonry whilst facing east.

Throughout the three Craft degrees and in the Mark and Royal Arch the east has an important place and is a symbol with many meanings and conveys striking lessons.

How to Live

Adapted from a toast to the Newly raised brother by V.W. Bro. J L Cowie

I have often, to my disappointment, heard it remarked that the object of the beautiful degree which we have seen worked tonight, is to teach men "how to die". I hope however, that some of you will see a little further with me and agree after all that the real object of this sublime degree is not simply to show men "how to die", but rather "how to live, so that they may know how to die, " for unless we know how to live, we certainly cannot know how to die. We should remember the words we usually sing:-

*As the tree falls, so shall it lie,
As the man liveth, so shall he die,
As a man dieth so shall he be
All through the days of eternity.*

I believe that if we have lived a noble life, it will be an easy matter to die a noble death.

If we have followed throughout life the "straight and undeviating line of conduct which is clearly and unmistakably laid down for our pursuit" then when our Evening Sun shall set we shall not fear the darkness for we know that the Bright Morning Star shall rise "whose rising brings peace and salvation to the faithful and obedient amongst men".

I think we sometimes overlook a portion of that charge delivered to every brother raised to the Third degree - "Nature prepares you by contemplation for the closing hours of your existence, and when by means of that contemplation she has led you through the intricate windings of this mortal life, she finally instructs you how to die."

If we are to die nobly then we must be prepared and this is what Masonry teaches us to do, so that when the "Great Leveller of all human greatness" shall call us, we shall be able to answer with the

responsibilities of doing useful service and so contribute the peace and happiness of the world in which we live?

How true the words of William Shakespeare:

*There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.*

Masonry teaches us ever to be prepared. Not only for this life, but for the life to come and urges us to search for those opportunities for loyal and devoted service to humanity, in the performance of which we shall find life's greatest joys and reward.

N.B.

Adapted from a talk by V.Wor. Bro. J L Cowie.

As in Masonry so in human life; our correct attitude should be facing the east (figuratively speaking) , the source of light, inspiration, hope and courage. Many men fail through their persistence in facing the west which is a symbol of the irrevocable and irretrievable past.

Many today are facing the west, watching the sun set upon failure and disappointment and are peering into the long night of gloom, depression and suffering, instead of manfully facing the east, full of expectancy, hope and inspiration. The east is symbolic of the "everlasting tomorrow" and Masonry teaches us not to mourn over the dead past with its failures and misgivings, but to look to the east, to see the dawn of a new day, new opportunities, new hopes and new possibilities.

"Facing the East" - does not this thought have particular significance for us in relation to our national, international as well as our personal problems? These will not be solved by facing the west and moaning over past failures. The solutions will come from facing the east and receiving from the new day, hope and encouragement.

Only a strong optimism will win out in these difficult days, and that optimism is born in the east - of God. In the words of Bro. Edgar A Guest::

*"Forget the past and face today
With courage and with mind alert.
Who comes a victor from the fray
Remembers not that he was hurt.
What if the future dark appears?
Fight to the last and don't give in;
Before you lies another year,
And is your chance to win."*

"Facing the East" suggests that the coming day brings with it not alone, hope and encouragement, but also new duties and new opportunities.

The failure of many men is due to their not seizing life's opportunities

and not manfully performing their allotted task, but their continually facing the west and failing to observe the new opportunities that each day brings with it. Our attitude in life should be one of alertness, with our eyes ever facing the east, looking for new opportunities of work and service.

*“ Don’t hunt for trouble, but look for success,
You’ll find what you look for - don’t look for distress;
If you see but your shadow, remember I pray,
That the sun is still shining, but you’re in the way!*

*Don’t grumble, don’t bluster, don’t dream and don’t shirk,
Don’t think of the worries, but think of your work;
The worries will vanish, the work will be done,
No man sees his shadow, who faces the sun.”*

ANON

Every man has a special work to do and the GAOTU has a plan for every life and the fulfillment of that plan is the source of all happiness. We will never be able to understand His plan unless our attitude in life is to face His presence in the East. We must always remember that TGAOTU never calls a man to perform any task in life without providing him with the strength, power and courage to successfully carry out that task.

Brethren, I may be speaking to one who has become very discouraged, one who has lost heart, one who has had many disappointments; to you I would say “Face about and look to the East and in the rising sun of tomorrow see new opportunities, new powers, new strength and new hope.

Never forget that TGAOTU brought order out of chaos and light out of darkness when He created this old world in which we live. Surely He can put your life in order and give you light and understanding?

Are you spending your time looking, as it were, into the west and worrying over all that “might have been” in your life? Is your experience the same as outlined by Whittier in one of his poems:-

Thousands of men and women have failed and continue to fail because of inattention to minor issues. The well known phrase “ read the small print” comes to mind.

They concentrate on the larger issues, the big problems and as a result they fail to account for the small all-important details.

It is the tiny germ not visible to the naked eye that turns the wound septic. A tiny piece of dirt in the distributor or carburetor, or a small broken wire, causes a great deal of trouble with a car’s engine.

Many brethren may consider that they have only a ‘minor’ or unimportant office in the lodge to fulfil. There is no such office in that sense of the word. Every office is important and whether you are the Wor. Master or a Steward, the job is important. If you regard your job lightly, you are unlikely to become a successful Master. Whether the work is great or small it is an integral part of a great plan, and must be done well.

Someone one said that if we pay strict attention to the small things, the big things will take care of themselves.

The words of that great sculptor Michelangelo are apt:- “ *Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle.*”

Fifthly, the word Shibboleth is the symbol of lost opportunities. What a great opportunity the Ephraimites had been offered to render a noble service and to achieve greatness and fame Just imagine what a vast difference it would have made to themselves if they had accepted the challenge presented to them.

The lives of 42 000 members of their tribe would have been saved, but more importantly their name would have resounded through history, covered with glory and honour.

Is not Freemasonry teaching us to make the most of our opportunities for service? Does not Masonry challenge us to accept the

Those leaders who today are guiding the country, communities, industry and commerce through the economic pitfalls of business and living today, are also not the noisy and turbulent element.

The tragedy at the Jordan is the symbol of the fallacy of empty noise and show. This is the lesson we must learn.

Thirdly, success and happiness in life are only obtained by accepting life's responsibilities. The Ephraimites shirked theirs. To accept Jephthah's invitation to join him against the Ammonites meant accepting a definite responsibility, and this they refused to do.

The punishment, the slaughter of 42 000 of their tribe, was perhaps a severe penalty to pay, but perhaps a greater disgrace is the tarnished name that has been handed down to all shirkers, for posterity.

Masonry teaches us that we have definite responsibilities to accept, responsibilities as to mode of conduct in our private and social lives, the responsibility of citizenship and national life, responsibility as to ethical standards in business and in our relationship with other people.

The charges in Freemasonry are designed to impress upon all of us our responsibilities as Masons first of all to God, then to others and lastly to ourselves.

If we are to expect the best from life and Freemasonry, then we must accept these well defined responsibilities.

Fourthly, this allegory teaches us the importance of the small and insignificant things in life. All that separated the Ephraimites from life and death was a single syllable—just one letter.

As we know, the test on that memorable occasion was to pronounce the word "Shibboleth", but owing to a defect in utterance peculiar to this tribe, they could only frame the word 'Sibboleth'. One letter and 42 000 people died.

*"For all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these:
'It might have been.'"*

Are you sitting in the twilight and musing over the "ifs" and "buts" of your life and endeavouring to conjecture how different things would have been if only "so and so" had happened?

Then would I urge you to turn again to that bright Morning Star in the East, whose rising brings peace, salvation, joy and happiness to all who are faithful, even unto death.

Lastly brethren, the east would impress upon us that there is a future. Surely as the great sun of the universe rises each morning heralding a new day, so shall eternity break for all of us.

This is the teaching of Freemasonry "The Day must dawn and darksome night be past," and the attitude of every Mason therefore, should be one of expectancy and constant hope, courageously facing the everlasting tomorrow, so that he may "patiently await the arrival of that awful moment when the Soul shall take wing into that boundless and unexplored expanse above, where the division of Time shall cease and the dawn of an endless eternity burst upon the view."



The House by the Side of the Road

*A speech delivered by V.W.Bro.J L. Cowie on proposing a toast
to a newly initiated EAF at Lodge Ferndale No.400, Newcastle, NSW
on 3 January 1934*

Whenever I drive northwards from this city towards New England, I must of necessity pass a little farmhouse which, every time I see it, awakens within me many very tender and sacred memories.

I cannot avoid that little house - for it is on the highway and by the side of the road.

When I first knew it as a child, nearly forty years ago, it was a very humble place, built of slabs and lined with paper, Today in my mind's eye, I can see the large open fireplace at the end of the slab kitchen and how well I remember as a small boy on holidays, sitting round the cheery log fire on a winter's night, listening to the howling wind and the pouring rain and, in my timidity, hugging still closer to my mother's knee, for I was bred in the city and strange at that time to the country.

I remember how we would sit on the grass between the house and the road and in the quiet and stillness of the starlit summer evening, listen with childish wonder and amazement to the stories of early pioneering days; how on a hot summer's day we would sit under the giant pear tree which grew just off the verandah and enjoy, as only boys can, the luscious pears and grapes and watermelons grown on that farm; how we would climb the mulberry trees and enjoy the delicious fruit until face, hands and clothes were stained the colour of the mulberry, much to mother's annoyance.

