

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
650 Fisgard Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1R6

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The following is the text of the opening address given at the Grand Masonic Day at Nanairno B.C. on May 2nd, 1987

**MASONIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH**

by RW Bro. J.E. Merrett

The presentations you will attend at this gathering may collectively be described as Masonic Education and Research and in this offering I trust I can briefly outline what the organizers hope will be your gain. Primarily their goal is to demonstrate that through guided research the study of Freemasonry is a factor in education and character development, and that each individual applying himself to this task cannot help but improve his understanding and observance of the moral precepts of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

Unfortunately on hearing the title "Masonic Education and Research" most of us are inclined to adopt the typical schoolboy reaction by objecting to concentrate on what we have preconceived as an uninteresting subject. The Education aspect might be acceptable provided not too much concentration was involved but the word Research conjures up a dull, monotonous search through the dust and cobwebs of antiquity. While such archival investigations have uncovered historical data of great interest it must be emphasized research does not restrict itself to a study of the past, but can be any endeavour to discover truths through a course of critical investigation.

Each of us, on being newly admitted into Freemasonry admitted to having a genuine desire for knowledge or for the Light of Knowledge and, particularly in the Emulation and Canadian Rituals, we were specifically instructed in the First Degree to direct our studies to the Moral Truths and Virtues contained in the Volume of the Sacred Law. Then, in the Second Degree we were instructed to make the Hidden Mysteries of Nature and Science our future study and were provided with a list of seven Liberal Arts and Sciences in which to commence our search. Finally, in the Third Degree we were directed to make the quest for the Knowledge of Ourselves our most important task. Unfortunately all too many of us have failed to observe these directives or have made only a casual attempt to perform them and thus still remain at the door of Freemasonry never using our research key to open it.

This enlightening asset we possess has been very well described by H. Flint in his paper, "Nature, Object, and Scope of Masonic Research" contained in Volume 10 of "British Masonic Miscellany", which I now quote:

"Masonic Research proper is not confined to the quest of relics of bygone generations. Its object is grander, its scope vastly wider than that. It takes cognizance of all matters comprehended under the heading of the 'Liberal Arts and Sciences.' It claims the freedom and the right to range through the wide fields spread out before the mind in the realms of Art, Algebra, Astronomy, Geology, Music, Logic and Rhetoric. It is the freedom to explore and make use of all sources of wisdom and avail itself of the benefits resulting therefrom as far as possible. The pursuit of truth and the acquisition of wisdom should be our common object and desire.

The cultivation of the reasoning faculties with which the Deity has endowed us is a matter of supreme importance, a duty incumbent on all; and Logic, which is intended to teach us the right use of reason should be studied by every Freemason who would avail himself of the great benefits resulting from

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the advice of King Solomon - 'to get wisdom above all other things' - to learn from the experience of our forefathers in the past, and make the best possible use of the present, ever shaping our course with an eye to the future. The ancients had a, saying which we would do well to bear constantly in mind - 'Veritas in puteo,' that is, 'Truth lies at the bottom of a well.' Philosophers, both ancient and modern, have repeatedly descended into that well or let down the golden vessels of their intellects, and brought forth hundreds, ay, thousands of truths from the hidden mysterious depths, which have been of incalculable service to mankind. Logic, or the art of reasoning, as I have said, has furnished a chain by which this work has been done and can be done. We can, if we will, follow their example by means of our intellectual faculties, still draw up from the dark mysterious well of truth, refreshing draughts of the crystal waters of wisdom, fed by the inexhaustible springs of God, and forever free to all alike." (Unquote)

I cannot think of a more appropriate conclusion to this presentation on Education and Research than to quote to you what I believe should be the goal of each of us so that we might fully appreciate the Wonderful Works of the Almighty. I now quote part of Tennyson's poem, "Ulysses":

"I am part of all that I have met  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrou'  
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use  
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains; but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
For some three suns to store and hoard myself  
And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."  
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