

MASONIC OBJECT LESSONS

Life is a learning experience. All through life we learn from others, both directly and indirectly, and attempt to teach others that which we have learned. One of the most positive ways of learning and teaching is through the use of object lessons.

The symbolism of Freemasonry is to a great extent made up of object lessons, impressing on your minds and hearts the values of our Craft. Quite often these lessons are not fully understood and are therefore soon forgotten as we mix with the world. Masons can and should view most objects, actions, or people in such a way that they become Masonic object lessons that relate to our Masonic teachings.

When a Mason views a great temple, it could remind him of, among other things, the Temple of Solomon. Perhaps he observes a funeral procession, and his mind goes back to the burial of one of our original Grand Masters. The list is endless---a square, a compass, a blind person. We could go on and on and relate almost any object, person, or action to our Masonic teachings.

Let me relate to you an object lesson I recently observed. I attended a concert performed by our local symphony orchestra. I arrived early to find my seat, relax, and talk with friends and acquaintances before the concert started. As I talked with others in attendance, I observed the members of the orchestra arriving and placing their instruments on the stage. They greeted each other and laughed and talked of things that were of mutual interest. Soon they were sitting in their respective places and tuning their instruments. Some were going up and down the scale, others were playing melodies that pertained to their particular instrument, and a few continued to talk.

Needless to say that during these moments, prior to the start of the concert, the orchestra on stage gave the appearance of confusion, and the sounds of the performers as they played their instruments solely for their own benefit was far from pleasing. There were screeches, howls, high and low notes---not a trace of harmonious sound. One would wonder how this mass of confusion could be turned into beautiful music that would delight the audience.

When it was time for the concert to begin, all the members of the orchestra took their places, and a quiet hush fell on the concert hall. At the appropriate time, the maestro made his appearance. Then, responding to the wave of the conductor's

baton, each performer at the proper time blended the sound of his or her instrument with the others under the direction of one leader to give forth the sound of beautiful music.

Oh, yes, the object lesson.

Let's begin with the arrival of the audience and the performers talking and greeting one another. This reminds me of a meeting room just prior to the opening of Lodge for work. Brethren talk in small and large groups where there is much laughter and friendliness. To the uninformed, this would seem like confusion, but it is true Masonic communication in its simplest form.

The performers tuning their instruments resemble the various walks of life represented in a Masonic Lodge. Each Brother has his own personal area in life---his attitude and his remarks prior to the labour of the Lodge reflect his individual interest.

The maestro taking his position, and the quietness and order that ensues at once is reminiscent of the arrival of the Worshipful Master to his station. The time of individual communication is over, and with the Master, Officers, and Brethren in their proper places, the evening's work can begin.

The maestro, with a wave of his baton, brought together the individual sounds of each performer to create one beautiful sound---music. This is like the Worshipful Master calling his Lodge to order with a blow of the gavel. All individual conversations cease. The Officers and Brethren focus their attention of the Master with one single thought---Masonic communication.

As the orchestra members made music, which was appealing to the mind and heart of those listening, so Brethren share in Masonic work and wisdom, the wonderful lessons of Brotherly love and affection. The art of the Brethren joining their minds and hearts together carries on the virtues of Freemasonry, just as the harmony of the orchestra's musicians creates beautiful music.

Needless to say, I received a double blessing: one from the soothing musical sounds of the concert and the other from the warm thoughts of my Brothers. However, there is one difference between the two: where the beauty of the concert music will fade, my Brothers will continue to extend help in time of need, sympathy in time of sorrow, encouragement in time of doubt, forever instilling in me a confidence that I am never, not ever, alone.