But the strange thing about this house was that every traveler seemed to know it. There were other houses in that locality - some hidden amongst the tick timber - some far removed from the road - some very pretentious, with beautiful lawns and bordered drives, but travelers rarely called at them - they preferred this humble house by the side of the road.

Success costs something. It can only be obtained at the expense of a sincere and sustained effort. Academic attainments are only reached after years of study and self denial. They don't come by dreaming and wishing.

To win promotion in your employment, you have to work and work hard and even harder.

Disraeli gave this advice, "The secret of success is the constancy of purpose." It was a long, long road from log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born, to the White House in Washington. Abraham Lincoln had to fight against poverty, a lack of education and hardship.

There is only one sure way to success and that is the way Masonry points out to us and that is the way of hard work and conscientious service.

Secondly, we are told that the Ephraimites were a 'noisy and turbulent people who had never before ventured upon open violence.'

How typical of most noisy people. Refer to the typical school bully, loud mouthed and belligerent, but when it came down to wire, he would rather avoid a physical confrontation.

If we look at history and read again the stories of all great movements that have had their genesis in a desire to help other people and to promote happiness and which have achieved some real, common good, you will find that those responsible for the success were not 'noisy and turbulent people', but rather men and women who have preserved the heroism of calm, who displayed tact and discretion and who invariably accompanied their vocal efforts with practical and sacrificial service.

The men and women who entered the forests and wildernesses of this great country Australia and blazed the trail for civilization, were not 'noisy and turbulent'. They were quiet and calm, resourceful and energetic. They got things done.

SHIBBOLETH

All Master Masons will be familiar with the allegory related in the explanation of the 2^o Tracing Board, where Jephthah, the Gileaditish leader and renowned General, had been engaged in war with the Ammonites and before going out to meet his enemy, he invited the Ephraimites to accompany him, but they refused.

On his return, the Ephraimites demanded a share of the booty and the resulting altercation brought about an armed clash between the two sides from which Jephthah emerged victorious. To protect himself from any survivors sneaking across the River Jordan claiming not to be Ephraimites in order to gain some of the spoils from his war against the Ammonites, Jephthah posted guards with instructions to ask any such insurgents to say the Password "Shibboleth". It was a known fact that the Ephraimites, due to a peculiarity of tongue could not speak this word but instead could only say "Sibboleth" and the guards were accordingly instructed to put to the sword anyone who phrased the word incorrectly.

The V. of the S.L. In the 12th Chapter of the Book of Judges, states that as a result of this 42 000 Ephraimites died that day.

Although we may wonder what possible meaning this allegory which is around 4 000 years old, can have for us today in the 22nd century, the fundamental principles underlying this tragedy are indeed the same factors governing life today.

Firstly, the Ephraimites believed in the economic fallacy of "something for nothing". This belief cost 42 000 their lives. They wanted to share in the spoils of war the possession of which had cost others their lives.. They themselves were not prepared to join in that fight.

Today there are hundreds of thousands of people in all communities who desire the spoils without the fight. Who want to win the lottery without a ticket. Who desire riches without the work.

There were no motor cars in those far off days. Fortunate indeed was the traveler who possessed a horse or buggy.

In summer it was a hot and dusty road - in winter cold and dreary. But it mattered not, summer or winter, sunshine or rain, there was always welcome at that home by the side of the road for the weary and needy traveler.

Well I remember it, as a schoolboy spending a holiday there during the devastating drought, when crops and fruit trees failed; cattle died from lack of feed and water, wells and waterholes dried up and weakened animals had to be driven miles every day for brackish water.

They were days of hardship and suffering, but the welcome for the weary traveler never grew less. No one ever called at that house by the side of the road and went away hungry or thirsty.

Many, many a "tramp" have I seen sit under that pear tree and in its cooling shade, enjoy the meal provided by that home, and left to resume his journey refreshed and encouraged.

You ask me what is Masonry? That is my answer - it is the House by the Side of the Road. It is the abode of love, kindness, help and friendship. It is that home from which flows the milk of human kindness and the stream of great brotherhood. It is that home the inmates of which teach by precept the golden rule of life - do unto others as you would have then do unto you; it is that which expresses true and genuine love, in common service and in the daily tasks of life; it is that which stands out pre-eminently from other houses on Life's Highway, and is noted for its helping hand and its willingness to serve the common good.

You, brethren, who tonight have been initiated into Masonry, have now entered that House by the Side of the Road, and it will be your duty, as I hope it will be your great joy and pleasure, to afford help and succour to those who need it. You are now charged with a heavy responsibility to uphold the great reputation of Freemasonry, a reputation which comes down the ages pure and unsullied; a great honour,

in that you are now associated with honourable men who are endeavouring to live up to the traditions of that House by the Side of the Road, administering comfort and succour to the weary and unfortunates on Life's Highway and affording shelter and refuge from the blasts of Life's storms.

I urge you brethren never to forget that charge delivered to you tonight in the N.E. and always remember the claims of those who are less fortunate than you.

No matter what may be your station in life, whether you be favoured to tread the flowery meads of affluence, or to walk the stony paths of poverty, never forget your fellows who are also passing along Life's Highway, and who need your comfort, your help, your sympathy, your encouragement.

The occupants of that house I have spoken of, were only poor farming people. They never knew material wealth, but they were kind and sympathetic. It may have been only a billy of tea, a few slices of bread, or round of beef - but it was their best. Someone has said -

“To get the best in life, a Mason must give his best,
and then throw in a smile for good measure”

This is just what Masonry expects of you brethren. To do just what you can; to give to the best of your means, but, above all else, be true to the tradition and reputation of that House by the Side of the Road.

There was always a very beautiful feature about that House by the Side of the Road. When the needy one came begging for food or shelter, he was never questioned. His history was never enquired into. That mattered not - all that did count was that he needed help; he was 'down and out'. Why or how he got that way didn't matter. There was the generous charity of thought.

Masonry teaches us, brethren, that not alone are we to exercise the virtue of material charity (if I may so term it), not alone to give of our money and means, but to display the charity of thought and criticism.

The Past Master reaches the boy and the Lodge watches as the elderly brother drops his cane on the floor and with great difficulty he lowers himself and sits down on the carpet next to John and welcomes him, so he won't be alone.

When the Secretary gains his composure, he says “ what I am about to say you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget! Be careful how you live. You may be the only Mason some people will ever meet.”

N.B. If this story is factual, and I have no reason to doubt its authenticity, this must have occurred in the USA where entry into the lodge room, once the meeting has commenced, appears to be much easier than the procedure we are familiar with.

Nevertheless, this story illustrates very strongly, the true meaning of the brotherhood of Freemasonry.



A Living Mason

Author Unknown

His name was John. He has wild hair, wears a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans and no shoes. This was literally his wardrobe for his entire four years of college. He was top of his class, kind of esoteric, very bright.

He became a Mason recently while attending college. After moving to his new town, he finds down the street from his new apartment is a well dressed, very conservative Masonic lodge.

One day John decides to go there after work. He walks in with shoes, jeans, his work shirt and longer hair. The lodge has already started and so John starts looking for a seat. The lodge is completely packed and he can't find a seat. By now the brethren are really looking a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything.

John gets closer and closer to the east and when he realizes that there are no vacant seats, he squats down right on the carpet. (Although perfectly acceptable behaviour at a college fellowship, this had never happened in this lodge before). By now the brethren are really uptight and the tension in the air is thick.

About this time, the Secretary realizes that from way at the back of the lodge, a Past Master starts walking toward John. Now the Past Master is in his eighties, has silver-gray hair and a three piece suit. AS good man, very elegant, very dignified, very courtly. He walks with a cane and, as he starts walking towards John, everyone is saying that you can't blame him for what he is going to do. How can you expect a man of his age and background to understand some college kid in the lodge?

It takes a long time for the man to reach the boy. The lodge is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. You can't even hear anyone breathing. The Secretary can't even continue with the Minutes until the Past Master does what he has to do.

Be not harsh with our criticisms, but seek to find the best in, and think the best of, our fellows.

One more thought before I close. The happiest people of all were not those who received help at that House. Many a hungry soul has gone away filled with the necessities of life and joy in his heart. Many a dejected and weary tramp has gone away with a lighter step and a new inspiration. But I want you to believe brethren, that not any of these had the joy and satisfaction of that humble farmer and his good wife who gave of their best. Theirs was the greater joy, the greater satisfaction, of having helped a needy soul.

Well I remember one wild and stormy night, as we were enjoying the warmth of the log fire, a lone traveler came to the door begging food and shelter. He was a pitiable object - wet and cold and hungry. A cup of hot tea and a plate of good plain food were soon given to him and he retired to the warmth of the barn. Turning to his wife the farmer said " Poor wretch; fancy being out on a night like this. Thank God we have a roof over our heads."

Next morning one soul went on his way invigorated and refreshed to tread again the hard highway of life; but two souls rose to work with light hearts filled with the greatest joy of having helped a needy one.

Brethren, you who have been initiated into Masonry tonight, I urge you to seek the greatest joy in life - that of being of some help and service to others. Brethren, let me say to you with all the emphasis possible, if you want to get joy and satisfaction out of Masonry, then live it! Let it become a living reality in your life; let it be the great dynamic force that will urge you from day to day to the noblest and highest service.

