



The Overy Papers

Number 9 The Master Mason Certificate

Fraternal Greetings Brethren

I gave this presentation at Abbotsford Lodge #70 in 2013 at the request of Brother Tom Pinch when I presented him with his Master Mason Certificate. It was given first by RWBro. J.H. McKergow, in the late 1920's but is as relevant today as it was then although small changes have been made over the years to keep it up to date.

It gives me much pleasure to present to you with this certificate, which is granted to you by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of British Columbia and the Yukon of which the present Grand Master is Most Worshipful Bro. Donald E. Stutt.

This Certificate records that you have been regularly initiated, passed and raised in the three established degrees of freemasonry according to ancient custom and according to the Constitution of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge. You must realize that it is evidence of your position and rank as a Freemason and therefore is a special document of which you should take special care.

It is the visible bond between our Ancient Craft and yourself, for on the one hand it bears the Great Gold Seal of Grand Lodge and also the signature of the Grand Secretary, Right Worshipful Brother George Moore, to indicate on their part that you are entitled to the great and invaluable privileges of our Ancient Craft while you obey its edicts, rules and regulations.

On the other hand, it will, before this meeting is over bear your signature which will be placed in the space provided for the same on the right hand side of the certificate, to show your adherence to these Constitutions and to the pledges you have given during your Masonic Progress.

You will see below this space the Latin words "ne varietur", meaning "Lest it should be changed" and means your signature should not be changed. Your signature as written by you tonight should never vary, because it may in the

future be used as a means of identification, especially if you travel into a foreign jurisdiction.

If you are visiting in a jurisdiction other than your own, you may be required to present your certificate to help in your identification, but my Brother, this certificate alone will not entitle you to admittance into any Lodge without due examination. Your certificate therefore, while a passport into any Masonic circle will require the backing of a readiness at all times to undergo an examination when properly called upon.

Study your ritual with understanding and fit yourself to undergo proof and answer questions on any portion thereof, so that you may be able to demonstrate yourself a true Freemason, with credit to yourself and honour to your Lodge.

In presenting you with this certificate let me explain that the illustration surmounting it is surrounded by the Thistle, the Shamrock and the Rose, showing that the three Grand Lodges of the British Isles are the parent stem from which we derive our Masonic life.

Within this imperial garland are the Royal Arms, indicating that Royalty is the Patron of Masonry within the Empire, while their motto "God and My Right" declares unto us two of the grand principles of Freemasonry, namely a firm belief in the Great Architect of the Universe and a determination to maintain that liberty of conscience for which Freemasonry has always stood.

In the foreground of the illustration is a shield, on one half of which are the Lion and the Crown and on the other half, Three Castles, symbols respectively of strength authority and protection.

Supporting the shield on the dexter (right hand) side stands Faith, with folded hands in an attitude of devotion and on the sinister (left hand) side stands Hope, in the attitude of adoration. Behind the shield stands Charity, cherishing orphan children, a symbol of the love and protection that is extended to the helpless and the weak by the Brethren of the Craft.

In the background are depicted the mountains of our sun-set province, with their peaks of eternal snow looking down over forest, stream and plain, all suggestive of the vast resources which for our material benefit, nature has with lavish hands laid down through a myriad of years.

Above all is the Equilateral Triangle indicating the three fold nature of man, the physical, spiritual and intellectual. Within the triangle is the All Seeing Eye of Divine Direction to which we need never look in vain for sure guidance on life's pathway.

In the body of the certificate there are three pillars representing Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. Wisdom of thoughts, words and actions in all our daily walks and conversations; Strength to resist the temptations that beset us from day to day and the Beauty of sterling character and lofty ideals.

Between these pillars, inscribed in English and Latin, is a brief history of your progress in Freemasonry and a declaration to this and all other lands of your right to its benefits and privileges wherever Brethren meet for fellowship or ceremonials, according to the rights and customs of our ancient institution.

You will also note that the date of your certificate is indicated as "A.L." and "A.D." "A.L." meaning "Anno Lucia" or in the "Year of Light" and "A.D." meaning "Anno Domini" in the "Year of Our Lord". Further study on your part will teach you the symbolic differences between these two terms.

On the Tessellated Floor, which could represent the vicissitudes of human life, are the Terrestrial and Celestial Globes indicating the universality of Freemasonry. The Ashlars—the Rough and Perfect Ashlars—teaches us that Freemasonry is a progressive science and that in all our endeavours we may by industry and assiduity attain to the rank and dignity of master workmen.

The Working Tools depicted here are all suggestive of the several degrees through which you have passed and the moral lessons incident to each of these degrees. In the Entered Apprentice degree you learn that by the judicious division of time and by industry and perseverance, you may acquire expert mastery over any labour to which you may turn your hand. In the Fellow Craft degree, this being a progressive science, you learned that you may acquire such knowledge of the arts and sciences as may lie within the scope of your interest and ability, while in the Master Mason's degree, you are at liberty to rise from the ashes of the past to newness of spiritual life.

But greatest of all, you are taught in every degree and more particularly in the Master Masons' degree, the value in Freemasonry of the Volume Of The Sacred Law that Great Light in every degree. It is that point within a circle from which a Master Mason cannot err if he places his trust in its sacred oracles and precepts.

Let these symbols ever remind you that by square conduct, level steps and upright intentions, aided by the Revelation of God's Will and Word as contained in the Sacred Writings, that you may become like unto the Perfect Ashlar, polished and adorned.

Thus my Brother, when the *Grand Architect* of the Universe shall summon you to deliver up your Tracing Board, the symbol of your life here on earth, may it show a building perfect in all of its parts and honourable to the builder, and may His judgment be as favorable to you as it will be merciful.

Thank you and whatever I say may we continue in peace and harmony.

Bro. Bill Overy

Member of the Education Committee of the *Grand Lodge* of British Columbia and Yukon.