

Quest Book No. Three

You Are Now an Entered Apprentice

In the belief that you will welcome some additional "light" upon the Fraternity to which you have just gained admission, and upon your own place therein, this book is presented to you for careful study.

In its long experience, Masonry has established many things that go beyond the realm of experiment and mere opinion; among these is the fact that one's appreciation of Masonry grows with the increase in his understanding of its history, its symbolism and philosophy, its world-wide character, its ethical standards, and the ideal of genuine brotherhood fostered among its multitude of members. In your own interest, therefore, give thoughtful attention to this, and to succeeding information as it is presented.

Now, a word of caution. You have crossed our threshold and you are now bound by your obligation to guard its secrets carefully. The secrets of Freemasonry and its affairs are for its members alone. Be guarded and watchful in your conversations. The mere fact that a stranger may wear a Masonic pin or a ring is in itself no guarantee that he is a Mason.

On Secrets

What You Can Discuss With a Non-Mason

Masonry is not a secret society. Members of our lodges are not in anyway forbidden from telling others that they are Masons. While every Mason should remember his obligations to secrecy, yet we want to inform non-masons about who we are, what we are, and what we do. Therefore it is important that every Mason understand clearly which things he can talk about and which things he cannot.

What is a Masonic Secret

What are the things we call the secrets of Masonry? The first secret is the ballot of a Mason. No one can know how a Mason votes, unless that Mason tells him, and that is considered un-Masonic conduct. The right and privilege of casting a secret ballot is universally respected in this country by Masons and non-masons alike.

Other secrets are:

- the modes of recognition (signs and words);
- the obligations or vows of each degree;
- the manner of conferring the degrees, and;
- the legend of the third degree.

These four items are usually considered to be the "real" Masonic secrets. But we should all realize that any interested party can go to the public library or bookstore and obtain books, which reveal all these things. Clearly we cannot consider these to be secrets in the true sense of the word. There is no way we can keep these books from the public. What then is the meaning of our obligation to secrecy?

Our Obligation to Secrecy

The obligations of Masonry, as well as all other teachings and laws of our Craft, are not things that Masons impose upon other people. These obligations, teachings, and laws are things that each Mason agrees to accept for himself and to apply to himself. Thus when we agree to keep a Masonic secret we only agree that we will not discuss that matter with a non-mason. This agreement is then binding upon the Mason, but it is not and cannot be binding upon a non-mason.

Masons should not be disturbed by this. If a non-mason learns what he considers to be our secrets, we are under no obligation to take action of any kind. But if the same person comes to us and asks us to affirm or deny that certain things are our secrets, then we must neither confirm nor deny what they have learned. We are best advised to simply change the subject. If that fails, then let the person read this page.

An Apprentice

You are now an Entered Apprentice; that is to say, your name has been so recorded in our Lodge. The first step in your journey to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason has been taken.

Doubtless you found your initiation an experience you will never wish to forget. A degree in Masonry is not an isolated experience, but an ever-enduring privilege. Always you may sit in your own Lodge when open on the Entered Apprentice Degree; always you can return to observe, to participate in, and to study its ceremonies. Your possession of the degree is complete.

Doubtless you are eager to learn more about this remarkable degree before you receive that of a Fellowcraft. Perhaps its ceremonies seemed strange to you; its language fell on your ears in unaccustomed accents; and at its end you may have been somewhat bewildered. It will be helpful if you are given a brief explanation of the term "Entered Apprentice."

The builders of those remarkable structures in Europe and Great Britain, from six hundred to nine hundred years ago, we call "Operative Masons" because they were builders in the literal sense.

In Operative Times

It was necessary for the Operative Masons to recruit new members to replace those lost through removal, accident, illness or death. To do this they used the apprenticeship system, which was in vogue in all crafts for many centuries.

The word "apprentice" means "learner," or "beginner," one who is taking his first steps in mastering a trade, art or profession. The Operative apprentice was a boy, usually from ten to fifteen years of age. He was required to be sound in body, in order to do work requiring physical strength and endurance. He had to be of good habits, obedient and willing to learn, of unquestioned reputation, and be well recommended by Masons already members of the Craft.

