



The Virtual Mason

WBro Daniel Boyco, PM, Exemplar Lodge No 175

It is a long and colourful account that describes the history of the Masonic Order. Traced back centuries to the stone quarries and towering palisades of the temples and cathedrals of early Europe, operative masons crisscrossed the countryside to ply their trade at the pleasure of monarchs and Popes. Conventional wisdom suggests that the operative art was the foundation for our speculative science. As we deliberate upon the particulars of that quiet evolution — from the rough hands and worn leathern apron of the operative mason of the Renaissance Period, to the bright, glittering lambskin and white-gloved hands of today's speculative Mason — it's difficult to know precisely when, where or how one ended and the other began. While wise men of the Craft ponder those details, a second more strident evolution is taking place that could pull the institution in an entirely unexpected direction. With the whole wired world at our fingertips, we have

access to an interminable supply of online Masonic information that can satisfy the most ardent researcher. This deserves our attention simply because it can all be done without entering a lodge room or feeling the grip of a Brother's hand.

Enter the virtual Mason.

For centuries the secrets of our Order have been communicated from Brother to Brother through rites performed in our temples. The lessons we learned we learned together, instilling in us the true meaning of brotherly love. Indeed, the most important aspect of the Masonic journey was that we never travelled alone. Although our mysteries can now be learned by anyone with a computer and a connection, the information is without context and limited to the ideas of others who may or may not be trustworthy sources. Such research extinguishes any possibility for personal discovery, a principle upon which our institution is founded.

Operative masons built stone edifices. Speculative Masons build in the spiritual realm. Swept away in a torrent of digital information where knowledge and engagement are distinct constituents, the virtual Mason settles for Masonic data at the expense of the Masonic experience. The virtual Mason is in essence a Mason, though not in fact.

We must therefore endeavour to support our Brethren, teach what it means to be a Freemason, and work hard to maintain a positive environment in our lodge rooms. Should we fail, we risk losing members who would rather seek comfort and convenience alone in front of a computer than share time with their Brethren at Lodge.

Freemasons are adept at reaching back in time to draw to the present that which helps us to understand our history. The real mystery; however, is not so much our past as it is our future. The way ahead is a web of countless passages, some of which could send the Brotherhood in a direction never anticipated.

Overtures of Spring

MWBro Rev William L. Wright, Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, *The Bulletin* 6:18, April 1956

With the coming of spring, and evidences of renewed life about us, a freshness of approach to the main challenge of Freemasonry is timely. Easter, with all its hopeful fulfillments in the moral and spiritual world, comes to remind us of a better way for mankind in the midst of an age of materialism.

Unfortunately, the emphasis of our lives tends to be on the material side. We have been thrilled and stimulated by the great technical advances that mankind has made during our generation. At no time in the history of the human race has material progress been so rapid. The ingenuity and inventiveness of man has never before blossomed so luxuriantly. It is as if, suddenly, all the accumulated knowledge of the centuries has been crystallised into modern mechanical devices which seem to give us new possibilities for a better life.

It is no wonder that many should

concentrate upon these new devices which are the outward expression of our modern industrial and scientific world. But when man has shown himself so intelligent, and so capable of harnessing natural forces, it may seem for him unnecessary to aspire towards those Masonic ideals which are to be found in the Volume of the Sacred Law, and which are manifested in a triumphant and victorious Divine Being. We have become too self-reliant and too much centred upon our own ingenuity. We have excelled on the material side, but not on the moral side.

It is this neglect of moral and spiritual values which has brought to the world anxiety and fear. This is the concern of each of us because, upon our power to control the material forces, will depend our happiness and our future welfare. Upon the Altar of every Masonic Lodge, supporting the Square and Compasses,

lies the Holy Bible. The old, familiar book, so beloved by so many generations, contains those moral values which must control our material life. If ever we are in doubt as to how we should act in particular circumstances — personal, social, political, or economic — we can find the answer reflected in that Great Light of Freemasonry. Its teachings break forth in a radiant glory carrying renewed hope to the discouraged and frustrated.

Just as nature at this season unfolds the true beauty of running streams, the sound of the waterfall, and the gradual appearance of delicate, charming spring flowers, so does the Volume of the Sacred Law inspire us to purer and nobler living. May faith and power be given to all of us to achieve a fuller measure of those lofty ideals of our fraternity which will unfailingly give us light, and life, and a deep abiding joy!

