

BOOKLET NO. 3

THE LODGE SYSTEM

OF MASONIC EDUCATION



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MEANING OF THE TERM “FELLOW CRAFT”

My Brother:

“Fellow Craft” is one of a large number of terms which have a technical meaning peculiar to Freemasonry and are seldom or never found elsewhere. In the dictionary sense it is not difficult to define.

A “Craft” was an organization of the skilled workmen in some trade or calling as for example, masons, carpenters, painters, sculptors, barbers, etc. A “Fellow” meant one who held full membership in such a Craft, or who was an associate in the work, thus obligated to the same duties and allowed the same privileges. Since the skilled Crafts are no longer organized as they once were, the term is no longer in use with its original sense.

It is more difficult to give it the larger meaning as it is found in Freemasonry, but we may be assisted to that end by noting that with us it possesses two quite separate and distinct meanings, one of which we may call the Operative meaning, the other the Speculative. We can consider first the Operative meaning:

1. In the Operative period Freemasons were skilled workmen engaged in some branch of the building trade, or art of architecture; as such, like all other skilled workmen, they had an organized Craft of their own. The general form in which this Craft was organized was called a “Guild.” A Lodge was a local, and usually temporary, organization within the Guild. This Guild had officers, laws, rules, regulations, and customs of its own, rigorously binding on all members equally.

It divided its membership into two grades, the lower of which was composed of Apprentices. As you have already learned, the Operative Freemasons recruited their membership from qualified lads of twelve to fifteen years of age.

When such a boy proved acceptable to the members, he was required to swear to be teachable and obedient, upon which he was bound over to some Master Mason; after a time, if he proved worthy, his name was formally entered in the books of the Lodge, thereby giving him his title of Entered Apprentice. For about seven years this boy lived with his master, gave his master implicit obedience in all things, and toiled much but received no pay except his board, lodging, and clothing. In the Lodge life he held a place equally subordinate because he could not attend a Lodge of Master Masons, had no voice or vote, and could not hold office. All this means that during his long apprenticeship he was really a bond servant with many duties, few rights, and very little freedom.

At the end of his apprenticeship he was once more examined in Lodge; if his record was good, if he could prove his proficiency under test, and the members voted in his favor, he

was released from his bonds and made a full member of the Craft, with the same duties, rights, and privileges as all others. In the sense that he had thus become a full member he was called a “Fellow of the Craft;” in the sense that he had mastered the art, and no longer needed a teacher, he was called a “Master Mason.” So far as his grade was concerned these two terms meant the same thing.

Such was the Operative meaning of Fellow Craft; now that the Craft is no longer operative the term usually possesses a very different meaning, yet at the same time it is still used in its original sense in certain parts of the Ritual, and of course it is frequently met with in the histories of the Fraternity.

2. We come next to the meaning of the term in Speculative Masonry. As you have already learned, Operative Freemasonry began to decline at about the time of the Reformation, when Lodges became few in number and small in membership. After a time a few of these in England began to admit into membership men with no intention of practicing the trade of Operative Masonry but who were attracted by the Craft's antiquity and for social reasons. These were called Speculative Masons. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, these Speculatives had so increased in number that at last they gained entire control, and during the first quarter of that century they completely transformed the Craft into the Speculative Fraternity as we now have it.

Although they adhered as closely as possible to the old customs, they were compelled to make some radical changes in order to fit the Society for its new purposes. One of the most important of these was to abandon the old rule of dividing the members into two grades, or Degrees, and to adopt a new rule of dividing it into three grades, or Degrees. It was necessary to find a name for the new Degree and the expedient was hit upon the naming of the Second the Fellow Craft Degree, the Third the Master Mason Degree; why this somewhat confusing device was adopted we do not know, but adopted it was and it continues until this day.

As a result, the term Fellow Craft is now used in general as the name of the Second Degree; more particularly it may serve as the name of that Degree; or of the ritualistic ceremonies and other contents of that Degree, or of a member of it, or of a Lodge when opened on it. You are yourself a Fellow Craft; this means that you have passed through its ceremonies, assumed its Obligations, are registered as such in the books of the Lodge, and can sit in either a Lodge of Entered Apprentices or of Fellow Crafts but not of Master Masons. Your function as a member of this Degree is to do and to be all that it requires of you.