When such a boy was chosen as an apprentice, he was called into the Lodge where all the members could assure themselves of his mental, moral and physical qualifications. If they voted to receive him, he was given much information about the Craft, what it required of its members, something of its early history and tradition, and what his duties would be. He gave a solemn promise to obey his superiors, to work diligently, to observe the laws and rules, and to keep the secrets.

After being thus obligated, he was bound over, or indentured, to one of the more experienced Master Masons. As a rule he lived with this Master Mason, and from him day-by-day learned the methods and secrets of the trade. When he was able to give assurance of his fitness to master the art and to become an acceptable member of the society, his name was entered on the books of the Lodge and he was given a recognized place in the Craft organization. Because of this official entering of his name he was given the title "Entered Apprentice." This apprenticeship usually lasted seven years.

His Education

It would be difficult to exaggerate the care our Operative Masonic forebears devoted to these learners. The Intender, as the Master Mason to whom the Apprentice was indentured was called, was obliged by law to teach him theory as well as practice. Not until the Apprentice, after many years, could prove his proficiency by meeting the most rigid tests of skill, was he permitted to advance to a higher rank in the Craft. Other Master Masons with whom he was set at work at the simpler tasks also were his teachers. He was given moral instruction; his conduct was carefully scrutinized; many rules were laid down to control his manner of life. When we read the Old Charges and ancient documents that have come down to us, we are impressed by the amount of space devoted to Apprentices.

As time passed, therefore, there grew up about the rank and duties and regulations of the Apprentice an organized set of customs, ceremonies, rules, traditions, etc. These at last crystallized into a well-defined unit, which we may describe as the Operative Entered Apprentice's Degree. When, after the Reformation, Operative Masonry was gradually transformed into Speculative Masonry, the Entered Apprentice Degree in a modified form was retained as one of the degrees of the Speculative Lodge.

Your Entry

As an Entered Apprentice you are a learner, a beginner, in Speculative Masonry. You have taken the first step in the mastery of our art. It is because you have this rank that certain things are expected of you.

First, you must learn certain portions of the degree, so as to prove your proficiency. But you are to learn these parts not merely to pass this test; you should master them so thoroughly that they will remain with you through life, because you will have need of them many times in the future.

Second, you must learn the laws, rules, and regulations by which an Entered Apprentice is governed.

As you stood in the northeast corner of the Lodge during your initiation you were taught a certain lesson concerning a corner stone. The meaning of that lesson should now be clear to you. You are a corner stone of the Craft. The day will probably come when into your hands will fall your share of the responsibilities of the Lodge. It is our hope and expectation that you will prove a worthy part of the foundation on which our great fraternity may safely build.

An Interpretation of the Ritual of the First Degree

The Masonic World

The Masonic Lodge room is represented in the ritual as a symbol of the world. The particular form in which this symbol is cast harks back to early times when men believed the earth to be square and the sky a solid dome; but while this no longer represents our idea of the physical shape of the world, the significance remains the same.

The world thus represented is the world of Masonry; the Masonic career from beginning to end, including all that lies between. The West Gate through which the candidate enters represents birth. In the first degree the candidate is ushered into Masonic Life; the old life with all its accessories has dropped from him completely. He now enters on a new life in a new world.

Laws and Authority

Masonry is systematic, well proportioned, balanced. Duties and work are supervised and regulated, controlled through laws written and unwritten, expressed through landmarks, traditions, usages, constitutions and by-laws, guided and directed through officers vested with power and authority. The candidate obligates himself to uphold that lawful system; when he salutes the Master and Wardens he signifies his obedience to the legally constituted officers; when he follows his guide and fears no danger he expresses his trust in, and loyalty to, the Fraternity.

The Entered Apprentice Degree is not an idle formality, but a genuine experience, the beginning of a new career in which duties, rights and privileges are real. Members are called Craftsmen because they are workmen; a Lodge in session is said to be "at labor."

Freemasonry offers no privileges or rewards except to those who earn them; she places Working Tools, not playthings, in the hands of her members.

To become a Mason is a solemn and serious undertaking. Once the step is taken, it may well change the course of a man's life.

Freemason's Faith

Freemasonry, while not a religion, is vitally religious. Its entire philosophy, all its teachings, are predicated upon the existence of God, a God in whom men can place their trust, and from whom strength and wisdom flow in response to prayer.

