

30th April, 1935.

A few thoughts for the initiate.

Your W.M. has asked me to put before you a simple paper, suitable for an E.A., and as the ceremony this evening was that of initiation, it seems to me to be most appropriate. Actually, I am glad not to have been asked to deal with something more advanced, because, in that event, I could have disappointed you more easily.

This night ought to be devoted to the initiate. He needs our helping hand. Having but just emerged from a state of darkness, he is not yet accustomed to the light which shines around. Consequently, my remarks in the main will be addressed to him, and I feel that you will not object.

Bro. initiate. This day you have joined not merely a lodge of freemasons, but a universal brotherhood. Details of the ancient ceremony will come back to you in the course of days, weeks, months, and even years; but it may be many years before you can appreciate to the full all the whys and wherefores.

If it will not tend to discourage you, consider the remarkably slow but sure and positive growth of stalactite and stalagmite until these unite and become one perfect pillar, ever increasing. The necessary materials are close at hand to complete the job, but the water (like truth) slowly works its ways from above, carrying with it the essentials which in course of many years are deposited



on the floor as stalagmite, and are gradually built up to meet the descending stalactite. It is a wonderful example of here a little and there a little. You, on the ground floor of the earth, will receive the truth gradually, almost imperceptibly; and because it reaches you from above, and is ever descending, and you are in a receptive state, the time will arrive, either here or hereafter, when the perfect union will be accomplished.

Expressed in another way, you will be asking questions, searching for explanations, and may be obtaining apparently contradictory replies, which again will lead you to ask still further questions. The truth, and various shades of the truth, will be absorbed. How can it be otherwise if we remember that not two things in nature are exactly alike---not even two leaves on the same tree. Each one of us has a slightly different viewpoint, but being broad-minded, we can appreciate the other man's views also. In this connection, may I direct your attention to a plain design, a very ancient one, adopted by freemasons, and appealing upon our first T.B.? It is a circle with a central point. Originally, probably in pre-historic days, the plain circle was made to represent both the sun and the deity. As you know, it is a line without beginning or end, and as such is an emblem of eternity; and was regarded as a type, form, or symbol of GOD, who is without beginning of days or end of years. Your reception tonight into our living circle is bound to make a lasting impression on your mind.



At a later date the central point was added; and the circle and point were said to represent the deity.

If we assume for the moment that the point represents truth, we can see that such truth can be viewed from every position along the circumference of the circle. Because our view is from the north, we may see something apparently different from our brother in the south; but the truth itself will always remain the same. In course of time we may be able to traverse the circle, and thus obtain more complete knowledge and understanding of that which remains unchanging and unalterable.

There are both natural and symbolic reasons for your being h.w'd. Until you had answered certain questions, and until you had taken your obligation, it was both unwise and improper that you should see anything at all of our ancient rites or the layout of our lodge. Then again, as to your real inner self, you were to be reborn. Just as your natural birth was in nakedness and from darkness to light, so was your re-birth from nakedness of knowledge of freemasonry, and from the darkness of such ignorance, to the light and knowledge of our order.

You were first prepared in your heart to join us, and this may be likened to natural conception. You underwent certain other preparations before your spiritual knocks upon our door were allowed to become physical knocks, and then answers to certain questions proving satisfactory, you were admitted, blind, poor, and penniless, in every sense, naked



blank (in a state of darkness) until we say that we can see. There we have the darkness of the north and the light from the east. Facts "dawn" upon us---and the dawn is from the east. Speaking of certain work accomplished, we sometimes say that we have borne the heat and burden of the day---typified by the sun at its meridian---the south. And when also speaking of the passing hence of a person, or of the failure of a job, we say that so-and-so, or the work, has gone west. Of course you will not overlook the fact that there is the return of the sun and of the spirit.

You will sometimes recall your cautious and perhaps awkward steps when you made your way to the east; (we know that our physical birth occurred in painful and awful spasms) and you will always have in mind the sign given to you in connection with your obligation: but you will never forget the moment when the blessing of light was restored to you. Material light must have been very welcome; but equally important, perhaps more important, in many senses, were the three great though emblematical lights in freemasonry---the V.S.L., the S. and the C's, which first greeted you, and to which your attention was immediately directed.

