

Book No. 4

THE MASTER MASON



The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge
of the Most Ancient and Honorable
Fraternity of Free and Accepted Ma-
sons of Pennsylvania and Masonic
Jurisdiction Thereunto Belonging.

This is the fourth of four Booklets for the use of candidates for initiation and membership as they progress in the work.

Grateful appreciation is extended to the Grand Lodges of Iowa and Indiana for permission to make use of the substantive matter in similar Booklets adopted by those Grand Lodges.

Foreword

It is safe to say that among the countless thousands who have in the past been raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, no one of them realized at the time the full implications of the ceremony. This would be clearly impossible. Yet it is vitally important that the deeper meanings of this degree be understood if one is to become a Master Mason in fact as well as in name.

This final booklet is intended to indicate something of what lies beyond the instruction you have already received. If it encourages you to investigate still further it will indeed have served a good purpose; the literature of Masonry in all its many phases is within your reach and your Worshipful Master or Secretary can give you particulars.

“On the Threshold” is the appropriate title of the first booklet presented to you; in a sense, it would be equally fitting for this one also, for while you have been given the third or Master Mason’s degree, you have by no means finished your Masonry; on the contrary you have only completed your entrance into the Fraternity. You now stand actually “on the threshold” of a new and potentially important experience, which should mature into a life relationship rich in its values to you, and marked by your own loyalty and usefulness to the Craft.

The Master Mason

You are now a Master Mason and, by reason thereof, a member of the oldest and largest fraternity in the world, an institution whose beginnings are lost in the dim reaches of the past. You achieved this distinction by participating in ceremonies which men have practiced in one form or another, but always with the same idea and purpose, since the childhood of the human race.

Your enjoyment of Freemasonry, its value to you in your future life, your contribution to the fulfillment of its great mission, will be in direct proportion to your understanding of its secrets, which, if you recall the degree through which you have just passed, you do not yet have and which can only be gained by your own endeavors and the assistance of your brethren. Your own endeavors will depend entirely on your devotion to Freemasonry's great mission, the bringing to mankind of a full comprehension of the Brotherhood of all men under the Fatherhood of one everliving God.

Much has been written of Freemasonry. Probably your own Lodge possesses a library of books telling of the history of Freemasonry and treating of its philoso-

phy, symbolism, and jurisprudence. Many of its books are at your disposal at all times and there are many others that you may purchase for study in your own home. There are also many magazines on the subject. The Grand Lodge Library, Masonic Temple, Broad and Filbert Streets, Philadelphia, is one of the great Masonic Libraries of the world. You CAN learn more and more about Masonry if you WILL. But you yourself must furnish the WILL.

This booklet is only an introduction to the great field of Masonic learning—an invitation to you to enter that field for your own pleasure and profit. We hope it will provide a starting point from which you will go on and on in a search for Masonic light. Your efforts will be richly rewarded.

Freemasonry has many sides. To the lover of ritual, it is the quintessence of beauty; to the jurist, it reveals a great field of jurisprudence in its landmarks, traditions, customs, constitutions and laws; to the research student, it opens avenues of investigation that would require a lifetime to pursue. The philosopher here discovers a simple yet profound solution of the problem of human relationships, while the historian finds the beginnings of democratic thought and the foundations of democratic political organization. And to every man it presents unlimited opportunities for fine and helpful friendship and encouraging companionship.

The History of Freemasonry

You have learned how Operative Masonry became gradually transformed into Speculative Freemasonry. There are today Speculative Lodges that began as Operative Lodges and which have had a continuous existence since the Sixteenth Century. There is Mary's Chapel Lodge in Edinburgh which has continuous written records since 1599.

However, they were all individual Lodges with no actual bond between them. In 1717 four such Lodges in the City of London united to form the first Grand Lodge—the Grand Lodge of England. The substance of the Constitution adopted by that Grand Lodge became the foundation of the Constitutions of all succeeding Masonic Grand Lodges. Organized Freemasonry, as we know it today, dates from 1717.