The Tenets

You will hear much of the Tenets of Freemasonry. This word is generally used to describe a principle, belief, or doctrine held to be true, especially by an organization.

The Principal Tenets of Freemasonry are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. It is necessary not to overlook the word "Principal," for it signifies that, while our Fraternity lays the greatest emphasis on these three teachings, yet there are others which must not be overlooked.

No man can question these teachings; they are self-evident – beyond cavil. Men are too likely to consider Brotherly Love, while highly desirable, as not practicable, and therefore a vision to be dreamed of, but never possible of attainment. Masonry challenges this thought, and even names Brotherly Love as one of its principal tenets. Freemasonry does not tell us that the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth ought to be true, that it would be better for us all if they *were* true – she tells us that they *are* true. They are tremendous realities in human life, and it is as impossible to question their validity as to question the ground under our feet, or the sun over our heads. Our problem is not whether to believe them, but what are we going to do with them?

Brotherly Love

What, then, is Brotherly Love? Manifestly, it means that we place on another man the highest possible valuation as a friend, a companion, an associate, a neighbor. By the exercise of Brotherly Love, we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family. We do not ask that from our relationship we shall achieve any selfish gain. Our relationship with a brother is its own justification, its own reward. Brotherly Love is one of the supreme values; without it life is lonely, unhappy, ugly. This is not a hope or a dream, but a fact. Freemasonry builds on that fact, provides opportunities for us to have such fellowship, encourages us to understand and to practice it, and to make it one of the laws of our existence; one of our Principal Tenets.

Relief

Relief is one of the forms of charity. We often think of charity as relief from poverty. To care for the helpless or unemployed is usually deemed a responsibility resting on the public. As a rule the public discharges that responsibility through some form of organized charity, financed by general subscriptions or out of public funds.

Our conception of relief is broader and deeper than this. We fully recognize the emergency demands made by physical and economic distress; but we likewise understand that the cashing of a check is not necessarily a complete solution of the difficulty. There sometimes enters the problem of readjustment, of rehabilitation, of keeping the family together, of children's education, and various other matters vital to the welfare of those concerned; and through the whole process there is the need for spiritual comfort, for the assurance of a sincere and continuing interest and friendship, which is the real translation of our first Principal Tenet: Brotherly Love.

Masonic Relief takes it for granted that any man, no matter how industrious and frugal he may be, through sudden misfortune, or other conditions over which he has no control, may be in temporary need of a helping hand. To extend it is not what is generally described as charity, but is one of the natural and inevitable acts of brotherhood. Any conception of brotherhood must include this willingness to give necessary aid. Therefore, Relief, Masonically understood, is a tenet.

Truth

Truth, the last of the Principal Tenets, has a profound meaning. Scripture declares that God is "A God of truth . . . just and right is he." Truth, then, is infinite; a term including the truth about all that is – an indispensable, intrinsic quality of existence and stability. To be good and true is the first lesson we are taught in Masonry. In any permanent brotherhood, members must be truthful in character and habits, dependable men of honor on whom we can rely to be faithful fellows and loyal friends. Truth is a vital requirement if a brotherhood is to endure, and we therefore accept it as such.

Thus Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth are the Principal Tenets of Masonry. There are other tenets, also; teachings so obvious that argument is never necessary to sustain them. With this in mind we urge you to ponder the teachings of the Craft as you progress from degree to degree. You may not find them novel, but novelty is unimportant in the light of the knowledge that the truths upon which Freemasonry is founded are eternal. The freshness of immortality is on them because they never die; in them is a ceaseless inspiration and an inexhaustible appeal. They are tenets of Freemasonry because always and everywhere they have been tenets of successful human life.

Symbolism

You have already discovered that Masonry's method of teaching is by symbolism and allegory. Now, a symbol is the visible sign of something invisible, like an idea; for instance, the figure 7 is a symbol of a mathematical idea – it is not the idea itself. One of the most noted of Masonic writers, Albert Pike, has said that Masonry's symbolism is its soul. "Every symbol in a Lodge is a religious teacher, the mute teacher also of morals and philosophy."

Note that word "mute." Masonry's symbols speak not to the casual attendant, nor to the superficial physical senses, but to the understanding heart – to the spiritual senses of man. Your interpretation of them is necessarily then peculiarly your own, and will be inspirational in the degree, that you seek to understand them. And in that degree only will you become truly a Mason.