You may have observed that the VSL lay open at the 6th chapter of the second book of Chronicles. It is so directed in the rubric to our ritual, of which in due course you will receive a copy, that the VSL shall be opened at the opening of the lodge, closed when the lodge is closed,



and when open shall disclose the chapter I have mentioned. There are reasons for all these directions, and these may be summarised briefly thus:-

1. We have the VSL in our lodges as a sign that we acknowledge it to be the inspired word, the light and guide of life, the standard of right for all men.
2. We open the book to indicate use. We not only possess the law in our mind or memory, but we use it in our life.
3. We open the VSL at the place indicated because here we find a record of the completed temple being dedicated to the glory of GOD and for the service of men; while in our lodges we dedicate ourselves to the service of GOD and our fellow men.

And the moral is briefly:-

First---acknowledge VSL.

Second---use VSL.

Third---dedicate self to service.

Personally, I would advocate that the VSL be read aloud in lodge, commencing with chapter 5 and closing with the last verse of chapter 6---that is to say, that both chapters be read in their entirety. May I recommend you to read those two chapters for yourself tonight, having in mind the dedication of your own self to the brotherhood? You will have no regrets. Briefly, it is the story of the dedication of the temple at Jerusalem by King Solomon, and includes his beautiful prayer not only for those who walk uprightly, but also for those who, after having left the straight path, look once more towards Jerusalem---in other words those who repent and seek to return once again.

Having dedicated yourself this day to a fresh life



of service, you will find the chapters wonderfully applicable to your own position, and will gain both comfort and guidance from them. In yourself has been laid the foundation of a temple which you yourself have to build, and according as you build so will masonry gain or lose lustre in the eyes of your brethren in particular and of the world in general. We trust you---we undertake to help you---but the duty is yours to maintain our ancient and high traditions, and to help those who come after you. For all this you will need preparation.

Your attention has been directed to the three great lights in freemasonry---the VSL, the S, and the C's; and to the three lesser lights placed east, south, and west---the WM and his two W's, representing the sun to rule the day, the moon to govern the night, and the M. to rule and direct his lodge. You have also been presented with three working tools, the 24" gauge, the common gavel, and the chisel, and these were moralised on for your guidance. But the great charter given to you as a charge by the JW embodies the whole of the three foregoing trinities, and directs you as to your duty to GOD, to your neighbour, and to yourself. Please do not delay to make that charter your very own---to know it fully word by word, and to understand all that it implies. Work to it, and you cannot be wrong. In it you are exhorted to study the VSL, from which you will learn your duties---to walk uprightly, to live on the square with your neighbour, and to keep yourself in due bounds as



indicated by the compasses. One leg of the compasses must remain on the centre point---but the other leg will make the larger or the smaller circle, as your growth expands or otherwise.

The charge is an epitome of many charges discovered over a lengthy period of years, and the oldest in existence, known as the "Regius" is preserved in the British Museum, and is dated 1399. The "Matthew Cooke" dated 1450 is also there. The earliest held by our Grand Lodge is dated 1583. Apparently, in ancient times, each lodge had a charge, and there were scarcely two of them alike. In the year 1722, the then Grand Master of England ordered as many as were then to be found to be collated and modified and prefixed to the book of constitutions. There the charge remains to this day.

The first portion is an introduction, and deals with the estimation in which the craft is held.

The second portion is the most important, as it details our duties as masons. In the first place, we are to study the VSI, because therein we are taught our duty to GOD, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. Get these three points definitely fixed in the mind, and live and act accordingly, and there is little else to trouble about, because every remaining injunction is well covered by closely observing this three-fold duty.

Next, we are enjoined as to our civil and social duties. Then as to secrecy, fidelity, and obedience.



Finally, we receive general recommendations as to our further studies, masonic and non-masonic.

You have both seen and heard much tonight that is quite new to you; and in due course there will be much more to interest you on similar lines. So far, you are an E.L. and I am sure that you can appreciate the wonderment, possibly the bewilderment, of any apprentice entering upon his new duties on the first day of his employment. Small or great items may have impressed you in the course of the evening; but let me ask you once more to keep before your mind the importance of the charge, to learn by heart every word of it, and to follow faithfully the injunction to contemplate on the VSL.

WM. I am fully conscious of the fact that my paper is put together very crudely, that much has been omitted, that the sequence is far from being perfect, and that my language is not easy; but I know that you can piece out my imperfections with your thoughts. My hope is that there may be some little good that will stick, and that a chance thought here or there may throw fresh light upon an old subject, even for some of the M.M's present.