Initiation

Masonry in Manitoba, The Grand Lodge of Manitoba, Autumn 2011

Initiation is the process by which an individual is separated from the masses, becoming a part of a select group to whom more critical information is made available. This is the nature of the study conducted by a serious student of Freemasonry.

There are many clues concealed within the ritual, clues that many of us never even look for. Some even deny that there is more to Freemasonry than the story relating to the building of the Temple at Jerusalem. To them it is merely a Fraternity whose aim is to make good men better and to assist our widows and orphans, nothing more.

As every action in the Entered Apprentice Degree begins with the left hand, the actions obviously are intended to influence the right — the feminine or the emotional — hemisphere of our brain. Initiation is intended to make a significant emotional impact upon the candidate, to change his life and the way he thinks about himself and his relationship with his Creator. Our ritual

is designed to generate emotions such as feelings of tranquility, ecstasy, security and awe. On rare occasions, and given a proper set of circumstances, one might even describe his mental state as one of spiritual transcendence.

Let's examine the words of W.L. Wilmshurst, who was a mystic with a practical knowledge and a profound understanding of the various religions of the world. In his book *The Meaning of Masonry* he offers his profound thoughts about our Craft [pp 84–86]:

...Masonry offers to those capable of appreciating it a working philosophy and a practical rule of life. It discloses to us the scheme of the universe. It indicates our place, our purpose and our destiny in that universe... Let us be careful not to cheapen the Order by failing to realize its meaning and by admitting to its ranks those who are unready or unfitted to understand its import... look to find in it a living philosophy, a vital guide upon those matters which of all others are the most sacred and the most urgent to our ultimate well-being. Realize that its secrets which are "many and invaluable" are not upon the surface; that they are not those of the tongue, but of the heart; and that its mysteries are those eternal ones that treat the spirit rather than of the body of man... For whosoever is carefully and deliberately "squaring his stone" is fitting himself for the place in the "intended structure"... which, though erected by ourselves, one day will become manifest of our clearer vision and will appear "more like the work of the Great Architect of the Universe than that of human hands."

Perhaps we can whet your appetite for a search beyond the obvious! The initial prayer, offered on behalf of the candidate kneeling in the West, offers an exciting insight:

Endue him with a competency of Thy



A First Degree Tracing Board, based on one drawn by J. Harris ca. 1823 for the Emulation ritual, a version of which is in widespread use.

Divine Wisdom, that assisted by our Masonic art he may better display the beauty of true godliness.

To understand how a mere mortal could be enabled to display the beauty of godliness we have to look back in history to the writings of Hermes Trismegistus, initially thought to be a contemporary of Moses. However, Hermes' book *The Corpus Hermeticum* is now considered by most historians to have been written late in the second century. Hermes Trismegistus is probably a fictional character, thought perhaps to be the most recent reincarnation of Thoth of Egypt and the Hermes of Greek mythology. This book however has had a tremendous impact upon Western esotericism and our understanding of the development of our culture. A short quote from that publication may give us an understanding as to why the "Moderns" chose this particular wording for that prayer.



Walter Leslie Wilmshurst (1867–1939) was an English author and Freemason.

Provided to Freemasons of Alberta and the Northwest Territories west of the 4th Meridian who are members of

The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M.

330 – 12 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2R 0H2
Tel 403-262-1140 — Fax 403-290-0671
www.freemasons.ab.ca

Grand Master	MWBro Peter Dunlop
Deputy Grand Master	RWBro David Roth
Senior Grand Warden	RWBro John Cameron
Junior Grand Warden	RWBro John Slade
Grand Secretary	RWBro Jerry W. Kopp



Published each month except July and August by
The Grand Lodge of Alberta, A.F. & A.M.