Without attempting to review them all, one by one, let us briefly discuss a few of these symbols.

The Three Great Lights

First, the Three Great Lights, foremost of which is the Holy Bible on the altar. As previously explained to you, in other parts of the world you may find there the Koran of the Moslem, the Vedas of the Brahman, or the Zendavesta of the Parsee, for our Fraternity bestows its approval upon no one religion. But always the book upon the altar is the Sacred Book of the Law – the symbol of man's acknowledgement of Deity and of man's relationship to Him. And, because of this *universality* of Masonry, we find here one of our greatest lessons – that of tolerance. Also implicit here is, of course, reverence for God, and obedience to Him.

Second among the Three Great Lights is the Square. It teaches us "to square our actions," and to regulate our conduct by the principles of morality and virtue. This idea has become common in our everyday conversation.

The third of the Three Great Lights is the Compass. This useful instrument assists in making accurate measurements so vital to the architect's plans in assuring grace, proportion and stability, as well as lending beauty to the structure. As you recall the words describing its Masonic use, remember that the word "passions" includes all feelings or emotions – fear, anger, envy, hate, love, joy, sorrow, anxiety, etc., as well as the one commonly associated with it. In short, the Compass symbolizes poise, balance, assurance, confidence in man's true spiritual nature, serene above all the negative influences, which would demoralize, degrade and undermine.

Masonic Light

All through Masonry you will find that "Light" has a great symbolical meaning. Light as opposed to darkness suggests many opposites, with Light always symbolizing the principles for which Masonry stands; and its opposite, darkness, typifying those things, which are antagonistic. Moreover, before your initiation, you were in darkness concerning much of Masonry, but later were partially enlightened, and in this sense light is a means of discovery. Mental or spiritual blindness cuts off the individual from all that makes life worth living, but as light comes with increasing intensity he finds himself entering a new existence. Light has made possible, but it remains for him to explore, to understand, and to conform.

The Cable-Tow

The Cable-Tow is another symbol. It was a physical means of restraining you, and was no longer necessary when you accepted and pledged compliance with whatever Masonry held in store for you. It is therefore a symbol of your obligation. A further significance will be revealed to you later on in your journey.

Circumambulation

Your passage from station to station was symbolic. In that it was to impress upon you that Masonry is not a static experience, but one of progress, or enlightenment, and that it is not a solitary, lonely journey, but one enriched by the companionship, the experience, the guidance, and the Brotherly Love of your brethren.

Working Tools

You were presented with two of the working tools of our Fraternity, the Twenty-four Inch Gauge and the Common Gavel. Others will be presented to you later on. These, too, are symbolic, for in them Masonry finds significant lessons, as you were taught – lessons whose application is both spiritual and practical in our everyday routine. Other working tools are yet to be presented; their very presence will declare there is constructive work to be done, and their nature will indicate the direction this work is to take. You will also encounter other symbols, each one with a depth of meaning, which will challenge your interest, and reveal still more of the character and purpose of our great Fraternity.

The Apron

You will recall the exalted symbolism of the Apron. Here is yet another concept of profound significance: the Apron has always been the badge of a worker; and underlying the lesson of industry is the great principle of *constructive* work as opposed to that which is *destructive*. Our ancient Operative brethren were builders, not wreckers; let it be remembered that the creative impulse has always been the soul of progress.

Duties, Privileges and Limitations of An Entered Apprentice

As an Entered Apprentice you have an immediate and personal interest in this subject, but you should also realize that it has a permanent interest for every Mason, however long it may have been since he received the First Degree. In a sense we always remain Entered Apprentices: the teachings of the degree remain always in effect; its obligation and charge, subject to additions in the succeeding degrees, continue to be binding. As Masons we associate with Apprentices, work with them, perhaps are sought by them for counsel. Therefore it is important for us to have as clear an understanding as possible of the duties, privileges and limitations of Apprentices.

Limitations

An Apprentice cannot vote or hold office. He is not entitled to Masonic burial nor may he walk in public Masonic processions, as the public assumes that every man therein is a full-fledged Master Mason, and judges him and the Craft accordingly. An Apprentice may not visit or sit in a lodge except when opened on the First Degree. Since all the business of a lodge is conducted in the Third Degree, he has neither voice nor vote.