The history of the spread and development of Freemasonry through the world is a fascinating study. At the end of this booklet you will find some references should you wish to pursue the subject further.

Duties of a Master Mason

There are three great duties you are strictly to observe and inculcate—to God, your neighbor and yourself. To God, in never mentioning His name but with reverential awe, to implore His aid in all your

laudable undertakings and to esteem Him as the giver of every good and perfect gift; to your neighbor in doing unto him as you would he should do unto you; to yourself in avoiding all irregularity and intemperance that may impair your faculties and bring reproach upon our Fraternity.

In the state as a Master Mason you are expected to obey the law, uphold the constitution, take an intelligent interest in the government and conduct yourself as a dutiful citizen. In your everyday life you should be careful to avoid censure or reproach, strive to extend the spirit and principles of Freemasonry to the whole life and transactions of mankind and conduct yourself in a manner that will be a credit to the Craft. In the Lodge you should assist and cooperate in its labors, be obedient to those in authority and careful not to disturb its peace and harmony.

You have been told to study the Ritual, as some knowledge of it is essential to you in visiting other Lodges. However, in order that you may interpret for yourself your obligations and responsibilities to the Craft, to yourself and to society, it is earnestly recommended that you continue your Masonic education by the study of its history, philosophy and symbolism. A suggested list of books on Freemasonry will be found on the last page of this pamphlet.

If you are approached by a man who desires to be initiated into Freemasonry, be particularly careful not to recommend him unless you know the petitioner personally, have made a thorough investigation of his character, standing in the community and fitness to be made a Mason and are convinced that his motive is a proper one. Always remember that by endorsing him as worthy of becoming a Mason you have involved your own standing as a man and a Mason. Masonry is intended to take good men and make them better. Hence no man who in his everyday life fails to practice honest dealings with his fellows should be recommended as one qualified to be a Mason.

As a Master Mason you are obligated to abide by the laws, regulations, and edicts of the Grand Lodge, the by-laws of your own Lodge and to maintain and support the ancient usages, customs and landmarks of the Fraternity.

The Rights of a Master Mason

As a Master Mason you have the right to belong to a Lodge. You had to receive the Degrees under the supervision of the Lodge which approved you and upon receiving the Entered Apprentice Degree you automatically became a member of that Lodge. As a Master Mason, you have the right to a voice and a vote, to offer your opinions on what-

ever subjects are presented for decision and to introduce any motion which you may suppose will be for the advantage or honor of the Fraternity. You are eligible to hold office and have exactly the same share in the Lodge's privileges and activities, subject to the same terms and conditions, as every other member. There are no privileged classes in Masonry.

As a member of your Lodge, you are also a member of a world wide Fraternity. Wherever you go throughout the world, at any time, and regardless of circumstances, you are in possession of the same rights and privileges. Your rights and privileges belong to you as a Master Mason; those that belong to you as a member of your Lodge are only incidental.

You have the right to seek to visit any regular Lodge anywhere in the world. Of course, you must be able to pass an examination, or be vouched for, and you cannot enter unless the Master permits, but your right to request to visit is an inalienable one that nobody can ever take away from you as long as you remain in good standing in your Lodge. This is one of the most precious of our privileges, because when we are in foreign parts or among strangers it enables us to enjoy fellowship and to become acquainted.

Should you move to another locality, state or country and wish to affiliate with a

Lodge in your new home, you have the right to tender your resignation to your Lodge. Such resignation can be accepted only by official action of the Lodge, but it is expected that the Lodge will cheerfully accept it for any good reason, providing, of course, your dues are paid in full and charges are not pending against you.

