

Paper to be given at the regular meeting of Godson Lodge
No. 2385 on Past Masters' night Wednesday 23rd November 1932.

preparation of materials for and the actual building of
Introduction.

As preceptor of the L.O.I. I invite members to ask
questions, promising them that if any question cannot be
answered off hand and with certainty, the matter shall be
looked up promptly and dealt with at our next meeting.

On Wednesday 12th October this year, I was asked why
the V.S.L. is opened at the II Chronicles, chapter 6.

That floored me; but it also served as a reminder that long
ago I also wanted to know, and that subsequently the same
thought had arisen more than once. The point was looked
up that same evening and later on was submitted to the
W.M. who was good enough to ask me to deal with it at
this meeting.

Although fitting that the chaplain of the lodge should
be called on to handle the matter, yet I feel that it is
a great honor to be allowed to address the brethren in
this way. A minister of religion, acting as chaplain,
would be much better qualified; but let me do my best to
put before you a few thoughts, on which most of you will
build up for yourselves a structure that will be useful
and fitting to your own personal needs.

I cannot exhaust the possibilities of the subject in
one evening. If you find the matter of general interest,
and desire that I should pursue it, let me know, and with
the consent of the W.M. I will endeavour to go further on
somewhat similar lines.

*Confidential
rough draft only
C. J. Barlow
18 Nov. 1932.*

Copyright Worcester-shire Masonic
Library and Museum Trust

It will be found that the chapters preceding the one in which we are interested, deal in much detail with the preparation of materials for and the actual building of Solomon's temple. The sixth chapter contains a reference to the opening ceremony and in particular records the prayer of King Solomon. That prayer is as useful to us to-day as it was on that historical occasion, and no doubt you will agree that no more beautiful and appropriate portion of Holy Writ could have been selected by our ancient brethren for exposure on the Master's pedestal during the time that our lodge is open, and in particular, while we are engaged in any one of our three ceremonies. In our first are we not "laying foundations and raising a superstructure" which we trust will be perfect in its parts and honorable to the builder? And, at other times, do we not seek to embellish the work by examples of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

^x We are dealing with human material - some of it, perhaps rather frail - but it is human - and, in our very humble way we ask a blessing on our work, just as King Solomon of old, amid surroundings of unexcelled beauty, riches, and dignity, kneeling before the Lord, all the people standing, gave voice to the words of wisdom, to which I will now ask you to give your attention.

*Jews.
Square
level
plumbline*

After Before I read chapter 6 it will be helpful to you to get the sequence of events if I mention the fact that in chapter 5 there is recorded the installation of the ark of the covenant by the priests and levites. The ark of the covenant was of course the most sacred possession of the children of Israel, and before the completion of the temple it could not be removed from its existing position, nor could it find a place in the new building. Following this installation of the ark of the covenant we come to verses 13 and 14, which conclude chapter 5, and I will read these so that we may have a fuller understanding of the opening verses of chapter 6, and in particular so that you may connect the reference to the clouds which filled the Holy place, with the subsequent reference of King Solomon to the thick darkness in which the Lord said he would dwell. I therefore commence to read at verse 13 of chapter 5. (Then follows the reading)

13mins.

5mins.

principles

standard.

After the reading. own mottoes. Some have

I am quite sure, that you will agree with me as to the impossibility of dealing anything like exhaustively with the subject this evening. There are in fact three questions and not one that merit our immediate attention, and in order these are -

1. Why do we have the V.S.L. in our lodges ?
2. Why is it opened while the lodge is engaged in Masonic work ?
3. Why do we expose the sixth chapter of the second book of Chronicles ?

Dealing with these questions in this order, we shall first admit that there can be no better evidence of our full acknowledgment of the Most High than by the adoption of the V.S.L. as our first great light or standard. We all remember the first question put to us after the invocation (in all cases of difficulty and danger etc.). In the absence of a satisfactory declaration of our faith the ceremony could not proceed. On nothing more sacred and better known to us could we be obligated, and in the charge we are recommended to study the V.S.L. as a guide to our faith. Further than that, we shall not forget the admonition of the J.W. when he charged us "to regard it as the unerring standard of truth and justice and to regulate your actions by the divine prospects it contains. Therein you will be taught the important duties you owe to God, to your neighbour, and to yourself". The V.S.L. temple, cutting, quarrying, collecting, and preparing is as much our standard as the Union Jack is the British standard.

Many of us have our own mottoes. Some have coats of arms, flags, or banners. In business we have our trade marks which in a sense are our standards there. It may not be inappropriate if I mention the motto of Rotary which is "Service - not self". Similarly, it will not be inappropriate to mention our own Godson banner. When we forgather to Provincial Grand Lodge each individual lodge carries its banner, but we then all come under the standard of Provincial Grand Lodge. So far as the V.S.L. is concerned we could probably say that it is the universal standard acknowledged by all.

We then come to the second question as to the book being opened. That of course is to indicate use. Quite apart from the fact that all our obligations are taken upon it, the open book should remind us that our own actions ought to be open and above board. It is closed at the conclusion of the work to protect its contents. In the same manner, regimental colours are safely encased and closely guarded until the time arrives for opening on ceremonial parades. The Royal standard is unfurled when the King is in residence or when he is upon any vessel. It is therefore appropriate that the V.S.L. should be opened while we are at business.

The third question is the one directed to me. In the earlier chapters of the second book of Chronicles will be found many details relating to the planning of the temple, cutting, quarrying, collecting, and preparing materials, and finally to the actual work of construction.

It will be seen that these may be said to correspond with the preparatory and building up periods of the physical man through the stages of childhood, adolescence and youth. We therefore ^{arrive} have on the one hand ^{at} the temple structure, and on the other hand the man of the full age of 21 years.

Chapter 6 is our next stage. The temple having been completed, the time comes for consecration and dedication to divine service or use. The ^{parts} of the temple which is the ark of the covenant is installed prior to this dedication. In the same way with the completed man, he is first prepared in his heart and made ready to enter masonry. His initiation may be said to be a consecration and dedication - a rebirth to new service or use.

Both the temple and the man, as regards the physical structure, are now to be built up spiritually. In the temple itself there are beautiful rituals and sacrifices. In the same manner it may be said that our rituals are equally beautiful. All these rituals, as in the days of old no less than at the present time, appeal to and impress ^{the heart.} It ^{should} does not end there however and our duty is to absorb the truths that are taught in the ritual and to make those truths form part of our every day life. It is useless if we fail to apply our knowledge, and consequently it is only the life of good works that will count in the building up of our life both here and hereafter.

Temp, Adolescence,
Temple.
Child, youth, man

Copyright Worcester-shire Museum Trust

In conclusion may I remind you that we perpetuate at the termination of our gatherings one of the petitions included in the prayer of King Solomon as recorded by this sixth chapter. Solomon ^{asks} ~~argues~~ that when a man who has been carried away captive to another country prays towards Jerusalem, the Lord will grant him a safe return. In this connection we shall all remember the Tyler's toast.

14mins

	<u>minutes.</u>
Introduction	5
Reading	13
Conclusion	14
	<hr/>
	32
	<hr/> <hr/>

Copyright Worcestershire Masonic Library and Museum Trust