In order to make that function clearer let us pause for a moment to consider one fact about Freemasonry as a whole. That fact is this: Freemasonry is altogether too large to be exemplified in the Ritual or to be presented through Initiation in only one evening, and there would be too much of it for a man to learn in only one evening (or even in one day!) if it could be thus presented. The teachings of Masonry constitute a pattern for living. In

fact, they have been aptly described as “a life to be lived.” How absurd, then, is the notion that one could absorb their entire significance by participating in the ceremonies of three evenings! It is not an overstatement to say that a lifetime is necessary, even as it is in an academic pursuit of art, religion or the sciences. The Three Degrees follow one another and the members of each stand on a different level of rights and duties; but this does not mean that the portion of Masonry presented in the First, or in the Second Degree, so far as its nature and teachings are concerned, is one with less importance, or less binding, than the portion presented in the Third Degree. All that is taught in the First or Second Degree belongs as necessarily and vitally to Freemasonry as what is taught in the Third; there is a necessary subordination in the grades of membership, but there is no subordination among the portions of Masonry as presented to each grade; one portion stands on the same level as the others.

Do not therefore permit yourself to be tempted, my Brother, to look upon the Fellow Craft Degree as a mere stage, or stepping stone, to the Third. Freemasonry as a whole gave one portion of itself to you in the First, it has given another portion, in the Second; in the Third that same Masonry will give you another portion, but it is always one and the same thing. There is but one Masonry throughout, therefore let me urge you to give it the same studious attention while you are a Fellow Craft that you doubtless expect to give it when you are a Master Mason.

INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL OF THE SECOND DEGREE

You are now a Fellow Craft Mason. What that title means has already been explained to you. My purpose now is to try to explain something of the meaning of the Degree of which it is the name; I say “something of the meaning” advisedly, for it would require many whole evenings to explain it in full.

Because the Fellow Craft Degree chances to lie between the Entered Apprentice and the Master Mason Degree you must not permit yourself to fall into the error of considering it a half-way station, a mere transition from one to the other. It has in itself the same completeness, the same importance, as each of the other two, with a definite purpose of its own; and unless you understand its teachings thoroughly your Initiation will fail of its purpose.

There are two great ideas embodied in it. They are not the only ideas in it, but if you understand them they will lead you into an understanding of the others.

One of these is the idea of adulthood.

Where the Entered Apprentice represents youth standing at the portals of life, his eyes on the rising sun, and where the Master Mason stands as the man of years, already on the farther slope of the hill with the setting sun in his eyes, the Fellow Craft is a man in the

prime of life—experienced, strong, resourceful, able to bear the heat and burden of the day.

It is only in its very narrowest sense that adulthood can be described in terms of years. When he comes to experience it a man discovers that the mere fact that he is forty or fifty years of age has little to do with it. Adulthood is a condition, a state of life, a station charged with a set of duties.

It is the man in his middle years who carries the responsibilities. It is he upon whom a family depends for support; he is the Atlas on whose shoulders rest the burdens of business; by his skill and experience the arts are sustained; to his keeping are entrusted the destinies of the State. It is said that in the building of his Temple, King Solomon employed eighty thousand Fellow Crafts, or “hewers in the mountains and quarries;” the description is a suggestive one, for it is by these men and women who live in the Fellow Craft period of life that the hewing is done, in the mountains, or in the quarries, or anywhere else.

And it is not their responsibility for toil alone that tests the mettle in their nature; they live in a period of disillusionment. Youth is enthusiastic, carefree, filled with high hopes; the upward sloping path before it is bathed in the morning light. Old age is mellowed, the battle lies behind it; it does not struggle or cry aloud, and walks where the landscape lies in the mystical light of the dying sun. Young men see visions; old men dream dreams.

The Fellow Craft walks in the full, uncolored light of the noon time. Everything stands starkly before him, in its most uncompromising reality; if he was buoyed by boyish illusions as to the ease of life and the sufficiency of his strength a little while ago, these illusions have now evaporated in the heat of the day; and if after a few more years he will have learned mellow peace and resignation, that time has not yet come. It is for him to bend his back and bear the load.

What does the Second Degree have to say to the Fellow Craft, whether in Masonry or in the world at large? The answer to that brings us to our second idea.