Masonic Tenets

A quotation from Bro. Benjamin Franklin

Freemasonry has tenets peculiar to itself. They serve as testimonials of character and qualifications, which are only conferred after due course of instruction and examination. These are of no small value; they speak a universal language, and act as a passport to the attentions and support of the initiated in all parts of the world.

They cannot be lost as long as memory retains its power. Let the possessor of them be expatriated, shipwrecked, imprisoned, let him be stripped of everything he has in the world, still those credentials remain, and are available for use as circumstances require.

The good effects they have produced are established by the most incontestable facts of history. They have stayed the uplifted hand of the destroyer; they have softened the asperities of the tyrant; they have mitigated the horrors of captivity; they have subdued the rancour of malevolence; and broken down the barriers of political animosity and sectarian alienation.

On the field of battle, in the solitudes of the uncultivated forest, or in the busy haunts of the crowded city, they have made men of the most hostile feelings, the most distant regions, and diversified conditions, rush to the aid of each other, and feel a special joy and satisfaction that they have been able to afford relief to a Brother Mason.



*Fumin' never wins a fight,
An' frettin' never pays;
There ain't no good in broodin' in
These pessimistic ways -
Smile jus' kinder cheerfully
When hope is nearly gone,
An' bristle up, an' grit your teeth
An' keep on keepin' on.*

Might I suggest to you that it does pay to persevere with your difficulties and your problems; even if you never succeed in actually overcoming them, the effort itself is worth while. There is a joy and there is a thrill in "hanging on" to the tough jobs we have to do, if we have the vision Masonry teaches us to have, the vision of a life given to useful service for God and humanity. Call it what you like - "backbone," "tenacity," "Grit" - it is an essential quality in every successful life, and is the only force that can succeed.

Whenever you feel like "giving up" think of the following:-

It took James watt 30 years to perfect his steam engine, but he did it!

It took Samuel Morse 14 years experimenting before he could send his Morse Code over the telegraph - but he sent it !

It tool Alexander Graham Bell 14 years to produce the telephone but what a success!

It took Charles Goodyear 10 years before he could vulcanize rubber - but what an invention !

It took Elias Howe 12 years to perfect the first sewing machine - But what a boon!

How true it is then that "knowledge, aided by labour and sustained by perseverance, will in the end overcome all difficulties."

brethren on the other side of the world, and to send messages across the spaces of oceans and continents.

It was not alone his knowledge of mechanics that enabled George Stevenson to build and to operate the first locomotive, but his sustained efforts in the face of adverse criticism. For 15 years he tried and failed and tried again and again, until at last his perseverance was rewarded and today mighty express trains cross over every continent and the world travels apace, the result of his persistent efforts.

One might recall the heroic struggles of Joseph Niepce, the inventor of photography, the first man to make a sun print. For almost a lifetime he assiduously applied his knowledge of chemistry and physics, fought against many difficulties, but ever persevering, until at last he was able to make photographs and laid the foundation of an art that plays an important part in our modern civilisation.

In every realm of science the record of success is marked by the spirit of perseverance, and this same spirit must dominate your life and mine if we are to succeed in any occupation or profession. Masonry teaches us from these simple Working Tools that the only way to overcome our difficulties and to solve our problems is by preserving a cheery optimism and “sticking” at them. Grouching and grumbling never won a fight; complaining never overcame a difficulty; whining never solved a problem.

There is only one way and that is the way Masonry points out, of conscientious and sustained effort. Might I quote some lines I read recently which I think aptly sums up the truths I have been trying to illustrate:-

*If the day looks kinder gloomy
An' your chances kinder slim;
If the situation's puzzling'
An' the prospects awful grim;
An' perplexities keep pressing
Till all hope is nearly gone'
Jus' bristle up, and grit your teeth,
An' keep on keeping' on.*

The Significance of the NE Corner

*An extract from a paper presented by Wor. Bro. S J Schultz to the
Athenaeum Lodge of Research, Johannesburg, South Africa in February 1986*

In ancient days it was customary to bury a victim under the foundation stone of the structure and numerous examples of this custom have been found, particularly in Palestine, where it is usually an unfortunate baby whose skeleton is revealed when excavators are exploring the foundations of some ancient edifice.

Even as late as the end of the 16th century, the Turks buried a Christian martyr in a hole which they filled with cement and made the foundation stone of one of their forts in Algiers. His face was well known and when the French took the town in the 19th century, they actually broke open the block of cement and found some of the bones and the hollow cast made by his body. They ran plaster into it and this somewhat gruesome relic is now in their museum at Algiers, while the bones of the martyr, who has been duly canonized under the name of St. Geronamus, are now one of the most precious relics in the cathedral of that city.

Even today in England, a last, faint memory of this ancient custom survives, in that coins bearing the effigy of a man, the King, are placed under the foundation stones of important buildings.

Thus the Masonic candidate is placed in the NE corner, symbolically to represent a Foundation Sacrifice.

The original idea underlying such foundation sacrifices was the belief that the soul of the victim would enter into the building and give it life, so that the stones would be welded together, as is the case in a living organism, such as a tree. In other words, the sacrifice was made in order that the building might stand firm for ever.

The candidate is led in like a victim prepared for sacrifice and sym-

bolically dedicates his life to the task of making the whole Masonic edifice stand firm for ever.

The foundation stone is laid in the NE corner for a very practical reason, namely so that the workmen could lay the course with the sun and thus obtain maximum amount of light.

Starting at six in the morning, they would, as it were, follow the sun to eventide.

Symbolically it refers to the journey of the soul which begins in the north and enters mortal life at birth in the east and so proceeds via the south to the west which denotes death.

The position in which the candidate stands is not only a square, emblematical of rectitude and of God, but at the particular point named, the feet constitute an angle clamp, which binds together the life which has been - in the north, which represents prenatal experience - and the new life which is just beginning in the east, which symbolizes mortal life.

In spiritual things the north is the place of darkness, the condition we are in before we turn towards the light. It should be noted that such angle clamps, which are no means uncommon in old buildings, give rigidity and strength to the corners and so assure stability.

Sustained by Perseverance

V.Wor. Bro. J L Cowie - 1934

The history of invention and discovery and the development of science during the past century is a simple story of perseverance, very often against popular opinion. The world scoffingly laughed and said "It can't be done.", but the inventor and the scientist calmly smiled and said "It can be done," and they persevered until it was done.

Is it not a fact these days that we are constantly doing those things our forefathers - and even our fathers - thought and said "could not be done"? Science has so developed during the past generation that we are today actually performing as part of our ordinary lives, the very things which were but a vision and a fantastic dream of other days.

The impossible has given way to the possible. After all, is not the great evolution in radio, telegraphy, aeronautics, the automobile etc. the result of the application of one of the great teachings of freemasonry? When you were handed the Working Tools you were informed that "knowledge grounded on accuracy, aided by labour and **sustained by perseverance will in the end overcome all difficulties.**"

What does this mean? In plain language, simply this, that the only way to overcome our difficulties is to "stick" at them and not give in, and to keep pressing on and on with optimism and courage.

It is interesting to note that full and complete knowledge alone is not sufficient. Nor will knowledge be successful in solving problems even if assisted by hard work, unless it is "sustained by perseverance."

Marconi had a wonderful knowledge of the science of electricity and physics, but his knowledge alone would never have given us wireless telegraphy.. (*Remember brethren when V.Wor. Bro. Cowie wrote this talk, he had not yet witnessed space travel or experienced the wonder of the internet.*) It was his sustained efforts and his perseverance in applying his knowledge which has enabled us to "listen in" to our

I wish that I might see them,
 My brethren black an' brown,
 With the trichies smellin' pleasant
 An' the hog-darn¹ passin' down.
 An' old Khansamah² snorin'
 On the bottle-khana³ floor,
 Like a Master in good standin'
 With my Mother Lodge once more.

Outside - "Sergeant ! Sir !
 Salute ! Salaam !"
 Inside - "Brother", an' it doesn't do no 'arm
 We met upon the level an' we parted on the square,
 An' I was Junior Deacon
 In my Mother Lodge out there !.

1. *Cigar Lighter*
2. *Butler*
3. *Pantry*

This poem by Rudyard Kipling is based on the factual situation as to membership of his Mother Lodge in India where he was born and made a Mason, and it illustrates very clearly that Masons are indeed part of a unique brotherhood where every religion is acceptable, and every member a brother provided he believes in a Supreme Being, by whatever name he calls Him.

When Kipling was raised to the 3^o, there were 6 different Holy Books resting on the altar where he took his obligation.

The Importance of the Apron

*From The Pocket Encyclopedia of Masonic Symbols
 Published by MSANA*

The symbol of honourable labour. The material of the Masonic apron - lambskin - is a symbol of innocence, as the lamb has always been, But for "innocence" do not read "ignorant". The word described those who do no injury to others, not those to whom injury may be done because they know little.

There is a special symbolism in the different ways in which the EAF, The FC and MM are taught to wear their aprons, emblematic of a progress from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge.

The use of the apron is extremely old, not, as with operative Masons, as a protector of clothing and body against tools and stone, but as a badge of honour. It was so used by the priests of Israel, by the candidates for the mysteries of Mithras in Persia, by the ancient Japanese in religious worship. Ethiopia knew aprons as did Egypt. In all times and all climes, it has been a badge of distinction and it is as such that a Mason wears it.