Before exercising your right to make Fraternal contact with another Masonic Lodge, especially if it is in another community, state or country, you should first ascertain if that Lodge is "Regular." Freemasonry has its imitators who use its outward guise and its symbols for their own ulterior motives. They and their lodges are "clandestine," "irregular"; and true Freemasons are forbidden to have any communication with them. The Secretary of your Lodge has a list of all "Regular" Masonic Grand Lodges as well as subordinate lodges throughout the world which are recognized by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

As a Master Mason, in good standing, you have the right to Masonic Burial. Perhaps this may appear on the face of it to be an empty privilege, because its recipient is not there to enjoy it, but in reality it is one of the most important. As with the right of visitation, this privilege is yours whether at home or in some remote section of the world. By previous arrangement, or the simplest request of a friend or relative,

the Brethren of any regular Lodge of Master Masons will tenderly perform this final rite according to Masonic customs and usages. And as a Master Mason in good standing you are privileged to take part in the services conducted by a Lodge of Master Masons for your Brother; do not let too flimsy an excuse prevent your so doing!

All of these are legal and technical rights, vital to your security and welfare as a Master Mason, but over and beyond these is your right to share in all that a Lodge is or does, to complete participation in the whole rich heritage of general Masonry. And what a heritage it is! In its history is an inexhaustible well of inspiration and guidance. In its philosophy is one of the most valuable of all the systems of teachings and truths. In its ritual and its symbols are a treasure beyond all reckoning. In the work it is doing for the world is a rare satisfaction for a man who dreads to live uselessly. It is in itself, a great world of fellowship, of tradition, of wisdom, and of power. And every one of us, however humble he may consider himself to be, or obscure, or poor, and regardless of what titles he may or may not hold, has in all this mighty heritage the same equal share as every other. To have Masonry come into your own life with all its fullness and power is at once your chief right and your richest privilege.

The Ballot

MASONIC AND UNMASONIC USE

It is of the utmost importance that you have a clear understanding of the ballot, as its exercise is a duty and an obligation as well as a right and a privilege.

The blackball is to be used to bar the unworthy from the privilege of membership but it is unmasonic to cast a blackball out of personal spite or private prejudice. When you vote it should be in an official capacity, as a Mason, and not as a private individual, and your sole thought should be for the good of Freemasonry.

In order to make proper distinction between the "worthy" and the "unworthy" the petitioner's character, position in society and fitness to be made a Mason must be determined.

Note these three specifications, "character," what the man really is; "position in society," his ability to afford Masonry without financial injury to family or any one else; and "fitness to be made a Mason," his moral and physical condition in detail.

Sometimes reputation is confused with character. Reputation is not necessarily what a man is, but more frequently what people think he is. His words and acts may be misconstrued, misinterpreted, even misrepresented, because of some peculiarity of the man on one hand and of prejudice of his

fellows on the other. If his reputation is subject to criticism, in justice both to the petitioner and to Freemasonry, it should be determined beyond all reasonable doubt as to whether or not it reflects his true character.

“Standing in society” is defined by some as financial, or the ability to afford Masonry. Of far greater importance is the petitioner’s standing as a man and a citizen. What is his influence upon the community? Is he serving his fellows and what is his attitude toward progress and uplift? A man who is generally recognized to be of little consequence to society may generally be adjudged to be of little consequence to Masonry.

In order to determine the candidate’s “fitness to be made a Mason,” it is necessary to consider the landmarks as regards age, sex, soundness in all members and possession of his senses. It is well, too, to stress dependence on God as well as a belief in Him. He should be able to control his tongue, to yield obedience and to keep himself chaste as well as to protect the chastity of the other sex. He must give assurance that he will continue under good Masonic report else he discredits the Craft. He must reasonably be expected to keep his covenants, else he dishonors the Fraternity.

Finally, in the obligation of the Third Degree, there are prohibitions, each and

every one of which makes rejection obligatory upon every member of the Craft.

No Brother has the right to demand that another Brother shall either cast a black-ball for him or interpose an oral objection. If he wishes either of these done, he must do it in person.

One of the most unethical uses of the right of objection is when a member assumes the personal prejudices of a Brother against a petitioner, and worse when he prevents him from becoming a Mason because of the dislike of a friend not a member of the Craft.