That idea is this—that the Fellow Craft may so equip himself that he will prove adequate to the tasks which will be laid upon him.

What is that equipment? The Degree gives us at least three answers. Let us ponder each of them a moment.

The first answer is that the Fellow Craft must gain direct experience. You will recall what was said about the Five Senses. Needless to say, that portion of the Middle Chamber Lecture was not intended to be an exposition on either physiology or psychology; it is symbolism, and represents what a man learns through hearing, seeing,

feeling, smelling and tasting—in short, immediate experience. A man garners such experience only with the passage of time; each day he must come into contact with facts; what he learns one day must be added to the next, and so on from year to year, until at last, through the very contacts of his senses with the objects which make up the world, he has come to understand that world, how to deal with it, how to master it at the point where he stands.

The second answer is education. After all, an individual's possible experience is extremely limited, circumscribed by the length of his Cable Tow. Could we learn of life only that with which we are brought into contact by our own senses, then would we be indeed poorly equipped to deal with its complexities and responsibilities? No! To our own store of hard won experience of others, supplementing our experience by the information of countless men brought to us through many channels; our own knowledge must be made complete by the knowledge taught to us by the race and its teachers.

We have a perfect picture of this inside Freemasonry. Consider the Apprentice in the days when Masons were builders of great and costly structures. He was a mere boy, ten to fifteen years of age, scarcely knowing one tool from another, entirely ignorant of the secrets and arts of the builder; and yet, after seven years or so he was able to produce his Master's Piece and to take his place at any task to which the Worshipful Master might appoint him. How was his miracle accomplished? Not by his own unaided efforts, but by teaching, by the Master Masons about him guiding his clumsy hands and passing on to him in many lessons what they had been years in acquiring.

Such is education. It is symbolized in the Second Degree by the Liberal Arts and Sciences. Perhaps you were somewhat nonplussed to hear what was said about grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, and wondered what such school-room topics had to do with Masonry. You understand now! The explanation of these subjects was not meant to be an academic lecture out of a college course; like so much else in the Degree it was symbolism, and the symbolism signified all that is meant by education—our training by others in skill and knowledge to do or to understand certain kinds of tasks.

A Fellow Craft of life then must be equipped with experience and knowledge. Is there anything more! Yes, there is a third answer, and it is of more importance than either of the other two. That third answer is wisdom.

Experience gives us awareness of the world at that point where we are in immediate contact with it; knowledge gives us competency for special tasks in the arts, trades, professions, callings and vocations. But a man's life is not confined to his own immediate experience; nor is he day and night engaged in the same task; life is more complex, is richer than that! It comes to us compounded of all manner of things, a great variety of experiences, a consistent succession of situations, a never-ending list of new problems, and it is full of people with all of their reactions, emotions, varied characters,

and behaviors. The world is infinitely greater than what each of us now sees, hears or feels; it is far more complex than our accustomed daily tasks.

Therefore, if we are to be happy in our life in such a world, we must have the ability to understand and to cope with this complex whole; we must be able to meet situations that have never arisen before. Imagine a symphony being rendered by an orchestra. Each player must be able to see, to touch, and to hear, or he cannot even hold an instrument in his hands; he must have knowledge of his own musical score and of the capacities of his instrument; but the conductor must have all this, plus an understanding of all instruments and of the composition as a whole. His skill and knowledge must embrace not only each instrument in turn, with each player's score, but all of them together and at once.

This conductor is not a misleading picture of wisdom. A man may see, hear, touch, and handle things so much that he wins a rich experience and yet not have knowledge; and a man may have such knowledge, may have mastered some task, or art, or trade, and yet be unhappy and a failure as a human being because he cannot adjust himself to the complex system of realities, experiences, and facts which make up life as a whole. He may lack the wisdom and competency to deal with each situation that arises, it matters not what it may be.

The Middle Chamber, which is so conspicuous an element in the Second Degree, doubtless has many other meanings, but it most certainly is a symbol of the wisdom of which I have just been speaking. Through the experience of the Five Senses, up through the knowledge gained of the Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Candidate is called upon to advance, as on a Winding Stair, to that balanced wisdom of life in which the senses, emotions, intellect, character, work, deeds, habits, and soul of a man are knit together in unity—balanced, poised, adequate.