Colour and material are important in its symbolism, but Masonry admits the "symbol of the symbol" as for instance an electric light in place of a candle. Hence a Mason has more than once been "properly clothed", when the lambskin aprons of a Lodge were all in use, and he came through the tiled door clad only in a white handkerchief.

The apron is said to be more ancient and more honourable than certain Orders and decorations.

The Order of the Golden Fleece was founded by Philip, Duke of Burgundy, in 1429.

The Roman Eagle was Rome's symbol and ensign of power and might, 100 years before Christ.

The Order of the Star was created by John II of France in the middle of the 14th century.

The Order of the Garter was founded by Edward III of England in 1349 for himself and 25 Knights of the Garter.

That the Masonic apron is more ancient than these is a provable fact. In averring that it is 'more honourable' the premise "*when worthily worn*" is understood. The apron is "more honourable than the Star or Garter" when all that it teaches is exemplified in the life of the wearer.

Here is another interpretation of what the Apron symbolizes by V.Wor. Bro. J L Cowie

I suggest that the Masonic apron is a symbol of:-

1. Work
2. Rank
3. Responsibility
4. Honour
5. Peace

1. Work

From earliest times every workman wore a suitable apron - our ancient brethren who were "operative" before they were "speculative", wore an apron at their daily toil as a matter of necessity. Whilst you or I are now "speculative" Masons and wear the apron as part of our regalia, it is a symbol of work - the service that you and I are obligated to give, irrespective of our trade or profession. We must remember that the claims of Masonry are not satisfied when we finish our daily toil or complete our professional duties, for Masonry being a life, lives on, and the service we are expected to render is a continuous one - in the home, in the community, in the office, in sport and so on - and is consummated only when we have answered the call of the Great Leveller.

We 'and't good regalia
An' our lodge was old and bare,
But we knew the ancient landmarks,
An' we kep' 'em to a hair.
An' looking on it backwards,
It often strikes me thus,
There ain't such thing as infidels,
Excep' per'aps it's us !

For monthly after labour,
We'd all sit down and smoke,
(We dursn't give no banquits
Lest a brother's caste were broke)
An' man on man got talkin'
Religion an' the rest,
An' every man comparin'
Of the God 'e knew the best.

So man on man got talkin'
An' a brother stirred
'Til mornin' waked the parrots
An' that dam' brain fever bird.
We'd say 'twas 'ighly curious.
An' we'd all ride home to bed
With Mahommed, God an' Shiva
Changin' pickets in our 'ead.

Full oft on guv'ment service,
This rovin' foot 'ath pressed,
An' bore fraternal greetin's
To the lodges east and west.
Accordin' as commanded
From Kohat to Singapore,
But I wish that I might see them
In my mother Lodge once more !

The Mother Lodge

Poem about his Lodge by Bro. Rudyard Kipling

There was Rundle, Station Master
 An' Beasley of the rail,
 An' Ackman, Commisariat,
 An' Donkin o' the jail;
 An' Blake, Conductor-Sargent,
 Our Master twice was 'e
 With 'im that kept the Europe shop,
 Old Framjee Eduljee.

Outside - "Sergeant ! Sir !
 Salute ! Salaam !"
 Inside - "Brother" an' it
 Doesn't do no 'arm.

We met upon the level an' we parted on the Square,
 An' I was Junior Deacon in my
 Mother Lodge out there!

We'd Bola nath, Accountant,
 An' Saul the Aden Jew,
 An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman,
 Of the survey office too!
 There was babu Chuckerbutty,
 An' Amir Singh the Sikh,
 An' Castro from the fittin' shed
 The Roman Catholick!

Masonry always emphasizes the necessity of work. Look at the following familiar passages:

"the legitimate occupations of life"
"Labour is the lot of man"
"Knowledge - aided by labour"

One thing we should always remember, that anything worth having in this life is only obtained by sincere, honest effort - professional skill, intellectual ability, scholastic achievement, success in industry and commerce, are the outcome of sustained effort.

Work is the essence of success. Work is noble, is dignified, is becoming.

The world now, as perhaps never before in its history, needs men who are prepared and willing to devote their talents and means in unselfish work and service for their fellows. As one writer has said "The world needs builders, for it is being made over. In the next few years, political, religious, educational and social institutions are going to be amended for better or for worse.". It is in this reconstruction of society, of industry, of politics, of education, that our work as Masons lies and in this the tenets and principles we are taught within the lodge while wearing the Apron of Masonry, should be our guide and incentive.

2. Rank

In lodge the Apron is a symbol of rank and status; e.g. the EAF wears the plain white lambskin; the FC has two blue rosettes while the MM is distinguished by three rosettes and the sky blue lining and so on through Senior Officers and Grand Lodge Officers.

But the Apron has a greater significance that to simply point out a brother's rank in Masonry. It is the "symbol" of that rank which in every activity in life demands from its wearers the practice of all the virtues and principles which not only make a good Mason, but a

great and good man.

Let us always remember that our rank never ceases when we close lodge. It lives on with us. We take it with us to work and business, and when we have ceased with things temporal and have passed to the Grand Lodge above, our rank here will live on as a memory and a record.

We are to be Masons not only in lodge, but at work, at home and in our professions.

The Apron should always inspire us to so live that the world will know our work as men by the sincerity and sweetness of our lives.

3. Responsibility

When the EAF is invested with his Apron, not only does he accept the honour and rank, but is also invested with a heavy responsibility - a responsibility to so live that the great traditions of Masonry and the reputation of the Craft will be safe in his keeping.

Great and good men have worn similar aprons. Kings and Emperors have considered it a great honour so to do, but it entails a grave responsibility that each of us must accept and continue to hold while life shall last.

Therefore brethren, when lodge is finished and you place your apron in its case, carry with you to your vocations in life, a sense of the great responsibility that that apron places upon you.

4. Honour

It is indeed a great honour to wear the badge of a Mason. Sometimes we hear a proposer say of his candidate ' he will be an honour to the Craft if elected". Should it not be "he will be honoured by the Craft if elected," for to be a member of such a worthy institution and permitted to wear that Apron is indeed an honour: an honour which countless thousands have sought and failed to obtain; an honour which money

The Journeys

As you move through the various degrees in Freemasonry, many of the symbolic aspects in the centuries old ritual include perambulations around the lodge room which are emblematic of going on a journey.

In every case you are accompanied by a guide who helps you along the way to overcome obstacles you may meet and who advises you on what to do and what to say.

In some countries the perambulations in the 1^o whilst the candidate is blindfolded, meet with obstacles put in the path of the candidate and they are often accompanied by thunder and fire.

Whether there are physical obstacles or not, these perambulations are symbolic of life, for life is like a journey with a beginning, a middle and an end. The perambulations around the lodge room are a symbol of this journey of life and serve to emphasize the reliance we should put in our guide (TGAOTU) who will ensure that we overcome any problems encountered.

The journeys emphasise also, the dangers and difficulties of life with its unseen and unexpected obstacles that all of us have to face at some time. They also symbolise the struggle for life and warn against being unprepared.

Finally there is the symbol of light by which man should allow himself to be guided. Man seldom realizes that he has a Divine Guide, but when he does come to that realization it is like a bright light which he has never seen before and this Divine Guide will help him on his journey and to surmount the difficulties of life, if he will only let it.

I know there are many who would be prepared to lay down their lives if any dare deprive them of their “rights”, but are so indifferent that they never exercise those rights. Lord Avebury has said :- “ *Think rather of performing your duties than of claiming your rights.*” and again he says “*A vote in peace is like a stroke in battle, and none the less effective because it is peaceful and bloodless. The vote is not a right but a duty; and to prepare ourselves for giving it is a duty also*”.

Thirdly, take a proprietary interest in your town and country. I believe most of you are interested in your home; you desire it to be as beautiful and charming as lies within your financial means. You like to have a nice garden and to keep your yard tidy. Might I suggest you extend these activities? Keep your footpath clean and tidy! Regard the parks and reserves as your own and so treat them and see that others do the same. Regard this as *my street, my town, my country* and I am sure that personal and proprietary interest will help you to be better citizens and more effectively to discharge the claims of civil duty.

In conclusion, might I urge you to be ever governed by the same noble spirit as inspired the Oath taken by every Athenian when admitted to citizenship during the period that the city was Queen of the World:-

“ I will never bring disgrace to this, my city, by any act of dishonesty or cowardice, nor ever desert my suffering comrades in the ranks; I will fight for the ideal and sacred things of the City, both alone and with many; I will revere and obey the city’s Laws, and do my best to incite a like respect and reverence in those above me who are prone to annul or to set them at naught; I will strive unceasingly to quicken the public sense of civic duty. Thus, in all these ways, I will transmit this city, not less, but greater, better and more beautiful that it was transmitted to me.”

If you are actuated by such motives and so live, then I am sure that you will be better citizens and the community in which you live and exercise your influence will also be richer, because you as a Mason will have met the claims of civil duty and have nobly lived as a citizen of the world.

cannot purchase or bravery achieve.

Our ritual says it is “more honourable than the Garter or other Order in existence.” Affluence, political power, social status, educational attainment alone cannot obtain it. Many of you men have none of these qualifications, but yet you may wear that badge because you have been found worthy of character to be admitted to this honour.

