

The following paper was received from one of our members, who shall remain anonymous unless we can recall who it was.

The Use of the V.S.L.

One of the first three items, we see at our initiation is the Volume of the Sacred Law or Bible. We are taught that this V.S.L. is to ride and govern our faith, and our rituals are good examples of the way this can be done. Why this Holy or "Set apart from " VSL is chosen is explained to us at any lodge installation ceremony, when one of our well qualified brothers delivers the Charge to the Brethren.

It is a custom in many of our lodges to present a copy of the VSL to each candidate on the completion of his third degree. When the joining age is 18 years or above, more often above even 50 years or more, this presentation seems to me to be an incongruous act. When would you accept a candidate who has no belief in the GAOTU or has never heard of Him or the VSL? Also assuming that the presentation is made to encourage a brother to read this book, why not present a Revised Standard Version? This Revised Standard Version uses the English language as we use it now.

Having overcome our initial feelings after we have completed the three degrees, I dare say most of us make an attempt to read the VSL only to fail. But the VSL is not meant to be read like a novel,; the GAOTU has not amassed his mysteries to us like that.

Our Masonic system of education is given to us in our rituals is but the end result of "living respected and dying regretted" is the result of our personal faith gained from the VSL and aided by the ritual.

Our masonic system is based on five Wisdom books in the VSL. These books are **Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes**. I have listed them in what is presumed or accepted to be the chronological order of when they were written. Obviously these books were passed on by word of mouth long before they were written. These five books are complete in themselves and can be read in any order and in any belief you have of the GAOTU. They deal with our life span on this earth; hence they are universal.(See Appendix 1). Except for saying that the 150 Psalms will cover any human feeling you can have in life, I wish to write and speak about the Book of Proverbs.

The Book of Proverbs details what is good and what is bad in people, in all human societies. You may say how does the thinking and wisdom of the people who lived in the iron and bronze ages apply to us here and now? An answer could be that our period of change is no different from periods of change in former times. The saying that, "Times change and people don't" seems strangely true.

In our modern period of change, we have vast amounts of knowledge and information available to us e.g The Internet. What we don't appear to have is a bank of wisdom apart from the VSL.. Knowledge, information and wisdom are three words with different meanings and wisdom should come from the other two.

The Book of Proverbs is traditionally attributed to King Solomon, who is reputed to have uttered 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. This is referred to in the first book of Kings. King Solomon was probably an active patron of wisdom but whether he was responsible for the Book of Proverbs is speculation.

The book amalgamates several smaller collections drawn from different periods and different cultures and countries. It can be divided into seven parts. (See Appendix 2).

Finally, reading the Book of Proverbs in on sitting would be like reading a desk calendar in one day. He experience of reading a proverb causes the reader to slow down, because the terrain is unfamiliar.

22-28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

23-4 Labour not to be rich : cease from thine own wisdom. These are examples of the Book from the King James version.

B.C. E.	<u>APPENDIX 1 - 5 WISDOM BOOKS</u>		
1900 - Abraham			
1700 - Joseph			1. <i>Job</i>
1600			
1500			
1400			
1300			
1200			
1100			
1000 - David	Temple	2. <i>Psalms</i>	
- Solomon	4. <i>Song of Solomon</i>	3. <i>Proverbs</i>	
800	5. <i>Ecclesiastes</i>		
700 Hezekiah			
600			
500 - <i>Esther, Ezra,</i>	2nd Temple		
400 - <i>Nehemiah</i>			

APPENDIX 2

The Book of Proverbs There are seven parts, being smaller collections from different periods and sources .

1. Chapters 1-9 The proverbs of Solomon
2. Chapters 10:1-22 and Ch. 16 The proverbs of Solomon
3. Chapters 22: 17-24 and Ch. 34 The Words of the Wise
4. Chapters 25-29 The Proverbs of Solomon collected by the men of Hezekiah. (Hezekiah reigned about 300 years after Solomon).
5. Chapter 30 The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh
6. Chapter 31:1-9 The words of Lemuel, king of Massa
7. Chapter 31: 10-31 An alphabetical poem on the good housewife.