If the Fellow Craft will thus equip himself—whether you think of him as inside Masonry or without—he need not shrink from his toil nor will he faint beneath the heat and burden of the day, because his competency as a human being will be equal to the demands made upon him.

This interpretation of the Fellow Craft Degree, as I stated in the beginning, touches but the hem of its manifold meanings, but it has been my purpose only to give you certain suggestions, and I hope that with them now in your possession you may be inspired to search out all the other meanings for yourself.

SYMBOLS AND ALLEGORIES OF THE SECOND DEGREE

In the Second Degree you discovered that a number of emblems and symbols of the First Degree reappear. You will also discover in the future that a number of its own emblems and symbols will reappear in the Third Degree. For this reason I shall, in my brief talk,

confine myself to those symbols and allegories that belong peculiarly to the Second Degree.

Among the allegories peculiar to it, the most striking and important one is that rite in which you acted the part of a man approaching King Solomon's Temple; you came into its outer precincts, climbed a Winding Stair, passed between the Two Pillars and at last entered its Inner Chamber; standing in it you acted the part of a Fellow Craft workman who received his wages of Corn, Wine, and Oil, and during certain stages of this allegorical journey you listened to various parts of a discourse which Masonry calls the Middle Chamber Lecture.

This entire acted allegory is a symbolic picture of the true and inner meaning of Initiation. The Temple is the life into which a man is initiated. That which lay outside the walls of the Temple, from which you, as a Candidate, were supposed to come, represents what in Masonry is called the profane world—not profane in the usual sense of the word as being blasphemous but profane in the technical sense; the word literally means “shut away from the Altar,” and it thereby signifies all who are not initiated; when you are instructed not to reveal the secrets to a profane, it means not to reveal them to an uninitiated person; that is, to one who is not a Mason. The stairs you climbed represented the steps by which the life of Initiation is approached—qualification, petition, election, and the Three Degrees. The Two Pillars represent birth; when you passed between them it signified that you were no longer a profane but had now entered the circle of initiates. The Middle Chamber represents Initiation completed; once arrived there the candidate receives the rewards for the ordeals and arduous labors he has endured on the way; he has arrived at his goal.

This, as I said, is an allegorical picture of Masonic Initiation, but our interpretation cannot stop here for the whole process of Masonic Initiation is itself a symbolic allegory of something else, so that in this central portion of the Degree we have an allegory within an allegory. We must ask then what is symbolized by Masonic Initiation itself.

The answer is that it symbolizes, and in so doing interprets, the experience of every man who seeks the good life; and by interpreting it teaches us how the good life is found. This will be best explained by one or two examples.

As one of these examples consider that form of the good life which we are seeking when we seek education or enlightenment. Ignorance is one of the greatest of evils; enlightenment is one of the greatest of goods. How does a man pass from one to another? In the beginning a man is a profane, stands in the outside darkness and is in that ignorance from which he would escape into the Inner Chamber of Knowledge. How is he qualified? By having the necessary desire to learn and by possessing the required faculties and abilities. How does he find his way? By trusting to his guides, that is, his teachers, and these may be teachers in the professional sense, or they may be others who have themselves learned that which the seeker needs to know, or the guides may be

books. What kind of path does the seeker follow? It is a winding path, that is, he must feel his way along from stage to stage, for he has never walked it before; it is an ascending path, that is, laborious, arduous, difficult, for there is no royal road to learning. What is the door through which he can enter? It is a door composed of the Two Pillars, which means birth; this signifies that knowledge must be won inside our own natures, through what happens there; others may assist but their assistance is limited; each man must learn by his own efforts, and knowledge is never permanently won until it is made a part of ourselves.

What are the rewards? The rewards are found in knowledge itself, which not alone is useful because of what it enables us to do but is a thing to be enjoyed for its own sake, like food or sleep or music; it is its own Corn, Wine, and Oil. The value of enlightenment is represented by the Temple; this means that it is holy and sacred. Why holy? Because it is set apart from the world of ignorance. Why sacred? Because it has been won at the cost of great sacrifice, sacrifice by ourselves and by all our forefathers who at great cost won it for us.