Let us see to it then Brethren, that we so regard this Apron as the badge of greatest honour, and so conduct ourselves that its glory may not be tarnished by any actions of ours.

5. Peace

I like to think of our Apron as an emblem of Peace. Just think for a moment. Each one sitting here tonight is at peace with the other. If there is a brother who is not so, then he has no right to be here, for do you remember the words of the charge the W.M. delivered to you immediately after your investiture as EAF to the effect that should you wish to visit a Lodge in which you know there is a brother with whom you are at variance, you are not to put on that badge, but to ask for the Brother to retire so that you may settle your differences amicably?

The Apron is to be worn only when we are at peace and in harmony with each other.

There is, however, a large sphere for this spirit of peace to operate in other than the lodge room. Does not the world today need it? Strife, war, international conflicts over trade and commerce, racial jealousies and bitterness and economic depressions are challenging Masonry and other similar Institutions to exert their influence towards international peace.

I believe there never was a time when our Apron should mean so much to us - as a Symbol of Peace.

The Winding Stair and Middle Chamber

The lecture on the 2^o Tracing Board tells us that in King Solomon's Temple there was a winding stair which led to the middle chamber, in which the fellow Crafts were paid their wages.

Their ascent to the middle chamber was opposed by the Junior warden who demanded that they identify themselves.

We read of this construction in I Kings, VI, 8 - *"The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house; and they went up by winding stairs into the middle chamber and out of the middle chamber into the third."* The Revised version of the Volume of Sacred Law speaks of chambers and calls them "middle side chambers".

The historian W J Songhurst states that the stations of the three principal officers were in early Continental Tracing Boards, marked by three closed doors - east, west and south - conveying the idea that behind these doors were Inner Guards empowered to admit or refuse Admission. The Biblical passage quoted above says that the winding stair is on the right side of the house and in I Kings VII, 39, the word "right" is seen to have the meaning of "south".

The winding stair has suggested some elaborate personal interpretations. For example here is what Carl Claudy¹ says.

"It requires more courage to face the unknown than the known. A straight stair, a ladder, hides neither secret nor mystery at its top. But the stairs which wind, hide each step from the climber; what is just around the corner is unknown. The winding stairs of life lead us to we know not what; for some of us a Middle Chamber of fame and fortune; for others one of pain and frustration. The Angel of Death may stand with drawn sword on the very next step for any of us. Yet man climbs."

¹ Carl Claudy is highly respected and renowned in the USA for his "Old Tyler's Tales".

experience in Local Government in several forms and I unhesitatingly say that if we all took a deeper and keener interest in civic and national affairs the result would be of mutual advantage. You would be better Masons if you possessed a greater knowledge of the difficulties and problems of your fellows; your association with men of other ideas and other viewpoints of life, would make you kinder and more tolerant, give you a wider vision, intensify your sympathies and make you more useful members of society. And your district, your community, your fellows, would be the better of your mingling with them and respond to your influence if, into all your dealing, you carried the spirit of real Masonry.

This is our duty as Masons - not to declare any political policy, but to set the ideals of truth, honour and virtue. Not to further the interests of any political party or religious sect, but to build civic and national character and to cultivate peace, happiness and fellowship.

Let us see to it then that we never neglect the claims of civil duty. Let us try to fulfil the hope of the poet C A Mason:-

*"We cannot all be heroes,
And thrill a hemisphere
With some great daring venture,
Some deed that mocks at fear;
But we can fill a lifetime
With kindly acts and true,
There's always noble service
For noble souls to do"*

Secondly, I think that every one of us should take full advantage of that priceless heritage - the freedom of the secret ballot. I know there are men who consider themselves good Masons, but who are so indifferent to the claims of civil duty that they never exercise their franchise - too unconcerned and perhaps too lazy to vote! I am afraid that we sometimes fail to realise how great are our civil privileges, and at what tremendous cost they have been purchased - the years of agitation, self-sacrifice, prayer and hard work.

Compiler & Publisher's note

This Chapter in its entirety, is the word for word talk delivered by V.Wor. Bro. J L Cowie, in 1934 and its contents and comments are his and not those of the compiler or publisher, and refers of course to V. Wor. Bro. Cowie's understanding and personal observance of matters of his day and the previous paragraph in particular refers to the situation as he saw it in 1934. It is likely that other observers of the times might disagree with him and of course he is speaking generally as obviously his remarks do not refer to all civic and State leaders. This may not be the case today with regard to our civic and State leaders and whilst V.Wor. Bro. Cowie's intention is clearly to illustrate the civic involvement meaning in Masonic ritual, the compiler and publisher hereof does not associate himself with the remarks made by the author of the talk whilst, simultaneously, agreeing with the underlying meaning of Masonic ritual as regards Masons getting involved in community affairs.

Ruskins summarized the attitude I think we should adopt when he wrote:-

“This government is always two-fold visible and invisible. The visible government is that which nominally carries on the national business; determines its foreign relations, Raises taxes, levies soldiers, orders war or peace, and Otherwise becomes the arbiter of the national fortune. The invisible government is that exercised by all energetic and intelligent men, each in his sphere, regulating the inner will and secret ways of the people, essentially forming its Character, and preparing its fate.”

To do this will mean some effort on our part. We must get to know what is taking place around us. We should read intelligently of matters civic and political.

We ought to take an active interest in all movements for the betterment of our community, our schools and our libraries, our hospitals, public and charitable institutions. All these are opportunities for fulfilling the claims of civil duty and all of them are calling loudly for sincere, devoted and conscientious helpers. I speak with many years intimate

Learned authors such as Donald MacKenzie - “*The Migration of Symbols*” - believe that the cross, the swastika, the spiral, the cardinal points and the sun-wise direction of movement, are all closely related in the ancient religions and he thus attaches special significance to Solomon's choice of a winding stair to conduct privileged Craftsmen from the ground floor to the middle chamber.

According to the Tracing Board lecture, the purpose for which the fellow Craft used the winding stair was to obtain his wages. His daily labour was in the quarries, but having earned his wages he had to ascend the winding stair to get them.

We have been told that the EAF received in return for his labour, material goods while the Fellow Craft received wages at certain established rates. From this allegory many deduce two points, namely that Today's Entered Apprentice is learning his trade - studying the principles of Moral Truth and Virtue.

The fellow Craft, on the other hand, having qualified himself for labour in the Kingdom of God acquires in the middle chamber recognition of his knowledge in exact proportion to the worth of his labour; he attains the place in the Temple for which his labours have fitted him.

The first three steps of the winding stair are taken by some as indicative of the three aspects of sight:- **Physical** sight is a complete, essential and accurate use of **Imaginative** sight and once these have been developed it is possible to take the third step and use **spiritual** insight to ascertain the ultimate value of objects. To many followers of this symbolism, insight reminds them that all men are equal because they are all emanations of the deity. It necessarily follows that all who have ascended the five steps must then be equal which in turn points to the Brotherhood of Man.

This personal symbolism further suggests that the ascent of these five steps is not made alone - some, there may be, who ascend with eyes for nothing but the summit, but the majority will climb in

in company, helping one another, lending a hand to those on lower steps even while stretching out a hand to be helped by those above..

This interpretation of the symbolism of the winding stair may appeal especially to to Masons in relation to the ascent of officers to the Master's chair.

In this particular imagery, the trinity of sight (already referred to) leads to the top of the five steps - but we are not yet at the summit, the remaining steps leading to our ultimate goal.

When we arrive at the summit and enter the middle chamber to receive our wages, our physical sight perceives something which our imaginative sight translates into God, whom only our spiritual insight can comprehend or appreciate.

Whatever particular meaning the individual Mason gives to it, the winding stair is generally accepted as a representation of progress.

Masonry teaches us to unite with others for a spiritual co-operation, to control the passions to enlighten the mind and to keep before us a great ideal.



of the Ideal Citizenship. There are many who are prone to consider a city or State is great when it is rich in commerce, or highly developed industrially, and balances its fiscal budget. But these alone do not constitute civic or national greatness.

The greatness of any community can only be determined by the character of its citizens, its public spirit, its civic conscience, and the practical expression given in the common avenues of life, of sympathy, goodwill and friendship, and the development of all that is artistic and beautiful.

It is of the utmost importance that we develop our industries and our commerce so as to find avenues of suitable employment for our citizens, in order that they may be taught the nobility of work and find happiness in their labour, but concurrently with the development of our industry and commerce there must be the cultivation of civic pride, a high standard of ethics and ideals, and the creation of a conscience which will insist on so expressing itself that honour, truth and uprightness will be dominant in civic and national office.

The ideal citizenship, therefore, is that which not only provides for the useful employment of its citizens, but demands character, encourages thrift, develops taste for art and beauty, adequately provides for its sick and afflicted, engenders a spirit of love and friendship, is unselfish and is prepared to sink personal interest for the common good.

The Claims of Civil Duty - what are they?

Firstly, I think we are to play a definite part in forming that civic conscience I have previously mentioned. Masonry stands for truth, integrity, honour and justice. Think what it would mean if every Mason used his influence in determining that these virtues should be paramount in every holder of civic and national office; it would be the end of bribery, graft and corruption. It would mean the creation of such a virile and healthy civic and national atmosphere that nothing mean or dishonourable could live in it.