Editor: RWBro George Tapley

339 Whitefield Dr NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 5S2

Tel 403-280-6776 — Fax 403-290-0671

e-mail: editor@freemasons.ab.ca

The Committee on the Grand Lodge Bulletin

RWBro George Tapley (Chairman);
MWBro Robert E. Juthner, Editor emeritus;
WBro Garth Cochran; WBro Loren Kline;
Bro Trevor Morris; Ex Officio: Grand Master,
Deputy Grand Master & Grand Secretary
Annual subscription rate for non-members of the GLA is C\$10.00 plus mailing costs. Republication rights are granted to other Masonic Jurisdictions, but acknowledgement of the source is requested. The Editor reserves the right to accept, reject and re-write material submitted for publication. Deadline for copy is the 1st day of the month, two months prior to the month of issue.

If you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot comprehend God. Leap clear of all that is corporeal and make your self grow to a life expanse with that greatness which is beyond all measure; rise up above all time and become eternal... deem that you too are immortal and that you are able to grasp all things in your thought.

We learn that our mysteries are concealed by symbols and revealed in allegory. Therefore within the ritual we need search not for the obvious but a hidden, concealed or implied connection to the story we need to discover. The method by which we approach the altar is a multiplication of the numbers of Pythagoras' famous right angled triangle. Of course Pythagoras is an important figure in Freemasonry, as his triangle forms the basis of the Past Master's Jewel. His discoveries

in mathematics and geometry would have been tremendously important to those who plied the operative trade. As speculative Freemasons, perhaps we should be more interested in his theory of the transmigration of the soul which, of course, implies that within our bodies there is a spark of divinity which is immortal. This concept greatly influenced the teachings of the great Plato whose work continues to influence man's understanding of his spiritual nature, even today.

Certainly there are many more clues, but in keeping with tradition we will explore only three. Charity is mentioned in several different places, but the lesson taught at the North East angle of the Lodge — often simply referred to as the Charity Lecture — is one of the more powerful. It begins by having the candidate symbolically represent

the foundation or cornerstone of the new Temple that he discovers he is beginning to build. Sooner or later he discovers that it will be patterned after the famous one built in Jerusalem by the wise King Solomon. Solomon's Temple had one main purpose and that was to be the earthly dwelling place for their God, Yahweh. The temple we all have supposedly begun to build has a similar role: to be the earthly dwelling place to house our Great Architect of the Universe, by whatever name we choose to use to identify Him or Her, depending upon our individual belief. Again we see the concept of a divine spark existing within our fragile tabernacles of clay.

Looking at the Entered Apprentice Degree along these concepts will prepare you for deeper and more profound lessons in the degrees to follow.

The Apprentice's Tools

Within the symbolism of the working tools of the Entered Apprentice lies the intellectual and spiritual foundation of our Craft.

WBro R. Whiteley, *Freemason*, The United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory, Summer 2011

The symbolism of these tools has evolved in ages past when, in the absence of written language, lessons were taught and transferred by relating important messages to the elementary tools used in everyday life. The 24-inch gauge, the common gavel and chisel were such tools from which teachings of conduct and morality are believed to have evolved.

The essential truth and relevance of these lessons has persisted over time and, in recent centuries, become an integral part of the fabric of our Masonic ritual.

The 24-inch gauge was the earliest instrument of measurement from which both distance and time were determined — the 12 hours of the day and the 12 hours of the night. The lesson from this division of time was that it must not be wasted, it cannot be evaded and it must be used to best advantage in achieving the ultimate purposes of life. Thus the 24-inch gauge symbolises the objective use of our private time and how we appropriate and apportion time between our daily duties of work, prayer, meditation and rest.

The 24-inch gauge exemplifies our threefold duties — to God, to our neighbours and ourselves — which are incumbent upon every Brother

every day. It allocates no definite apportionment of time, but tells us in clear language how each day should be occupied.

It exhorts us to go forth in prayer to our labour and service until evening. Prayer is a matter of attitude, and the man "who in times of difficulty and danger puts his hand into the hand of God" enunciates his prayer of faith.

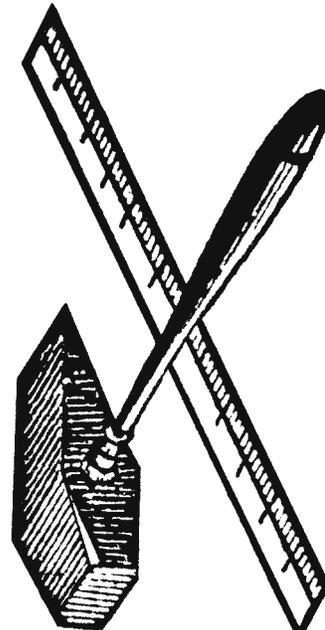
The common gavel is the simplest of all tools, the origin of which goes back to primitive man, evidence of which is found in virtually all parts of the world. The wedge shape of the gavel is the first principle of mechanics and is even now an essential component of even the most complicated modern machinery. It is an essential tool in common use in modern life.