It is by the same methods that a man wins all the other great goods of life: religion, which is the knowledge of God; Brotherhood, which is a life of fellowship grounded in good will; Art, which gives us ways and means of enjoying the beautiful; Citizenship, by which we are enabled to enjoy the goods of communal life; Science, by which we learn the nature of the world we live in; and Literature, by which we enter into communion with life of all mankind. A good life is one in which all such good things are enjoyed.

All this, you may say, is commonplace. It is commonplace only in the sense that it conforms to the experience of all wise men everywhere and always. It is not common in the sense that all men understand it or follow it. For it is certain too many men do not understand it, or if they do, have not the will to follow it, or else do not sincerely believe in it in their hearts.

Such men, when they are young, are so impatient, or else are so indolent or so self-conceited, that they refuse to submit themselves to a long and painful apprenticeship, but rush out into adult life with all its tasks and responsibilities, without training and without knowledge, trusting, as we say, to their luck.

This belief that the goods of life come, or even can come, by luck, or that they happen by chance or fall by accident to the fortunate, is their chief and most fatal blunder. The satisfying goods of life, whether they be spiritual, moral, intellectual or physical, have a nature which renders it impossible for them ever to be won by luck, like a lottery prize, or for them to drop into a man's lap by some happy accident. They cannot come at all except by our toiling to make them come, and even then they cannot come except at the cost of changes and transformations in our own natures, which are often painful and costly to make.

Such is the meaning of our allegorical entrance into King Solomon's Temple in the Second Degree. You can see at once that all the other symbols and allegories in the Degrees are to be interpreted in the light of that meaning; you can also see that in the light of that meaning the Degree itself as a whole becomes a living power, by which to shape and build our lives, not only in the Lodge Room itself but in the world of human experience of which the Lodge Room is a symbol.

THE TEACHINGS OF MASONRY

You have now had conferred upon you the First and Second Degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry. And while you have yet to reach the climax of your journey to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, already you have discovered that Freemasonry has a certain teaching of its own and that to expound that teaching is one of the principal functions of the Ritual. We believe that if at this stage some light is shed upon this subject, you will appreciate the Third Degree all the more. Therefore, certain suggestions follow which will help you in studying the teachings of Masonry.

Already you have discovered that Masonry's method of teaching is unlike that of the schools. Instead of employing teachers and textbooks and lessons in didactic form—instead, that is, of expounding and enforcing its teachings in plain words—it uses the method of Ritual, symbol, emblem and allegory. This is not as easy to follow as the schoolroom method, but over that or any similar method it has this one great advantage: it makes a Mason study and learn for himself, forces him to search out the truth, compels him to take the initiative, as a grown man should, so that the very act of learning is itself of great educational value. The purpose of secrecy is not to keep a Candidate in the dark, but to stimulate him to seek the light. The symbols and emblems do not conceal the teachings, they reveal them, but they reveal them in such a manner that a man must find them for himself. It is only when a man finds the truth for himself that it can be and remain a living and permanent possession.

Therefore, in giving you a few interpretations of Masonic teachings I can only suggest to you what you will find by your own efforts, how you will find it, and where you will find it. Necessarily there cannot be any exhaustive exposition of Masonic truth, because in its nature it is something each man must discover for himself.

Among Freemasonry's Tenets, or great teachings, are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. By Brotherly Love is meant that the relationship of blood brothers is of a type of the relationship of Masons with one another. By Relief is meant the principle of benevolence and charity. By Truth is meant, not only that which satisfies the mind, but also sincerity of conscience and soundness of character—truthfulness in act as well as in thought and speech.

Freemasonry is a Fraternity devoted to Brotherhood, exists to furnish opportunities to its members to enjoy it, for its own sake and not as a means to something beyond it; but this

Brotherhood must be understood in a special sense. Freemasonry's position is that Brotherhood rests on a religious basis; we are all Brothers, or should be, because God is the Father of us all; therefore religion is one of the foundations of Masonry.

Masonry is dedicated to God, the Sovereign Grand Architect of the Universe. It keeps an Altar at the center of every Lodge Room. The Volume of Sacred Law lies open upon it. It begins and ends its undertaking with prayer. When it obligates a Candidate he must be upon his knees. Its petitioners must believe in Immortality. All this is genuine religion, not a formal religiousness; it is sincerely held and scrupulously upheld, and without this basis of faith the Craft would wither and die like a tree with roots destroyed.