Citizenship

"The claims of civil duty" - 1st Working Tools
"As a citizen of the world" - Final Charge in 1°

When you were handed the Working Tools at your initiation, you were enjoined amongst other things "not to neglect the claims of civil duty", and again during the Final Charge, you had detailed to you your duties "as a citizen of the world."

Masonry stands today as it has always done - for good citizenship. A man cannot be a good Mason unless he is a good citizen. If he has failed to discharge his duties as a citizen and lived without taking an interest in the affairs of his community, he is not a real - a complete - Mason.

I have been amazed at many brethren who would never miss a lodge meeting under any circumstances, yet fail lamentably when it comes to exercising the rights and accepting the duties of citizenship. I have met many Masons who know their ritual perfectly and have a good knowledge of the Book of Constitutions, but are grossly ignorant of even the most elementary principles of the system under which they are governed, both locally and nationally.

Their only concern is to pay as little rates as possible - or none at all! They could argue on matters concerning Masonic history, and jurisprudence, but know little, if anything, of the great civic problems and difficulties which face every community, and in the solving of which Masonry charges its members to assist.

I realise that as Masons we cannot, and rightly so, allow politics, either State or Municipal, as such, to enter the domain of our lodge, but there are many civic responsibilities which as Masons we are expected to accept, and many directions in which we can and should render valuable service to our community.

What is the ideal citizenship? Before we can adequately and efficiently discharge our civic duties, we should have a proper conception

Quote from the Farmer's Almanac 1823

"A real Freemason is distinguished from the rest of mankind by the uniform, unrestricted rectitude of his conduct. Other men are honest in fear of punishment which the law might inflict; they are religious in expectation of being rewarded, or in dread of the devil in the next world.

A Freemason would be just if there were no laws, human or divine, except those written in his heart by the finger of his Creator.

In every climate, under every system of religion, he is the same. He kneels before the Universal Throne of God in gratitude for the blessing he has received and humble solicitation for his future protection.

He venerates the good men of all religions. He gives no offense because he does not choose to be offended. He contracts no debts which he is certain he cannot discharge, because he is honest upon principle."

Equality - A quotation from Bro. Theodore Roosevelt

"I violate no secret when I say that one of the greatest virtues in Masonry is that it affords an opportunity for men in all walks of life to meet on common ground, where all men are equal and have one common interest.. For example, when I was President (of the USA) the Master of my lodge was bro. Doughty, who was the gardener for the estate of one of my neighbours and a most excellent public spirited citizen with whom I like to come in contact.

Clearly, I could not call upon him when I came home, it would have embarrassed him. Neither could he, without embarrassment, call on me.

In the lodge it was different. He was over me, although I was President, and it was good for him and good for me."

The Forest Giants

Adapted from a short talk by V. Wor. Bro. J L Cowie 1934

It has been my privilege on several occasions to travel through the wonderful forests of our North Coast - the Wingham Brush, the scrubs of Upper Richmond and Clarence and the Headwaters of the Macleay - and each time I have thrilled at the grandeur and majesty of the Forest Giants. There they are in all their glory - turpentines, red gums, blackbutts, ironbarks, bloodwoods, mahoganys, sassafrass and many other of our fine forest timbers. Straight of stem, strong of trunk, thrusting their tops high into the sunlight - a veritable picture of strength, glory and majesty.

As I pass through these forests of ours I often think of our ancient Brethren at work in the forests of Lebanon 3000 years ago felling the huge cedars from which the temple timbers were hewn. Without the mills and machinery of modern days, we can imagine what skill of hand they possessed to enable those timbers to be accurately shaped so as to ultimately fit into their pre-appointed places in the Temple building.

I am always tempted to loiter awhile as I pass through these forests, for they seem to speak to me of life itself. I see in these forest giants an epitome of human experience, for the same forces which gave them strength, supported them in their early struggles, and ultimately clothed them in glory and grandeur, are the same forces available in our human lives and the same principles must be observed in your life and mine if we are to be clothed with majesty and grow in strength of mind and character.

As I have stood in the stillness of the forest and gazed in admiration at these giants and pondered the secret of their strength and glory, many thoughts have rushed into my mind, but I think they can be crystallized into four words:-

1. Foundations
2. Purpose
3. Struggle
4. Triumph

our lives. It shows us that work is clothed with honour and dignity. No matter what the occupation may be, so long as it is faithfully and well performed, it is a fine and noble exercise. Rather than our work be considered a drudgery and a bore, we should regard it as a great privilege to be able to take our places as workmen and craftsmen.

That great temple at Jerusalem built by King Solomon, which we are told surpassed all imagination for glory, grandeur and splendour, was a triumph of organized work and labour. The great mind of King Solomon conceived the idea; the genius of Hiram Abiff devised the plan, and the workmen and hewers of wood and stone, the carpenters and craftsmen, brought it into being. All had their part to do; all labour shared in the glory of that undertaking. I like to think that Masonry places a very high value upon work. Why, the very aprons we all must wear in lodge are symbolical of, amongst other things, the nobility and dignity of work.

Devotion to one's job and concentration on one's work are essential to success. No man ever succeeded without hard work - whether it be manual or mental. To you younger brethren especially would I say that if you desire to make a success out of your life, and to experience real joy and satisfaction, you must be devoted to your work. This is one of the simple teachings of Freemasonry. From the first Working Tools we learn "knowledge..... Aided by labourwill overcome all difficulties... and promote happiness."

Brethren, Masonry teaches us that "Labour is the lot of man," but work is noble and dignified. Let us therefore find life's greatest joy and satisfaction in the faithful performance of the tasks allotted to us.

The Dignity of Work

"Labour is the lot of man" - Abridged from a talk by V.Wor. Bro. J L Cowie 1934

This has been so from the Garden of Eden. The V. of the S.L. Tells us that when God turned Adam there from, it was with the command that henceforth he should till the soil. In that case it can be construed that labour was a punishment, but through the process of time we have learnt long centuries since to regard work as the honourable function of manhood. All the great spiritual and moral teachers, reformers and philosophers have ever so regarded it. Indeed most of them added dignity to labour by themselves participating in humble employment e.g. the Founder of Christianity worked as a carpenter; St. Paul as a tent maker.

When at your initiation you were handed the Working Tools you were told that the Common Gavel taught that "Labour is the lot of man"; that although our minds might be able to conceive great ideas and plans, and our brains devise the ways and means of executing them, all this would be in vain if the necessary labour to carry them into effect were not forthcoming.

Masonry would therefore teach us that labour is an integral part of life. Our ritual abounds in this great truth. In each degree we are presented with Working Tools, not that we might actually work with them, but to impress upon us certain fundamental truths to follow in carrying out our life's work to a successful issue.

If we examine our economic system we will see that man cannot live without work. Someone must till the ground; someone must sow and reap to produce the food we eat; someone must work to provide the clothes we wear, and someone must make and operate our means of transport and so on. It is one of the irrevocable laws of life - man must work. It is part of our existence - indeed our very existence depends upon it. Undoubtedly "Labour is the lot of man."

But Masonry teaches us that Labour is more than an integral part of

1. Foundations

They have good foundations - they never grow in poor ground. Their roots are deeply laid in the best and richest soils, for they must have nourishment to grow and maintain their strength. I doubt if we can imagine what nourishment is required to feed for 50 years or more one of these giant ironbarks or turpentines, with its 100 feet or more of height and its immense girth. So with your life, and mine, they can never be productive of great good and be crowned with glory unless built upon the right foundation.

Masonry teaches us that there is only one foundation upon which we can build our character i.e. the V. of the S.L. "in which a straight and undeviating line of conduct is clearly and unmistakably laid down for our pursuit." Truth, Love, Honour, Justice - all have their genesis in it. Masonry is great today, has withstood the tests of time, and stands supremely above all adverse criticism and abuse, simply because it is built on the right foundations, the teachings of the V. of the S.L. which lies open upon the altars of all our lodges. Surely we have not forgotten that important charge delivered to all initiates, when we were exhorted "before all things" to a serious study and contemplation of the V. of the S.L., "The unerring standard of Truth and Justice" and to regulate our conduct: by the divine precepts it contains." The V. of the S.L. is the basis of all our national laws. Queen Victoria when asked what was the secret of England's greatness, pointed to the V. of the S.L. Remove it - disregard it - and the very fabric of our civilization will collapse.

Brethren, the Forest Giants are emphasizing in nature what Masonry would teach us all, that Strength, Honour and Glory only come in life when that life is built upon the right foundations.

2. Purpose

The trees tell me of the necessity of having a *purpose in life*. When the tiny seed was sown in the forest, nature at once commenced to fulfil its purpose. The ironbark seed grew to be an ironbark. It had to

be tough, heavy, strong and long of trunk to be fitted for its particular purpose in the years to come. It was never meant to be a small tree. The Pine tree was intended to be of different character. To fulfil man's needs it had to be soft and light, altogether of a different nature to the ironbark, and so on with other species, each has its own definite purpose, to grow to what nature meant it to be.

Masonry teaches us Brethren that we should have a definite purpose in life if we are to succeed. We are enjoined to educate ourselves, so that the latent qualities of the mind may be discovered, and by "cultivating ideas and polishing rude thought" transform ourselves "into civilized and enlightened beings capable of appreciating and performing our duties to God and man."