Symbolically, it represents the force of conscience. It dictates

our individual responsibility for our actions, the appropriate line of action to be done or not, the choice of right or wrong and that the onus of our decisions as individuals clearly rests with us.

Conscience can be said to assume a judicial attitude which commands when our actions are right but condemns when our actions are wrong. We are endowed with the privilege of self-government and self-determination. Conscience should also regulate our conduct with regard to our neighbours in civil, social and other functions of modern life. Conscience is purely moral; it is the knowledge of one's actions and knowing what is right.

In our ritual we are admonished to examine and respect our character. It teaches us to "correct the errors and irregularities of our temper, to curb the aspirations of unbridled ambition,



Entered Apprentice Working Tools from Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma*.

to moderate the outbursts of wrath (or anger) and repress the malignancy of envy, to condemn the excrescences of vice." Unbecoming thoughts and actions unworthy of a Freemason must be cast aside as worthless to avoid offending the Great Architect.

The chisel differs from the 24-inch gauge and the common mallet in two essential respects. Firstly, its efficiency as a tool is not contained within itself. It requires an independent force — a heavy gavel — to be used successfully.

Secondly, it must be maintained sharp to be an efficient tool. It demands significant but subtle skill on the part of the Craftsman to enable him to finish and polish his work. It symbolises the role of education as a vital and necessary

tool for properly training and equipping a man as a useful productive member of society.

Our ritual explicitly defines that the chisel represents the advantages of discipline and education, which further develops the intellectual potential of each person into a civilised and enlightened being capable of appreciating and performing our duty to man and to God.

In practical terms, the symbolic intention of the chisel is to motivate each new candidate to devote himself to the continual process of learning, to know, to understand and to appreciate the many and complex elements that constitute modern society; in particular the contemporary environment in

which he lives and is now obligated to make a useful contribution. This includes the progressive acquisition of Masonic knowledge through learning and appreciating our brilliant ritual and by readings from the literature on Freemasonry.

Together, the symbolic teachings of these three simple elementary tools unquestionably represents the most relevant and pertinent foundation for teaching civilised and thoughtful conduct in an educated society. No other philosophy or moral doctrine is more expressive or relevant in its objective of promoting those human values that give meaning and expression to the nobler and more democratic values of life.

Symbolism of the Ladder

Bro Leon Zeldis, *The Short Talk Bulletin*, The Masonic Service Association of North America, Vol. 87 No. 9, September 2009

The ladder is a symbol that appears frequently in religious and esoteric contexts since ancient times. It features prominently in the Tracing Board of the First Degree (Jacob's ladder), and it is also an important symbol both in the Second Degree (the spiral staircase) and in the Thirtieth Degree of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Knight Kadosh, (the two-sided ladder).

From remote antiquity, the ladder was taken as a paradigm of spiritual ascent. In a bas-relief from the 3rd Dynasty of Ur, dated ca. 2700–2600 BCE, there appears a seven-rung ladder "suggesting initiation leading from lower to higher realms of consciousness; above the initiate is the conjunction of a crescent moon and sun, symbolizing the union of masculine and feminine principles as the central meaning of initiation."

We find here the core of an explanation for the use of the ladder as a symbol in the First Degree of Freemasonry, in preference to others.

The source of the connection made in Freemasonry between the ladder and the moral virtues can be traced back to the Greek philosophers:

Man's arduous ascent to God is represented by a ladder. John Klimakos (died ca. 600 and whose name means John of the Ladder) laid the foundation for this graduated conception, rooted in Neo-Platonism. The starting point of this "ascent to Paradise" is Jacob's dream.

Man's task is... to overcome his sinful desires, then to achieve the

virtues, if he wishes to attain in the end the topmost rung and there join the Pauline trinity of virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity.