But this religion of Masonry, like all else in its teaching, is not set forth in written creeds, or in any other form of words; the Mason must come upon it for himself, and put it in such form as will satisfy his own mind, leaving others to do likewise. This is Masonic tolerance, which is one of the prime principles of the Craft and one protected by the Ancient Landmark that forbids all sectarian discussion in our assemblies.

Along with religion Masonry teaches the necessity of morality, requiring of its members that they be good men and true, righteous when tried by the Square, upright when tried by the Plumb, their passions kept in due bounds by the Compasses, just in their dealings with their fellows, patient with the erring, charitable, truthful, honorable. Nor are these the words of a high sounding but empty aspiration; a Candidate must possess such a character to be qualified for admittance, and a Mason must persevere in it to retain his membership.

Of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity our Craft says, as did the Apostle, that "the greatest of these is Charity." Through the agency of the Lodge and of the Grand Lodge each of us is to give support to the charities maintained by the Jurisdiction, District or Lodge; but at the same time, and over and above this, each of us must stand ready at any and all times privately to extend a helping hand in relief of an unfortunate Brother or of his dependents. Masonry, however, unlike some of the sects and cults, does not advocate a charity carried to the limits of fanaticism; there is such a thing as a Cable Tow, the extent of ability and opportunity, and we are not asked to give relief beyond the point where it would work damage to ourselves or hardships to our families.

Another of Masonry's great teachings is Equality, symbolized by the Level. This does not represent that impossible doctrine which would erase all distinctions, and holds that in all respects all men are the same, for it is evident that in many respects men are very unequal, as in physique, in talent, in gifts, in abilities, and in character; it is, rather, the principle that we owe goodwill, charity, tolerance, and truthfulness equally to each and all, and that within our Fraternity all men travel the same road of Initiation, take the same Obligations, pay the same dues, and have the same duties, rights, and privileges.

A like importance is attached to the need for enlightenment. The motto of Masonry is "Let there be Light;" almost the whole of the Second Degree is a drama of education; the Work of Masonry is called the Royal Art, and it is expected that our Candidates beginning as Apprentices shall study to learn its practice, consulting with well-informed Brethren and making use of the Working Tools. Truth is one of the Tenets. There is a Masonry of the mind as well as of the heart and of the hands. To revere the wise, to respect teachers, to value and uphold schools and to encourage the Liberal Arts and Sciences are some of our most ancient traditions.

Outside the Lodge Room the Mason is to be a good citizen, loyal to his government, taking no part in broils and rebellions, conducting himself as a moral and wise man, remembering in all things that he has in his keeping the good name of his Fraternity.

These teachings arise out of, and at the same time are bound together into, an organized unity by the nature and needs of that Brotherhood for the sake of which the whole system of the Craft exists, to endure through all vicissitudes and to satisfy our natures. Brotherhood must have a spiritual basis, hence the all-importance of our foundation or religion. Brotherhood requires that men must be held together by unbreakable ties, hence the necessity for morality, which is a name for the forces that bind us in the relations of amity and accord. Differences of beliefs and opinions must not be permitted to rupture those bonds, hence the need for enlightenment. They may not come together or remain together except they have the same rights and privileges, hence the necessity of equality. They cannot work together except they all understand the work to be done, hence the need for enlightenment. They will not be drawn together except they are filled with that spirit of goodwill which necessarily expresses itself in charity and relief, and a Brotherhood itself cannot exist except in a society which admits of it, hence the need for Masons to be good citizens. Through all the teachings of Masonry run these principles which lead back, each and every one, to its conception and practice of Brotherhood; from that conception all things emerge in the beginning; to it all things come in the end. Gain a clear understanding of that and you will have that Royal Secret by which all else is made plain.

In conclusion, my Brother, The Masonic Belief is that there is but one God, the Father of all men.

The Volume of Sacred Law is the Great Light in Masonry, and the Rule and Guide for faith and practice.

Man is immortal.

Character determines destiny.

Love of man is, next to love of God, man's first duty.

Prayer, communion of man with God, is helpful.