I have seen, as no doubt you have, many failures in this life, of men who simply drifted along without an aim, or a purpose, or an ideal. I believe that after a good foundation, the next essential in life is to have a definite purpose and live to it. I like the way Thomas Carlyle has put it:-

"From the lowest depths there is a path to the loftiest heights. The tendency to persevere, to persist despite hindrances, discouragement and impossibilities, distinguishes the strong from the weak. The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder."

We should be careful to remember that the Great Architect had a definite purpose for each one He has created. He gave us peculiarities of temperament, of mind, of faculty, of physique, all to fulfil a special purpose, and success comes to us in life when we discover that purpose and faithfully fulfil it. Likewise our failures are often due to a disregard of that purpose - of trying to be someone else instead of our natural self.

3. Struggle

These trees tell me of a long struggle for "sun and sky and air and

A kind word that cost *nothing* but it brought into the dark life more light than could have been put there by a coin that might have bought a loaf of bread.

"You called me brother, and that was a great blessing."

Brethren, remember the 'grace' usually spoken at the lodge Festive Board?

"For what we are about to receive may the Great Architect of the Universe make us truly thankful **and ever mindful of the needs of others.**"

Brotherhood

Here are a few comments of my own in this regard.

Every fraternity professes to support the idea of brotherhood as a concept to be practiced by its members. In Freemasonry over the years there have been examples of Masonic brotherhood in action, but what exactly is this concept?

Brotherhood symbolizes the feeling experienced when brethren share common beliefs and aspirations. It endeavours to impart that special relationship which exists between all Freemasons, a relationship that a member is able to recognize as being one where a brother can rely absolutely and without question non another Freemason, no matter what the consequences or the risk.

It illustrates that special security which can never be found anywhere else in life - a security that will endure for our entire life.

Brotherhood is the cement which binds the structure together, joining every brother together in an unbreakable chain.

You called me Brother.

The following is a story told of Count Tolstoy, the great Russian novelist and Freemason, a man who dared to be a socialist in the days of the Czars.

The Count was accosted by a beggar on the streets. Tolstoy searched his clothes but could find nothing that he might contribute. He then spoke to the beggar:

“Brother, I hope you are not angry with me, because I can find no coin?”

The trace of a smile crept over the face of the beggar and a dim light came into his eyes. He replied *“You called me brother, and that was a great blessing.”*

We who use the word “brother” freely and are not hindered in so doing, may have little conception of what deep meaning there may be in the word when spoken under certain conditions or in certain circumstances.

The derelict who approached the great Russian undoubtedly was accustomed to refusal of his appeals; he must have been accustomed to kicks and cuffs in place of silver.

There was no one to love him, and none for whom he might show affection. At night he crawled into a dirty hovel and by day he was hounded by the Czar’s police. To receive nothing could not have been a great disappointment, having so often been his lot, YET he showed no disappointment, no indeed, the disappointment was in fact shown by the great Russian who had nothing to give.

Whatever the reason, he spoke the word that brought to the face of the mendicant, the first glint of a smile that it may not have known for many a month.

The kind word may have led the beggar to forget his hunger—who knows?

light.” From the moment the tiny fronds thrust their heads above ground, the struggle commenced and has continued through the long ages. Sun, light and air were necessary for its life and these must be got. There was little room in that crowded forest - there were many others engaged in this struggle, and so the tiny tree threw out its leaves and reared its head to catch a gleam of sunlight. So on and on the fight has gone, despite rain and wind and cold, until today the forest giant is the admiration of all.

Not every tree that took root grew like these giants. Many became no more than saplings, the struggle was too great! They failed to catch the gleams of sunlight and to rise above the darkness of the forest.

Brethren, is this not a picture of life today? The man who has covered himself in honour and glory has not done so without a sustained effort. Success never comes with idleness, slothfulness and drifting. It is the result of honest and continual effort. It comes through lifting one’s head above the dark environments that hinder, and keeping one’s face turned towards the blue sky above. The pages of history are filled with deeds of men who, like these forest giants, fought against great odds - against disappointment, public opinion, adverse criticism, physical disabilities, only to achieve success.

Think of Stephenson, Watt, Marconi, Morse, Goodyear, Pasteur and countless others. True indeed is it that the things easily obtained in life are of little value. The things that are realized only after intense struggle and ceaseless effort are those really worth possessing. This thought has been aptly expressed in the following lines.

*The tree that never had to fight
For sun and sky and air and light,
That stood out in the open plain
And always got its share of rain,
Never became a forest king,
But lived and dies a scrubby thing.*

*The man who never had to toil,
Who never had to win his share
Of sun and sky and light and air,
Never became a manly man,
But lived and died as he began.*

*Good timber does not grow in ease;
The stronger wind, the tougher trees,
The farther sky, the greater length,
The more the storm, the more the strength;
By sun and cold, by rain and snows,
In tree or man, good timber grows;
Where thickest stands the forest growth
We find patriarchs of both,
And they hold converse with the stars,
Whose broken branches show the scars
Of many winds and much of strife -
This is the common law of life.*

4. Triumph

I look again at these giant timbers and I see in them the symbol of triumph. They have overcome their earlier difficulties, and though their fight was a long one, it culminated in victory. It is a long, long way through the mists of the years to the days when they caught their first glimpse of the sun; they all had very small and humble beginnings, but the years of effort and struggle have resulted in victory and glory. Do they not speak to us in these difficult days and give us inspiration and encouragement?

How many really great men of history have had humble starts in life, but have risen above their environment and emerged victorious? Think of Lincoln, Lloyd George, Washington and many others.

Did you ever notice that the finest timbers are not always seen from the roads and highways? They are back in the stillness of the forest. So in

Masonry teaches us that, after all, in the final analysis, or in the great crises in life, it is not the big reputation that counts, but what a man really is, and this depends on how he has prepared himself for the contest.

Secondly, the boat race emphasizes another great truth which Masonry would teach us, viz. that the successful man is not he who lives unto himself, but who is mindful of others. Mingle with these youths and ask them why all this training, why all this self-denial and this supreme effort to win, and they to a man will reply, "For the School!"

Not for self aggrandizement, or self glorification, but the honour of the school!

Is not this spirit also the spirit of Masonry? Are we not taught in the Final Charge of the first degree, the duties we owe to God and to our neighbours, as well as to ourselves? Masonry teaches us that no man lives unto himself. Your life and my life touch each other at many points. The peace and happiness of this lodge and of Masonry, and of the outside world in which we associate, depend on the harmonious relationship of each one of its members.

Just as Shore's progress was hindered when No. 2 lost his oar, and as Grammar's balance was upset when one of its crew "caught a crab", so the progress and harmony of this lodge and your home, and your circle of friends, is affected by your mishaps and misdeeds. If this lodge is to prosper, then there must be mutual understanding and co-operation. If any home is to be happy, there must be a "pulling together", and if this old world is to be at peace, and war no more, then the principles of Masonry - brotherly love, mercy, justice, self-abnegation, obedience to the law - must ever be fulfilled.

Just as the Head of the River was won by each man, from Row to Cox, pulling his weight and doing his best, carrying out faithfully his particular part, so the perfect fabric of civilization will only be woven by each one of us doing our part faithfully and well, with one aim, not for self, but for humanity.

burst, and carried them to victory in record time, under such trying weather conditions, did not simply happen. It was the result of careful preparation and training. The real race did not start with the firing of the starter's gun on that memorable Saturday afternoon, but months previously, when the crews were carefully selected and the youths went into the training camps. The hard work of preparation then commenced. The mind, as well as the body, was carefully trained for the ordeal. They were taught the will to win. Weaknesses were detected and remedied, the crews were rigidly disciplined, and limbs were loosened and strengthened. Nothing was left to chance, and so the race was rowed and won.

Is this not exactly what Masonry teaches us? That the mind, as well as the body, must be carefully prepared if we are to achieve success in life. No man ever made a success of his life unless he had the mind so to do. No one ever overcame difficulties and solved his great problems unless he had the will to win out. At the very commencement of his Masonic career, the initiate is impressed with this fact. He cannot be admitted unless he is properly prepared, both internally and externally. When the First Working Tools were presented to him he was informed of the "advantages of discipline and education", and told how the mind must be trained by "cultivating ideas and polishing rude thought", so that he may "perform his duty to God and man".

He was instructed how to apportion his day to work, rest and pleasure; to follow the dictates of conscience, so that he may be able to control temper, curb unbridled ambitions, repress envy, encourage goodness and thus become a worthy representative of the God who made him.

The Third Working Tools, teach us that there is only one line of conduct we may follow if we are to enjoy real happiness, viz, that laid down in the V. of the S.L.

And so I might go on quoting from our ritual, suffice it to say that Masonry teaches us very definitely and very clearly that the prizes of life are only won by men who are first of all properly prepared in their hearts, and then express in their lives those fundamental truths by sincere and devoted service.

life - many of its grandest and noblest sons are living in the obscurity of humble life, away from the glare of publicity. After all is not this the teaching of Masonry?

Social position and status in life do not count in the final analysis. Only the Brother who has discharged his duties, whether great or small, with fidelity and zeal, can patiently await the arrival of the moment when the Great Leveller shall reduce us all to the same state.

Education, wealth, social position, can never bring happiness and victory unless they have been obtained in fulfilling the purpose of the Great architect in our lives.

This is the victory which Masonry teaches us to strive for - the consciousness of life's tasks well and faithfully performed.

