

WILLIAM O. WARE LODGE OF RESEARCH

Book Review

Short Masonic Lectures

with extensive notes for the curious Brother

B. Elltay, P. M.

Reviewed by Dan M. Kemble Past Master and Fellow William O. Ware Lodge of Research

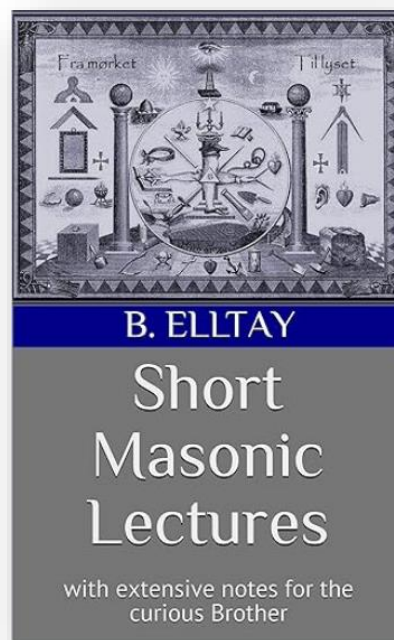
Author B. Elltay identifies himself as a Past Master of the Past Masters Research Lodge No. 950 under the American Canadian Grand Lodge AF&AM, one of five grand lodges operating in Germany under the United Grand Lodges of Germany.

W. B. Elltay writes that, "...every Mason still needs to learn the essentials of what makes Freemasonry unique, else we risk becoming 'just another social club.'"

In *Short Masonic Lectures*, he has compiled 31 essays covering a broad spectrum of topics. W. B. Elltay has arranged the lectures by their relevance to a specific Degree. Thus, there are eighteen lectures devoted to the Entered Apprentice Degree, six lectures given to the Fellow Craft Degree and seven lectures that relate to the Master Mason Degree. Fittingly, the Entered Apprentice Degree, the initiatory gateway to Freemasonry, receives the most attention. The topics to which the Entered Apprentice is introduced, of course, remain relevant to the Freemason as he journeys through the remaining Degrees.

The lectures compile by W. B. Elltay are quite brief – usually around five to seven pages. Each article is illustrated, and, importantly, each such entry is duly footnoted so that any reader wishing to pursue the subject more fully is given guidance as to where to seek further enlightenment. While the notes may not be quite as "extensive" as W. B. Elltay promises, they are certainly sufficient to promote further research.

Short Masonic Lectures is a good tool for Masons who are teaching Masonic education classes. Because it includes information related to all three Degrees, and for reasons described later in this review, it is best that only Master Masons receive a copy of the entire book.



W. B. Elltay makes no claim that his work is an exhaustive examination of, or commentary on, the subjects discussed therein. It is, without any doubt, an excellent place from which to begin one's examination of the history, philosophy and symbolism of Freemasonry. As with most good books, *Short Masonic Lectures* leads the reader to ponder additional questions inspired by the information offered within its pages. To the extent that *Short Masonic Lectures* is used as an introductory instrument in the quest for greater light in Masonry, it is certainly adequate to the task.

There are two criticisms that apply to *Short Masonic Lectures*, one of which is stylistic and the other of which is substantive.

As a matter of style, the author has chosen (incomprehensibly) not to include page numbers. As one may imagine, this makes it something of a chore to keep one's place in the book, or to quickly access a passage for reference.

More perplexing is the author's inclusion of certain words and phrases that would be considered to be private in most North American jurisdictions. Admittedly, all such information is obtainable through a cursory internet search. It remains, however, somewhat troubling to see them appear in a book purportedly written by a Mason for Masons.

The above criticisms notwithstanding, *Short Masonic Lectures* is a good gift for the newly raised Mason, and it is a useful tool for the Lodge seeking to introduce a structured approach to exploratory discussions about the aim and purpose of Freemasonry.

Short Masonic Lectures was published in 2020 and is available through most on-line booksellers.