Recognizing the impossibility of confining the teaching of Masonry to any fixed forms of expression, yet acknowledging the value of authoritative statements of fundamental principles, the following is proclaimed as:

THE MASONIC TEACHING

Masonry teaches man to practice charity and benevolence, to protect chastity, to respect the ties of blood and friendship, to adopt the principles and revere the ordinances of religion, to assist the feeble, guide the blind, raise up the downtrodden, shelter the orphan, guard the Altar, support the Government, inculcate morality, promote learning, love man, fear God, implore His mercy and hope for happiness.

THE LITERATURE OF MASONRY

It has been said upon good authority that more books have been written about Freemasonry than upon any other single subject. Many more books, of course, have been devoted to the broad fields of human thought, such as religion, science, and so on, but such topics could not be described as a single subject. The point in itself, however, is unimportant; the fact to be remembered is that we possess an extraordinarily rich literature about the Fraternity in all its branches and aspects, and any Brother who wishes to enjoy his Masonry to the fullest, will necessarily make use of it. It is to give you some guidance in doing this that this Committee speaks to the following regarding our literature and the means of obtaining it.

Our literature divides itself naturally into a series of divisions.

1. **History.** Our written records cover some six centuries of time, but at the time one of the oldest documents was written, which was about 1390 A.D., the Craft already was old. Furthermore, it had in its own beginnings inherited much from other secret fraternities that had gone before; therefore, our historians must go much further back than 1390. At the same time they must range far afield, to cover allied subjects, and they also must often deal with other fraternities, with which Freemasonry is, or has been, historically connected. Add to this the fact that the Fraternity as a whole has divided itself into a number of rites, and the additional fact that each country has a history of its own, and something of the scope of the subject begins to be revealed. Speaking in the large, Masonic History breaks into the following subdivisions: general history, history–country by country, history–Grand Lodge by Grand Lodge, and Lodge history. In the same general field would fall biographies, histories of buildings, and histories of single subjects such as the Ancient Manuscripts, etc.
2. **Ritual and Symbolism.** A writer on this subject might try to trace to its origin some element in the Ritual or compare it with something similar elsewhere; or he might try to explain a symbol or ceremony; or show how it is related to the other

portions of the system; or interpret its meaning. A great mass of material exists on the Ritual in many languages and various forms from every conceivable point of view and according to the beliefs of all the schools of Masonic thought.

3. **Philosophy.** This deals with the teachings of Masonry, what Masonry stands for, what its ideals are, what it is trying to do, how it is related to other social institutions and what its mission is in the world. The term “Masonic philosophy” may be justly defined in either of two ways; it may mean an effort to study Masonry itself by philosophical methods, as philosophers study other subjects; or it may mean Masonry's own philosophy of life. Understood either way, we have a magnificent literature devoted to it.
4. **Jurisprudence.** Masonic Law exists in two main branches, Unwritten Law and Written Law. By Unwritten Law is not meant that it is never written down, but rather that its authority does not lie in the form in which it may be written—if written at all. Under this head fall the Ancient Landmarks, Old Charges, Ancient Constitutions, traditions, customs, and usages. By the Written Law are meant the Volume of Sacred Law, Grand Lodge Constitutions, Codes, Statutes, Rules, Definitions, Regulations, adopted Edicts, and Lodge By-Laws.
5. **Reference.** By this is meant such books as dictionaries, encyclopedias, Grand Lodge Proceedings, handbooks and similar books. Their value is not for constructive reading but to be kept at hand for quick reference.
6. **General Literature.** Under this is included fiction, poetry, drama, humor, music, and all such other books as do not fall easily under the heads already given.

Having received this birds-eye view of the vast scope of the literature of Masonry you doubtless are asking in your own mind how you may secure the use of it.

There are many publications available for those looking for further Light in Masonry, such as, Mackey’s Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Gould’s History of Freemasonry, and many other books covering all Masonic subjects. The Worshipful Master or Secretary of your Lodge will give you the necessary information on how to obtain the books you desire. We feel it is our duty to urge you to make use of every opportunity to find further Light in Masonry.

You have entered that country called Freemasonry; it spread out from your feet farther than your eye can reach through time and space. Its great themes are like mountain ranges and fertile valleys. This land belongs to you, and the Masonic literature exists to help you put yourself in possession of it.