

LESSON OF THE KEYSTONE



One of the richest and most significant symbols in the Mark degree, and in Capitular Masonry, is the Keystone. Its lessons are many and applicable to some phases of life. Let us here deal with one aspect in particular and see how its teachings may affect not only our own thinking, but our attitude towards others.

Consider for a moment the rejection of the Keystone by the Overseers. A Craftsman presented for inspection a stone of "Singular Form and Beauty." No doubt he carried up this stone with great pride, feeling sure that in the noble and important work in which they were all engaged, would be received with acclaim, and would occupy a pre-eminent place in the glorious structure they were building.

True the Overseers did not immediately reject it. They passed it from one to the other to a final court of appeal - the Master Overseer. They agreed that it was of singular form and beauty. They consulted together; they admitted that they had no knowledge of its place or purpose; it was not according to the plans with which they were familiar, and therefore not accepted.

The manner of its rejection should, however, be noted. In the presence of, and in the face of him who had presented it with so much pride, it was declared useless, unfit for the building, and not just set aside. In the most humiliating manner, thrown among the rubbish of ill conceived, poorly executed and defective work. The stone was rejected, not for poor construction, (for did they not all three agree that it, the stone, was of singular form and beauty?), but because it did not conform.



We can draw lessons from both sides --- from the two forces represented on the one hand by the Craftsman, and on the other by the Overseers. The first is the progressive mind, the latter the conservative. Both elements are present in society; both are necessary, even although they are opposing forces, because, when kept in balance, true progress be attained.

Let us then, unlike the young and inexperienced craftsman, not attempt to present Utopian ideas and opinions that our fellow men are not ready to accept. Let us remember, worthwhile advances are painfully slow. Radical ideas forced on others of more conservative mind, lead only to discord and strife. Evolution and not revolution is the way of progress, and that caution and patience are necessary in order to receive the acceptance and endorsement of others. Let us not forget, that for the one stone of "singular form and beauty" which was rejected. There were thousands of others unworthy and valueless, which properly belonged to the rubbish pile of discarded things.

Are our ideas worthy and timely? Are they keystones that will ultimately be accepted and put to their proper use?

On the other hand let us not be ultraconservative like the overseers. They rejected the stone because it was of an unknown and peculiar shape. Let us keep an open mind in our daily life and do not reject things because they are peculiar, or unaccustomed, or unknown. Many of the great discoveries of life, of science, of religion, of philosophy, of industry, were first rejected. Then sought after eagerly and put to their proper use for the benefit of mankind.

Above all, be careful how we reject the thoughts, actions and discoveries of others. If we cannot accept, let us not judge harshly or condemn unjustly because we do not understand, or because they do not conform to our own preconceived ideas. Others have a right to their opinions and they may be as right as we are wrong. One day we may find generally accepted those things we so bitterly and hastily condemn. Let us not forget, "The stone the builder rejected is become the head of the corner."