



**The  
Entered  
Apprentice**

## Foreword

In the belief that you would welcome some additional “light” upon the fraternity to which you have just gained admittance, and upon your own place therein, this booklet 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 established 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 booklets as they are presented.



## The Entered Apprentice

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You are now an Entered Apprentice. 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's 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 Fellow Craft. Perhaps its ceremonies seemed strange to you; its languages 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 the 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.

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 youth, usually ten to fifteen years of age. He was required to be of sound body in order to do work requiring physical strength and endurance. He had to be of good habits, obedient, and willing to learn, and of unquestionable reputation, and be well recommended by masons already members of the craft.

When such a youth 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 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, indentured, to one of the more experienced master masons. As a rule he lived with his master mason, and from him day by day learned the methods and secrets of the trade. This apprenticeship usually lasted seven years. 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, and because of this official entering of his name, he was given the title "entered apprentice."

It is difficult to exaggerate the care operative masonic forbearers devoted to these learners. The intender, as the master mason to whom the apprentice was

indentured was called, was obligated by law to teach him theory as well as practice. Not until the apprentice, after many years could prove 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 to 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 apprentices 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's Degree in a modified form was retained as one of the degrees of the speculative lodge.

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. And 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 in open lodge. 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 cornerstone. The meaning of that lesson should now be clear to you. You are a cornerstone 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 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 this 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 the 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.

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's 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; lodges are quarries because they are scenes of toil. 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.

## **A 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**

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.

By a "tenet" of Freemasonry is meant some teaching, so obviously true, so universally accepted, that we believe it without question. Examples lie everywhere about us.

Freemasonry considers brotherly love, relief and truth to be teachings of this kind, true in the sense that no man can question them: they are obvious, self-proving, axiomatic. It is not uncommon

for men to consider brotherly love, while highly desirable, as not practicable, and therefore but a vision, to be dreamed but never possessed. It is challenging for Freemasonry to call these “tenets,” thus stating that they are both obviously and necessarily true. Unless you grasp this, and see that the principals of Freemasonry are self-evident realities, not visionary ideals, you will never understand Masonic teachings. For Freemasonry does not tell us that the principals of brotherly love, relief and truth *ought* to be true, that it would be better for us all if they *were* true — it 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 we are going to do with them?

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 which 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, to make it one of our laws of existence; one of our Principal Tenets.

*Relief* is one of the forms of charity. We often think of charity as relief from property. To care for the helpless or unemployed is deemed usually 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 economical 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, or 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.

By *truth*, the last of the Principal Tenets, is meant something more than the search for the truths in the intellectual sense, though that is included. Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation

of every virtue. 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 inexhaustible appeal. They are tenets of Freemasonry because always and everywhere they have been tenets of successful human life.

## Symbolism of the First Degree

“The symbolism of Masonry is the soul of Masonry. Every symbol of a lodge is a religious teacher, the mute teacher also of morals and philosophy. It is in its ancient symbols and in the knowledge of their true meanings that the pre-eminence of Freemasonry over all other orders consists. In other respects, some of them may compete with it, rival it, perhaps even excel it; but by its symbols it will reign without a peer when it learns again what its symbols mean, and that each is the embodiment of some great, old, rare truth.”  
—Albert Pike.

Without specifically reviewing, one by one, the various symbols you have observed, their general significance may be summarized, and at the same time perhaps made even more clear in personal application.

All through Masonry you will find that “light” has a great symbolic meaning. Light as opposed to darkness suggests many opposites, with light always symbolizing the principals for which Masonry stands; and its opposite – dark-



ness – 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 this possible, but it remains for him to explore, to understand, and to conform.

Your complete acceptance and pledged compliance with whatever Masonry may have in store justified your release from the symbolic restraint of the cable tow.

One symbolic ceremony in which you participated, and which was not fully explained at the time, holds a number of meanings; one, that your passage from station to station may remind you that Masonry is not a static experience, but one of progress: a journey not solitary, but enriched by the guidance and fraternal spirit of your brethren.

The explanation of the presence of the

Holy Bible on the altar could not tell the whole story, although true in itself. It represents the sacred book of the law, but has not exclusive rights as such on the altar of Freemasonry, for the supremely sane reason that no one religion has exclusive right within the Fraternity. The Vedas of the Brahaman, the Zendavesta of the Parsee, the Koran of the Mohammedan, have, among the Masons of these faiths, as rightful a place upon our altar as the Holy Bible. In any faith, however, its sacred book of the law is the symbol of man's acknowledgement of and his relation to Deity. And in this universality of Masonry we find one of our greatest lessons: toleration.

The working tools of our ancient operative brethren still survive in both actual and symbolic form. We are concerned only with the latter, but in them lie some of the most significant lessons Masonry has to teach. Their application is spiritual, ethical and moral; and make no mistake: their application is also unfailingly practical, in that they claim admittance to our commonplace, everyday routine, and then influence should rest thereon with considerable weight.

It should be helpful to have a brief reminder of the working tools already presented. Your attention was directed to our recognition of a Supreme Being; to a realization of service to our fellowmen with special emphasis on our fraternal ties; to a steady adherence to our chosen vocation, implying both present and (hopefully) future independence; and to proper conservation of our energies – the sum of all these being a *well balanced* chart for living.

One of the Great Lights is the compass or compasses – as truly a working tool of the operative mason as any of the rest. While it assisted in making accurate measurements so vital to the architect's plan in assuring proportion and stability (both necessary also in character building), its symbolical use likewise *excludes* beyond its circle that which is harmful and unworthy.

You will recall the exalted symbolism of the apron. There 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.

Other working tools are yet to be presented; their very presence will declare that 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.

### **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 and important 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 addi-

tions 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.

An apprentice cannot vote or hold office. 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.

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 trial. He has the right to apply 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.

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 with its own field, and its teachings should be permanently incorporated in his own 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 profane world. Nor is its work easy to understand.

In asking you to learn well the duties, privileges, and limitations of an Entered Apprentice, we also urge you to conceive 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 royal art.