The theme of a spiritual ladder is closely connected with the idea of human perfectibility, best expressed in Pico della Mirandola's *Oratio de Ominis Dignitate* (1486), where Pico imagines the voice of God saying:

We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lowest forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.

In other words, the ascending and descending angels on Jacob's ladder are representations of the soul's capacity to rise or fall along the Chain of Being. As Jean Farre explains:

...the ladder is a bridge between earth and heaven; it enables man to rise in the realm of knowledge and access the sacred... Further, the ladder expresses man's search in his aspiration for progress. In this case, the movement is ascending. However, the movement can also be descending. Man starts then looking for his deep roots, his unconscious, and even hidden knowledge. We could speak here of a descent to

the underworld, in order to unveil all secrets, the mysteries that are in man. The ladder then reaches down to the bowels of the earth.

As explained by Wells:

*The images of ladder, scale and chain are found universally in medieval and Renaissance art, because the cosmos was conceived as a series of interlocking hierarchies. The concept of "the Great Chain of Being" expresses the order and harmony of the cosmos. This image was conflated with two others: the Golden Chain of Zeus (*Illiad*, VIII, 19-27) and Jacob's Ladder.*

The visionary ladder upon which the sleeping Jacob sees angels ascending and descending was widely interpreted as a symbol of cosmic harmony... Peter Sterry wrote in 1675: "All ranks and degrees of Being so become, like the mystical steps in the scale of Divine Harmony and Proportions, Jacob's Ladder."

Since we have been dealing with Jacob's Ladder and its spiritual connections, it would be convenient to go back to the Biblical origin of this image. Here is a retelling of the pertinent passages:

Jacob leaves Beersheba to go to Haran. The sun sets while he is on the way, so he decides to spend the night at a certain place, takes a stone and uses it as a pillow. During his sleep, he dreams that he sees a stairway or ladder — the Hebrew word accepts both translations — resting on the earth

and reaching heaven, and angels of God ascending and descending on it. On top is God, telling Jacob that He is the Lord, God of his father Abraham and God of Isaac. God further promises Jacob to give him and his descendants the land on which he is lying, and makes other generous promises. (Genesis 28:10–13). The next morning, Jacob is struck with awe at what he had experienced, and concludes the place is holy: “the house of God, the gate of heaven.” He takes the stone he had used as a pillow, sets it up as a pillar and pours oil on top, that is, makes it into an altar. And the Bible states that Jacob called the place Bethel (“House of God”), “though the city used to be called Luz.”

“Luz” in all Latin-derived languages has the meaning of “light.” Although the Hebrew name means “almond” or “hazel-nut,” as a verb it means “to turn aside, to depart,” and also “to speak evil, to slander.” This strange passage in the Biblical text can then be explained as a way of saying that Jacob decides to turn aside from evil thoughts and take the first steps of ascent through the “Gate of Heaven.”

An interesting explanation of the place of Jacob’s Ladder in Masonic symbolism was advanced by Bro Sir John Cockburn:

The ladder has ever been a prominent Symbol in Masonry. It is drawn on the Tracing Boards and, as the Ladder of Perfection, it is a

conspicuous object in the higher degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite. From time immemorial it has been employed as the symbol of progressive ascent on the Intellectual, Moral and Spiritual planes. The number of steps varies from three upwards. The ladder reaches from Earth to Heaven and it is thus a type of the Union of the Terrestrial and Celestial Kingdoms, and of the atonement between God and man, which throughout the ages has been the constant theme of the Mysteries, as well as of Philosophy and Religion.

Masonic historians, however, seem to agree that Jacob’s Ladder is of relatively recent appearance as a Masonic symbol. No mention of it can be found in the oldest documentary evidence relating to our Craft. Bro Harry Carr has written that he believes Jacob’s Ladder to be “of mid or late eighteenth century introduction, because there is no trace of it in the earlier rituals,” without advancing any more precise date. Coil’s *Masonic Encyclopedia* proposes a date “as late as the early nineteenth century.”

