

ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE FRATERNITY OF  
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS.  
PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF WARWICKSHIRE

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THE ORATION  
DELIVERED AT THE  
CONSECRATION  
OF THE

FRATERNITY LODGE, No. 4032,

AT THE

MASONIC HALL, NEW STREET, BIRMINGHAM,

On Monday, June 7th, 1920,

BY

REV. J. T. CHILDS,

Provincial Grand Chaplain of Warwickshire,

I.P.M. Tudor Lodge, 1792.

## FRATERNITY.

IN the explanation of the First Tracing Board (too seldom heard in our Lodges) we are informed of two "Immovable Jewels" so called because "they lie open and immovable in the Lodge for the Brethren to moralise upon." We know them as the Rough and the Perfect Ashlars, and they rest on the Junior and the Senior Warden's pedestal respectively.

"The Rough Ashlar is a stone, rough and unlearned, as taken from the quarry, until by the industry and ingenuity of the workman, it is modelled, wrought into due form, and so rendered fit for the intended structure." We are further taught that "this represents man in his infant or primitive state, rough and unpolished as that stone" and so quite unfit at this stage to be admitted into any self-respecting Lodge.

Hence we observe that this Rough Ashlar, lying on the J.W.'s pedestal, has had some considerable amount of work bestowed upon it, prior to its being brought into the Lodge-Room, and that whilst it is ROUGHLY in the shape of a cube, much more work is needed to make it a PERFECT Ashlar, and also that the nearer the finishing stages are approached the more highly-killed become the operations to which the stone is subjected.

When a brother is admitted into Masonry, it is expected that he has received a sufficiently "liberal and virtuous education" to have shaped him to be at once recognisable as a GENTLEMAN. But he has by no means finished his education, as represented by the PERFECT Ashlar. His very awkwardness in "entering the Lodge," his difficulty in giving the salutes correctly, remind him how vigorously the "working tools" must still be applied to "render him fit for the intended structure." So, as an Entered Apprentice, he is placed like the Rough Ashlar is, under the immediate observation and supervision of the J.W. If our brother possesses the true Masonic spirit, he will not be content to remain a ROUGH Ashlar, but will, step by step, slowly perhaps, but none the less surely, attain the perfection represented by the "The PERFECT Ashlar" on the S.W.'s pedestal.

Among operative Masons, at least Ancient ones, the process largely used in producing these Perfect Ashlars is the rubbing an imperfect stone on a true one; so in Our Lodges, the great principle of FRATERNITY is ever at work, brother rubbing against brother, and in the doing so each is worked into trueness of surface and form, each face square with the other, and of precise and accurate dimensions, ready to be finally "tried and proved" by The Great Architect Himself. But, in this final testing, T.G.A.O.T.U. uses HIS OWN standards, which, as He is The Grand Geometrician and also the Accurate Mathematician, are DEAD TRUE. Hence we must take care that in preparing our work for His approval, OUR instruments of measurement &c., are also dead true. Our squares must be 90 degrees, not one more or less. Perfectness is not right simply because He commands it, but He commands it because it is right.

The Perfect Ashlar when finished does not lie ON the S.W.'s pedestal, but suspended above it. Having been made fit for the intended structure, it now awaits to be "raised" from the earth, then "adjusted on its proper base."

When a brother has been fitted and polished on every side, symbolised by his occupancy of the S.W.'s Chair, he is now ready to be "installed" into HIGHER service. His Mastership may be likened to the derrick, holding him in readiness to be raised to rank in the Province or even in Grand Lodge itself, and there place him in his allotted office.

When FRATERNITY has accomplished its work, and the working tools and the contactual FRATERNAL rubbing has produced as Perfect an Ashlar as the brother is capable of being made, "the grave is not his goal." Death is merely the ROAD through which we are transferred from the workshop (Lodge) below, where we have been "wrought into DUE form," to The Grand Lodge above, whither we are RAISED by the derrick, and placed in our appointed position in that larger and more perfect FRATERNITY over which T.G.A.O.T.U. reigns supreme in His Glorious Majesty.

May this FRATERNITY Lodge, No. 4032, now being consecrated, prove the means of shaping very many "rough" and imperfect Ashlars into "perfect" ones, that T.G.A.O.T.U. after "due trial and strict examination," shall pronounce to be 'stones of a TRUE CAST or DIE,' exact to His requirements, and in every respect ready for the position He has designed and allotted.

NOTE.—

"Ancient" Masonic symbolism appears to be based on the assumption that "The Craft" consists of F.C.'s with a greater or less sprinkling of E.A.'s.

The M.M. was certainly nothing less than what we should understand by an "installed" Master as illustrated by the following quotations, etc. (amongst others) :—

In 2nd Tracing Board :—

"At the building of K.S. Temple, an immense number of M.'s were employed. They consisted of E.A.'s and F.C.'s. (No mention of M.M.'s).

"There were but THREE Grand Masters who bore sway."

It is true that they are described as Grand Masters, but we know that the death of ONE caused the secrets of the third degree to be lost. Hence H... m alone possessed the secrets of a MASTER Mason.

See again the opening address at an Installation.

"It has been the custom . . . . . to select . . . . . an experienced CRAFTSMAN to PRESIDE over them."

Hence in the foregoing "oration" this idea has been preserved, and the career of an ordinary Masonic Brother regarded as theoretically consummated when he has reached the S.W.'s chair, his "Mastership" thus forming his introduction to "higher Service."