

Official Visit to Temple Lodge No. 324

October 10, 2006

Lecture

(Worshipful Sir, Right Worship Sirs, Very Worshipful Sirs and Brethren,)

THE SEAT OF HONOUR

Why, at the conclusion of each degree, is the candidate directed to take his seat "*to the right of the Worshipful Master and the left of all senior brethren present*"? As a Brother, should he not be allowed to take a seat anywhere among his Brethren? Furthermore, is the North not a place symbolical of darkness? The candidate comes seeking light. Why place him in darkness?

First, consider the unique way in which the Brethren are seated in the Lodge around the perimeter of the room, not in serried rows as we might expect in a church, synagogue, or lecture hall. We all sit in lodge as equals - equidistant from the centre where the VOSL is open on the Altar - the place where we were made a Mason by solemn vows taken. There are designated chairs assigned to the principal officers where the candidate is presented first to the Junior Warden at the south gate, then to the Senior Warden at the west gate and finally to the Worshipful Master at the east gate. Designating a specific seat in the lodge to the newest Entered Apprentice to be admitted, therefore must have significant symbolical import.

The Lesser Lights are situated in the East, West, and South - there is no light in the North. Yet, during the ceremony, the candidate has been brought from darkness to light. In the Northern Hemisphere, the North is 'a place of darkness.' However, we should remember that the North East angle is the place where the Sun rises on Midsummer Day, the Summer Solstice, the longest day and the shortest night (21 June). Our ancient operative brethren in Masonry, when laying out the ground for the foundation of the intended structure, placed a stone there to mark the North East corner of the building - the foundation stone or 'Cornerstone' to which the perimeter walls would be squared and aligned. Just as the rising Sun heralds a new day, the candidate is seated at North East Angle to mark his beginning in Masonry, so full of promise for the future.

In this sense, every Entered Apprentice, as we are reminded in the Charity Lecture given at the North East Angle, is both figuratively and literally, the 'foundation stone' upon which the future of the Lodge and the Craft depends. It is not an exaggeration to consider this place "to the right of the Worshipful Master and the left of all senior brethren present" at the North East Angle, the **Seat of Honour**, equal in importance, even superior in consequence, to any other in the lodge.

The Curriculum Group, Committee on Masonic Education, *Masonry is the science of service*