The great Masonic scholar Mackey declares that:

In the Ancient Craft degrees of the York Rite, Jacob’s Ladder was not an original symbol. It is said to have been introduced by Dunckerley when he reformed the lectures. This is confirmed by the fact that it is not mentioned in any of the early rituals

of the eighteenth century, nor by Hutchins... Its first appearance is in a tracing board on which the date of 1776 is inscribed, which very well agrees with the date of Dunckerley’s improvements. In this Tracing Board, the ladder has but three rounds; a change from the old seven-stepped ladder of the mysteries; which, however, Preston corrected when he described it as having many rounds, but three principal ones.

In 1 Kings 6:8, we read: “The entrance to the middle chamber was on the south corner of the temple; a spiral stairway [in Hebrew: *belulim*] led up to the middle level and from there to the third.” The Masonic tradition is different in the various rituals. In Emulation, the Middle Chamber is the place where the Fellow Craft received their wages, while in the Scottish Rite tradition, the Middle Chamber is the meeting place of Master Masons. The circular stairway, however, supports both traditions.

We must come to the conclusion that the use of Jacob’s Ladder may have started around the middle of the eighteenth century, but its use did not become generalized until the beginning of the nineteenth century, more or less coinciding with the formative years of the Union (1813), at the time when the rituals used by both Grand Lodges were being compared and a unified ritual was being worked out.

Corn, Wine and Oil — Part 1

Short Talk Bulletin August, 1930, Masonic Service Association of North America

The wages which our ancient Brethren received for their labours in the building of King Solomon’s Temple are paid no more. In the Lodge we use them as symbols, save in the dedication, constitution and consecration of a new Lodge and in the laying of cornerstones, when once again the fruit of the land, the brew of the grape and the essence of the olive are poured to launch a new unit of brotherhood into the fellowship of Lodges or to begin a new structure dedicated to the public use.

Corn, wine and oil have been associated together from the earliest times. In Deuteronomy the “nation of fierce countenance” which is to destroy the people “shall not leave thee either corn, wine or oil.” In II Chronicles we read “the children of Israel brought in abundance the first fruits of corn, wine

and oil — Nehemiah tells of “a great chamber where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine and the oil — and later “then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, the new wine and the oil into the treasures.” There are other references in the Great Light to these particular forms of taxes, money and tithes for religious purposes, wealth and refreshment. In ancient days the grapes in the vineyard and olives in the grove and the grain of the field were not only wealth but the measure of trade. So many skins of wine, so many cruses of oil, so many bushels of corn were to them as are dollars and cents today. Thus our ancient Brethren received wages in corn, wine and oil as a practical matter; they were paid for their labours in the coin of the realm.

The oil pressed from the olive was as important to the Jews in Palestine as butter and other fats are among occidentals. Because it was so necessary, and hence so valuable, it became an important part of sacrificial rites. There is no point in the sacrifice which is only a form. To be effective it must offer before the Altar something of value; something the giving of which will testify to the love and veneration in which the sacrificer holds the Most High.

Oil was also used not only as a food but for lighting purposes; more within the house than in the open air, where torches were more effective. Oil was also an article of the bath. Mixed with perfume, it was used in the ceremonies of anointment and in preparation for ceremonial appearances. The “Precious ointment upon the head, which ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment” as the quotation has it in our Entered

Apprentice Degree, (and Nevada's Master Mason opening and closing) was doubtless made of olive oil, suitably mixed with such perfumes and spices as myrrh, cinnamon, galbanum and frankincense. Probably oil was also used as a surgical dressing. Nomadic peoples, subject to injuries, could hardly avoid knowledge of the value of soothing oil. With so many uses for oil, its production naturally was stimulated. Not only was the production of the olive grove a matter of wealth, but the nourishing and processing of the oil gave employment to many. Oil was obtained from the olive both by pressing — probably by a stone wheel revolving in or on a larger stone, mill or mortar — and also by a gentle pounding. This hand process produced a finer quality of oil. "And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." (Exodus 27: 20.)

The corn of the Bible is not the corn we know today. In many, if not the majority of the uses of the word, a more understandable translation would be simply "grain." The principal grains of the Old Testament days were barley and wheat. Corn represents not only both of

these, but all the grains which the Jews cultivated. Our modern corn, cultivated and cross-bred was, of course, unknown to the ancients, although it might be going too far to say they had no grain similar to the Indian maize from which our great corn crop has grown.