***Quotation from Warren H Harding
(President of the USA)
Speaking at his Masonic initiation.***

" I say it with due deliberation and without fear of breaking faith, I have never encountered a lesson, never witnessed an example, never heard an obligation uttered which could not be openly proclaimed to the world.

More, if the lessons taught were heeded, the obligations read were assumed, if the relationships urged were adopted, men would be infinitely better in their human relationships and better citizens of this country."

Building a Cathedral

*Talk delivered to Lodge Hiram, Dungog, NSW By V.Wor. Bro. J L Cowie
On 5 April 1934 and at Lodge Prince of Wales, Muswellbrook, on 10 April 1934*

No doubt you will have heard the story of the visitor who accompanied Sir Christopher Wren on a tour of inspection when that great architect was building St. Paul's Cathedral. Approaching a workman busily engaged in fashioning a great stone to be ultimately part of the cathedral, the visitor asked the stonemason what he was doing, and received the casual reply, "Only chipping a stone."

Turning to a second workman and asking the same question he received the reply, "Earning my wages." A third workman, however, in answer to the same question replied with great pride, "Why, I'm building a cathedral.!"

It seems to me Brethren that these three workmen are representative of the type or classes we have in Masonry today.

First the nominal Mason,
Secondly the mercenary Mason,
Thirdly the real Mason.

The Nominal mason is generally quite a good fellow in many ways; pays his dues, attends meetings regularly, never seeks office, but is content to remain merely a nominal Mason. There are many of these brethren in every lodge. They take no part in the business affairs. They never come forward with new ideas or offer constructive criticism. They never read Masonic history. They have failed to live up the exhortation of the final charge of the 1st Degree to devote a fair proportion of their leisure time in the acquisition of Masonic knowledge. No doubt there are some such brethren here tonight; to you I say very kindly and very sincerely, "Why be content with "chipping a stone" when you may be "Building a Cathedral?"

There is so much open to you in Masonry if you will only take full advantage. Masonry is more than mere membership, the paying of

Head of the River V. Wor. Bro. J L Cowie - May 1934

A few days ago I had the great pleasure of witnessing the race for the Head of the River, and, naturally, like many old Sydney Grammar School boys as thrilled to see representatives of that grand old school row their way to victory. What a great race it was! And what wonderful opponents! Four crews, the pick of the G.P.S. - each youth well trained, strong of limb and full of determination to do his best for his school.

How the fortunes seesawed! First Scots in the lead, then Grammar, then Shore, then Grammar and again Shore, over that long mile and a half. Who will ever forget that plucky and determined effort of the Shore boys to "head off" their strong opponents, despite the fact that No. 2 had lost his oar a few hundred yards from the line? And when the black and gold flag, indicating a Grammar victory, was hoisted, amidst the cheers from tens of thousands of throats, the boys from Shore, from Scots, from High, joined in congratulating the victors. Such is the spirit of our Great Public Schools. Long may it continue! What a fitting termination to a memorable struggle.

As I reflect on that great day, and in my mind's eye see again that wonderful race, I cannot help thinking that the schools boat race and Masonry are both teaching us the same imperishable truths regarding life itself. The fundamental principles which governed the winning of the boat race are the same as must exist in every human life, if that life is to be successful. victory is to be achieved and happiness enjoyed.

At least two thoughts occur to me:-

First of all the race tells us that most careful and assiduous preparation is absolutely essential. The race was not won by the crew simply having a big reputation, or the finest looking boat, or by eight youths and a cox dropping into a skiff and rowing their hardest. That stamina and determination which marked Grammar's final

Quotation from George Washington

“Flattering as it may be to the human mind, and truly honourable as it is to receive from our fellow citizens, testimonies of approbation for exertions to promote the public welfare, it is not less pleasing to know that the milder virtues of the heart are highly respected by a Society whose liberal principles must be founded in the immutable laws of truth and justice.

To enlarge the sphere of social happiness is worthy of the benevolent design of a Masonic institution; and it is most fervently to be wished that the conduct of every member of the fraternity as well as those publications that discover the principles which actuate them, may tend to convince mankind that the great object of Masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race.”

25th President of the USA - William McKinley

When asked how he came to be a Mason, he explained as follows.

“After the battle of Opequam, I went with the surgeon of our Ohio Regiment to the field where there were about 5 000 Confederate prisoners under guard. Almost as soon as passed the guard, I noticed the Doctor shook hands with a number of Confederate prisoners. He also took from his pocket a roll of bills and distributed them among the men. Boy-like I looked on in wonderment; I didn’t know what it all meant. On the way back to camp I asked him: ‘Did you know those men or ever see them before?’ ‘No,’ replied the doctor, ‘I never saw them before.’ ‘But’ I persisted, ‘you gave them a lot of money, all you had about you. Do you ever expect to get it back?’ ‘Well,’ said the doctor, ‘if they are able to pay me back, they will, but it makes no difference to me; they are my brother Masons in trouble and I am only doing my duty.’\I said to myself, “If that is Masonry, I will take some of it myself.”

dues, regular attendance at Lodge, constant visitation, learning a ritual literally perfect, giving liberally to charity, all these are very commendable, they are very essential, but they are but the “chipping of a stone.” They alone do not constitute Masonry.

The Mercenary Mason we all deplore. Unfortunately he is with us, he has come for the “loaves and fishes.” To him masonry is but a benevolent institution to look after him in old age; a charitable organisation to take care of his widow and orphans., an employment bureau to assist him industrially.

He sees in masonry only his wages; just what he can get out of it. His vision is stunted and his outlook upon life and work and recreation is purely a materialistic one. He measures life in terms of the material instead of the spiritual. He has failed to realise the dignity and nobility of good honest work. He has never practiced the spirit of the “second mile”. He never does one iota more than he can possibly help he is a “5 o’clocker,” like some men I have met in business. They drop pens and papers on the stroke of 5 and rush home, caring little whether or not the job is done. Like the stonemason of our story they see in their work only the amount of wages they’ll obtain from it. They have lost the vision of the great Cathedral into which their stones, their work, their time are being put.

I would say to you, W.M. and you brethren, be careful of your candidates. Examine them thoroughly, see that their idea of Masonry is the correct one, see that none are admitted who regard their place in Masonry as simply to earn wages and to get what they can out of it. Such men will never build the great Cathedral of Masonry. They have the wrong vision. Brethren be careful you do not become mercenary, it’s so easy to lose the spiritual outlook under our modern industrial and economic systems. In the grind and whirl of industry it’s easy to lose your soul. Never fail to uphold the dignity of your job, no matter what it may be. Wages are not everything; they are important and should be equitable. Masonry demands this; Masonry does not condone sweating; but if you work for wages only and fail to evince pride in your job and do not appreciate the purpose and ideal of your efforts

you will fail to realise the nobility of work, and are but a mercenary Mason.

The Real Mason - "I am building a Cathedral". He was only a common (and I use that term in its honoured and respectful sense) Mason, like his companions in this regard. He was in fact only chipping a stone, shaping its rough form until it became beautiful and fit to occupy its place in the great cathedral. Truly he was working for wages, in all probability receiving only the same as his two fellow workmen, but he had an ideal, he was a man of vision. He saw beyond the quarry with its stones rough and unshapen, to the wonderful monument of architecture and industry in the finished Cathedral.

He visualized the day when he could take his sons and his daughters and his friends and with justifiable pride point to the great building and say , " I helped to build that wonderful Cathedral." That was the difference between him and his two companions; he had an ideal, a vision, a soul. He had character, he appreciated the importance of his job, he realized the dignity and nobility of work. He was a real Mason.

This is, I think, the vision and the ideal we must have if we are to be real Masons. We must not be content with being simply nominal members of an honoured institution, much less regarding that institution as a means of employment or opportunity, but must realise that as units, even in the humblest capacity, we are assisting in the building of a great cathedral, the cathedral of character. We must never forget that just as surely and silently as our ancient brethren built the great Temple over 3000 years ago, each doing his part, either hewing timbers in the forests of Lebanon or fashioning the stones in the quarries, or casting the great columns on the plains of Jordan, so you and I are surely and silently building the Temples of our character.

My Brethren, is masonry to you a living reality? If not, you are but chipping stones without an ideal. Is Masonry a dynamic force in your lives, urging you to the achievement of splendid deeds of service? If not, you are but mercenary, receiving wages, with no vision of what you may be or what you are doing. I urge you brethren to have an ideal and a pur-

pose in your life. Remember that no matter how small or apparently insignificant may be your part, it is a part, an essential part, of the great cathedral of human character that you as a Mason are building, and it must be done well.

I quote the words of Edmund Leamy:-

*Whether the job be large or small,
Splendid or poorly paid;
Whether you come at another's call,
Master or not of your trade;
Merchant, mechanic, stenographer,
Clerk, labourer, salesman tell -
If the work's worth doing - at all worth doing -
It's worth doing well!*

*Whether the job be large or small,
If it's the task for you,
Get in your stride or quit it all,
Struggle and strive to do!
Honest! Be square! Be not slip-shod nor slick;
Urgings to idle quell.
For a job worth doing - at all worth doing -
Is worth doing well!*

If this is your vision, your ideal, your purpose in life, you may rest assured you are not merely chipping a stone, or receiving your wages, but you are building a cathedral - a temple - of character and industry, that time shall never destroy, which shall never decay with passing years, but will live on through the countless ages of eternity, till time shall be no more.