



The Overy Papers

Number 33 - Faith Hope and Charity

Fraternal Greetings Brethren

A Lodge building is said, symbolically, to extend in length from east to west, in breadth, from north to south, in height from the surface of the earth to the highest Heavens and in depth from the surface to the center of the Earth.

A Lodge is said to be of these vast dimensions to denote the universality of Masonry and to teach us that a Mason's charity should be equally as extensive.

Its covering is a clouded canopy or starry decked heaven, where all good Masons hope at last to arrive with the help of that theological ladder which Jacob, in his vision, saw ascending from the Earth up to Heaven. The three principal steps of this ladder were Faith, Hope, and Charity, and they admonish us to have faith in God, hope in immortality, and charity to all mankind.

We are taught that the greatest of these is Charity, for our faith may be lost in sight, Hope ends in fruition, but Charity extends beyond the grave and through the boundless realms of eternity.

As a young lad Faith Hope and Charity were the three Gloster Gladiator biplanes that defended the Island of Malta during the Second World War.

But as I grew older they became a part of my life but only as a side line and it was not until I became a mason that I was taught that these were virtues that should be the three great guides on my conduct in life.

FAITH

Our first step on the ladder is our Faith in the *Great Architect of the Universe*. Faith and our belief in a Supreme Being were often taught to us at our place of worship at a very early age in our life,

We are guided by the book of our faith be it the Holy Bible the Torah, the Koran or the Writings of Buddhist Philosophy. The concept is similar in all religions and should last through your life until you pass to the *Grand Lodge* above.

How we interpret the various works is a personal thing and like most immigrants I often find difficult in our new country. For myself the only churches, that I know

of, that has a service that matches my religion, is St Joseph's oratory in Montreal and a small Church in Oklahoma City. This makes for a long drive on a Sunday morning.

But as a Freemason this does not stop me living up to my belief and more important being pleased for those who have found religious comfort in their new county. I believe if you can look at the mountains and forests with all the wild life you can see the hand of the Great Architect of the Universe. This should make you at least comforted and this should be the same for all mankind and after all we are all the same.

Most people use one religion or another to give them their faith that guides their footsteps through life. But when all is said and done these "guide books" that they use. are almost the same whatever the religion. The words provide the same message and some of the stories such as Noah and the flood are mentioned in other sacred books and even the birth of Jesus is mentioned in two opposing religions of today and to be honest the story of Mary having her baby under a fig tree in the desert is far more likely than my version. But then I somehow like my version with the angels and the manger because of the comfort it represents.

And let us not forget whatever book you use it was written by Man and is the product of a culture that often has just put a different face on the same beliefs.

HOPE

Hope is the next virtue where we believe in the afterlife and I am sure many look upon it as an "after death insurance policy". This Hope is important as it gives you strength to face the world and all the trials and tribulations that life throws at you. It also gives you the chance to look upon the human race as one entity and although there are a few bad apples the majority of mankind look for the greater good.

This hope gives us the strength to give our children and grandchildren the opportunity to face an ever changing world.

How often have you discussed world issues with your children or grandchildren only to find you have begun to sound just like your Father Mother or Grandparents. You suddenly realize that although the world had changed a great deal from your grandparents to your grandchildren, their basic hopes and dreams are just the same. The only difference being they use an I-pad to express themselves and also uses a language that spells even worse than me.

CHARITY

And this brings us to Charity. We as Masons are taught that charity is not just an action of opening your wallet in the practice of cheque book giving, but it is a virtue that should guide our actions as we pass through our life and all eternity. I am not saying a cheque book does not have its place but Charity is much more than that.

The Apostle Paul puts it better than I ever could when he said, "charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude but rejoices in the right. If I have not charity, I am nothing."

It is necessary to have charity toward the weaknesses and mistakes of others without the arrogance of feeling superior.

The random acts of kindness are a form of Charity where you give of yourself without any form of reward.

Boy scouts are taught this by an example to help old ladies across the street and as we know that started a flood of jokes.

We should always be alert to the problems of others such as a heavy shopping basket, a friend who needs physical help to get to a doctor and the mental support if, what he or she has been told is not good.

The brother who asked my wife, who was on her own, if she had a license to drive an electric shopping cart or seeing an elderly couple who had dropped a quarter under a parked shopping cart and could not reach it. We found by two of us pulling the row of carts apart, one used Edna's walking stick to drag it out and another picked it up, we had solved the problem. We were so pleased with ourselves and for a moment as we laughed were back to our youth.

The fruits of charity are joy and peace and while charity demands we are there to help in our benevolence to others it fosters others to do the same. It is friendship and communion. Love and Charity should be the fulfillment of all our works.

The practice of all the virtues is inspired by charity, which "binds everything together to perfect harmony. Charity upholds our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love.

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

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