An ear of grain has been an emblem of plenty since the mists of antiquity which shroud the beginnings of mythology. Ceres, goddess of abundance, survives today in our cereals. The Greeks call her Demeter, a corruption of Gemeter, our mother earth. She wore a garland of grain and carried ears of grain in her hand.

The Hebrew *Shibboleth* means both an ear of corn and a flood of water. Both are symbols of abundance, plenty and wealth. American Masonic use of a sheaf of wheat in place of an ear of wheat — or any other grain such as corn — seems rather without point or authority. As for the substitution occasionally heard, of "water ford" for "water fall," we can only blame the corrupting influence of time and the ignorance of those who have permitted it, since a water "Ford" signifies a paucity, the absence of water, while a water "Fall" carries out both the translation of the word and the meaning of the ear of corn: plenty.

Scarcely less important to our ancient Brethren than their corn and oil, was the wine. Vineyards were highly esteemed both as wealth and as a comfort — the pleasant shade of the "vine and fig tree" was a part of ancient hospitality. Vineyards on mountain sides or hills were most carefully tended and protected against washing away by terraces and walls, as even today one may see the hillsides of the Rhine. Thorn hedges kept cattle from helping themselves to the grapes. The vineyardist frequently lived in a watch tower or hut on an elevation to keep sharp look-out that neither predatory man nor beast took his ripening wealth.

The feast of Booths, in the early fall, when the grapes were ripe, was a time of joy and happiness. "New Wine" — that is, the unfermented, just pressed-out juice of the grape — was drunk by all. Fermented wine was made by storing the juice of the grape in skins or bottles. Probably most of the early wine of Old Testament days was red, but later the white grape must have come into esteem — at least, it is the principal grape of production for that portion of the world today.

To be continued next month.

How Does Your Garden Grow?

In Freemasonry, We Find the Beauty of Life Itself

John L. Cooper III, Senior Grand Warden, *California Freemason*, Grand Lodge F&AM of California, December/January 2012

In some respects, Freemasonry is like a beautiful garden. A garden is a living entity that brings beauty to the eye of the beholder. Some gardens are formal, with flower beds laid out with regularity, and whose charm lies in the order and symmetry thus displayed. Some gardens are informal, looking as if God had cast seeds to the earth in random order, but whose composite beauty when in bloom defies description. Freemasonry is like such a garden — or rather, like a constellation of gardens, all presenting a different aspect to the eye of the beholder.

As with a formal garden, there are aspects of our Fraternity that we cherish which are formal in nature. Our degrees, conferred with exactness of word and ceremony, convey the timeless lessons that all Masons learn as they pass through them. Our meetings impose the formality of respect for the presiding officer, and through him, respect for all Brethren present. We have the ancient teachings of Freemasonry enshrined

in our lectures, which convey timeless truths to each generation.

But Freemasonry also shares the exuberance of the wilder garden, where colour and shape run riot. There is friendship, which knows no bounds of formality, but which spills over into a cascade of good deeds, done without hope of fee or reward. There is brotherly love, which constrains not only our relationships with one another, but inspires our commitment to our families, friends, and neighbours. It fills our idle hours with pleasure, and undergirds and supports our busier hours as wage earner, citizen, and perhaps, as husband and father. We find in Freemasonry a deep sense of the beauty of life itself, and our ancient and honourable institution becomes the source of great personal satisfaction as the years roll by.

To ask a Mason why he is a Mason is analogous to asking a gardener why he gardens. A gardener finds in his garden a sense of order and beauty, and an expectation of the unanticipated that

only the Master Gardener can bring into being. Similarly, a Mason finds in his Fraternity the peace and serenity of sincere friendship and brotherhood, a sense of order and harmony as set forth in the principles of Freemasonry, and the surprise of joy when Freemasonry opens to him a vista that he never knew existed. To explain why membership in this ancient brotherhood is so valuable to a Mason is easy. Just look around.

Grand Master's Itinerary March

- 7 Redwood Lodge No. 193, 50-Year Jewel Presentation; Highlands Masonic Hall; 19 30 h
- 17 Eastgate Lodge No. 192, Taste of the Orient
- 24 Al Amira Nile Installation of Officers, Edmonton Shrine Centre
- 30-31 All Canada Conference of Grand Lodges, Winnipeg