Privileges

Nevertheless he possesses certain important rights and privileges. He has the right to be instructed in his work and in matters pertaining to his degree. If charged with violating his obligation, he is entitled to Masonic trial. He has the right to hope for advancement to a higher degree. Also the Apprentice possesses modes of recognition by which he can make himself known to other Apprentices, as well as to brethren who have taken additional degrees, and he has the privilege of using them.

Duties

Complete faithfulness to his obligation and implicit obedience to the charge are among his important and lasting responsibilities. It is also the duty of the Apprentice to learn the required portions of the degree with thoroughness, not only because he must prove himself proficient in order to advance, but also because it contains Masonic teachings of fundamental importance that remain forever binding on every Mason. In a measure the degree is complete within its own field, and its teachings should be permanently incorporated as a part of his Masonic life.

Freemasonry preserves a secrecy about all its work; it meets behind tiled doors; it throws over its principles and teachings a garment of symbolism and ritual; its Art is a mystery; a great wall separates it from the rest of the world. Nor is its work easy to understand.

Master of Our Art

In asking you to learn well the duties, privileges, and limitations of an Entered Apprentice, we also urge you to think of apprenticeship in the larger sense. It is not particularly difficult for a worthy candidate to become a member in name only, but we want your own ambition to extend far beyond that perfunctory stage. We believe that you wish to become a Mason in reality, and that no idle desire for the honor of bearing the name has been your motive for seeking our fellowship. If this be true, we urgently advise you not to be content with the letter and outward form in this, your beginning period, but to apply yourself with freedom, fervency and zeal to the sincere and thorough mastering of our Noble Art.

The Four Cardinal Virtues

During your Entered Apprentice experience, you will recall, you were presented with a Lambskin – "a white leather apron – an emblem of innocence – the badge of a Mason." An emblem of innocence! May you wear it as a constant reminder of your responsibility – that no act of yours shall ever bring discredit upon the great fraternity of which you are now a member.

A Blueprint

Actual achievement of such a goal might be deemed impossible but for the fact that shortly thereafter you were given a detailed "blueprint plan," for its accomplishment. How? Let us analyze: You were told that Temperance enables us to regulate and control our passions and prejudices; that Fortitude teaches us to have the courage to stand for the right when we know the right; that Prudence counsels us to form conclusions and to make decisions carefully, thoughtfully, after sound and logical reasoning; that Justice is, in effect, a "square deal" for every man.

But it is most important for you to recall that three times it was pointed out that "this virtue should be the constant practice – the invariable practice – the peculiar characteristic of every Mason." This, you will readily see, is the all-important lesson to be taken from these teachings. They are not merely words to be read and forgotten; they are intended to point out to you your path of life, in the hope that they will become the motivating principles of your daily existence.

Later you were told: "In the State you are to be a quiet and peaceful subject, true to your government and just to your country; you are not to countenance disloyalty or rebellion, but patiently submit to legal authority and conform with cheerfulness to the government of the country in which you live."

It must be evident therefore, when you add the foregoing to the explanation of all that has here been revealed to you, you have a complete "pattern" for determination and demonstration of the kind of life now imposed upon you as a member of the Fraternity.

After you have had a reasonable time to absorb what has here been said to you, and you have at least somewhat familiarized yourself with the lecture you are to learn, we shall meet with you for a further discussion of this, the most important of all the three degrees; most important in the sense that here you obtain your first impressions, and so much depends upon them.

A Note From the Research and Education Committee:

Brothers, don't just TAKE the degrees – STUDY THEM! Learn them! Learn what they mean! If you don't, you are just cheating yourself! You are paying for them, so learn well their lessons. You will then appreciate their truths, their beauty, their deep significance, and their value to you. You will be well repaid, for they will make you a better man, a happier man, a more useful citizen, a better church member – Mason in fact as well as in name. Otherwise Masonry will be to you but an empty shell, echoing with hollow sounds. The Craftsman who gauges his life in accordance with Masonic Moral Law will be a more loyal friend, a more understanding husband and father, and he will know the real joy of living. Masonry is not merely a ritual, a club, a lodge; it is a way of life, a plan for living.