

The Rock on the Path

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Companions,

Quite often we hear concerns of declining membership, and how we don't have the percentages of the population they had in the fifties and sixties. And we should be concerned, to a point. After all more members mean more dues, and this of course provides more funding for our various projects and charities, such as Grand Lodge, let's face it, a lot of the pomp and ceremony gets expensive. But that is a topic for another occasion. Today I wish to address attracting new members.

Have you ever heard someone say that every man should be a Mason? I have. And I stand here and tell you that's crap. I know a lot of men, some of whom I even like, that are not fit to be Masons. Now it would be nice if every man were fit to be a Mason, but we know it ain't so. And of the many, many men who are fit to be Masons, a lot of them just wouldn't enjoy what we do. And that's OK. There are still plenty of good men who would.

So how do we get them in the door? We could just ask, right? Well, no we can't. Masonic law is clear, we are nor to solicit members. There are some who are trying to change that, even now. It would be a sad day for the craft if they do. There is something to be said for the man who seeks of his own free will and accord the kind of fraternity we offer.

The Rock on the Path – Jerry Moore Walters, Jr.

A man who will go out of his way to become a brother, not just because someone offered it. Think about it, why are you a brother? What prompted you to join? Maybe you were solicited, but most likely you sought out the craft. Maybe you are from a Masonic family, maybe someone you respected was a Mason, and maybe you were just curious. And that's OK, because you must have liked it or you wouldn't be here listening to me right now.

Perhaps the message we need to get across is that you will not be asked. I know you have heard stories of men who have said they were just waiting for someone to ask. Our job is making sure that when they express an interest, we are there for them. Can we drop hints? Well, we certainly can discuss Masonry with them, and tell them what it has meant to us, maybe tell them why we joined. There are plenty of ways we can make ourselves known and show them the door, if not actually inviting them in.

I also believe there is something to be said for being able to tell someone, that remember you asked for this, we did not twist your arm to get you here. This is who we are, we are not going to change to suit someone's fancy on how he would do things to be. So I still haven't answered how we are to attract new members. One solution I will address in part 2 of this talk, which will be heard . . . now.

I took a look and there alone,
I saw a rock a single stone

Sitting by itself right there
A lonely block, but good and Square.

If I could only work it loose
It might be put to some good use.

Perhaps a brick within a wall
Of a home, a school or worship hall.

What would it take that might just nudge,
And get this static rock to budge?

Was there some thing that would inspire,
Kindle interest, and spark a fire?

Alas, my hands were tied it seemed,
I'm not to ask, it has been deemed.

Must it then stay where it has lain?
And evermore remain profane?

If only I had words to say,
To start this rock upon the way.

Of Brotherhood as I have known
Within my Lodge, a living stone.

Somehow I felt I must do more
To bring him in, walk through the door.

Around the lights a path well-trod
In partial robe and semi shod.

Must go through dark, deprived of sight
And by a word receive the Light.

I left for Lodge and felt despair
That I could not invite him there.

Since by the Rock my path would go,
I raised my hand and went to throw.

A friendly wave as I walked by
But when I looked down, I saw him nay.

Surprised I was it caused me wonder,
Where did he go? I paused to ponder.

So on I went upon my way
When suddenly I heard a "Hey."

I turned around who should I see?
My friend the Rock had followed me!

Why came you here? I had to ask.
I welcome you, what is your task?

He stood aright, held up his head,
Looked straight at me, and then he said:

I have observed the way you walk,
The friends you keep the talk you talk.

And what I saw I thought was good,
And just perhaps maybe I could

Walk through the door, beyond the wall
And get to see what's in your hall?

That would attract men such as you
I'd like to know what do you do?

That brings you back time and again
What joy is it you find within?

I answered as I shook his hand,
It is my hope you'll understand.

Come on inside and let me show
You how to walk the path I know.

With friends of old and Brothers new
You then will learn just what to do.

As we went in it occurred to me
To worry not only to be.

The kind of man which we profess
We wish to be, no more, no less.

And if we live for all to see
We will attract men such as We.

Of their accord and own free will
Good men will come, our ranks to fill.

If worthy found, and we bestow
Him Brotherhood then we will grow.

By living life the way we should
We hope to lead the true and good

To find a place within our fold
As Brothers new with Brothers old

And of this Rock what was his fate?
What did he find? Beyond the gate?

He travels now but not alone
That path which shapes A living stone

To one day sit within the wall
As answer to God's final call.