Finally a Mason has no right of objection when he predicates protest against a petitioner on any personal dislike, prejudice or animosity.

The ballot is a sacred right; it should always be used with circumspection and only after careful consideration of the qualifications of a candidate. By the admission of worthy men into our ranks, Freemasonry derives its strength and support in its service to God and mankind.

Masonic Ideals

In an address delivered before the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania convened to commemorate two hundred years of Freemasonry in Pennsylvania, October 13, 1931, Past Dis-

trict Deputy Grand Master, Brother Henry S. Borneman, beautifully summarized the ideals of our Fraternity:

“The fundamental and vitalizing program of Freemasonry is to build; to build an ideal; particularly to build that impressive portion of the great Temple of Truth which is dedicated to the beautiful art of fine living.

“The faith of a Freemason has at least three essentials:—First, adherence to a belief in a Supreme Being, the Great Architect of Heaven and Earth, the Giver of all good gifts and graces. Second, the adoption of a Supreme Book of the Law, the Holy Bible, as the only infallible guide of his faith and practice. Third, the enjoyment of the blessed hope of a state beyond this life, where his personality persists and his soul reigns in immortality.

“The practices and conduct of a Freemason are in a Brotherhood which teaches that the burden of each is the burden of all; that the deepening twilight of old age with its weakness of body and fret of mind must be illumined; that the terrors of the open grave must be assuaged; that the widow and the orphan must be supported and encouraged in their despair; that he must tender his staying hand to every brother if he is worthy and his cause is just.

“The technical student of history will never be able to place his finger upon the precise date when this faith or these principles of human conduct were adopted. It is far more important and interesting to record that they have been so long persisted in, and practised in so peculiar, intimate and personal a manner, that the term Freemasonry, aside from its technical signification, has come to mean in a figurative and popular sense a secret or tacit brotherhood where there is instinctive sym-

pathy. Sir Walter Scott said more than a hundred years ago in one of his letters: 'There is a Freemasonry among kindred spirits that always leads them to understand one another at little express of words.' "

When Is a Man a Mason?

Joseph Fort Newton ends his great book, *The Builders*, with a paragraph that has gone around the world. It has been translated into many tongues.

"When is a man a Mason? When he can look out over the rivers, the hills, and the far horizon with a profound sense of his own littleness in the vast scheme of things, and yet have faith, hope, and courage—which is the root of every virtue. When he knows that down in his heart every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic, and as lonely as himself, and seeks to know, to forgive, and to love his fellow man. When he knows how to sympathize with men in their sorrows, yea, even in their sins—knowing that each man fights a hard fight against many odds. When he has learned how to make friends and to keep them, and above all how to keep friends with himself. When he loves flowers, can hunt the birds without a gun, and feels the thrill of an old forgotten joy when he hears the laugh of a little child. When he can be happy and high-minded amid the meaner drudgeries of life. When star-crowned trees, and the glint of sunlight on flowing waters, subdue him like the thought of one much loved and long dead. When no voice of distress reaches his ears in vain, and no hand seeks his aid without response. When he finds good in every faith that helps any man to lay hold of divine things and sees majestic meanings in life, whatever the name of that faith may be. When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something beyond mud, and into the face

of the most forlorn fellow mortal and see something beyond sin. When he knows how to pray, how to love, how to hope. When he has kept faith with himself, with his fellow man, with his God; in his hand a sword for evil, in his heart a bit of song—glad to live, but not afraid to die! Such a man has found the only real secret of Masonry, and the one which it is trying to give to all the world.”

At the Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in March, 1939, the following “Declaration of Principles,” formulated in the Grand Masters’ Conference in Washington in February of that year, was introduced by Grand Master Robert R. Lewis and was adopted by the Grand Lodge. It may be regarded as a broad definition of Masonry. The following is a copy of the

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Freemasonry is a charitable, benevolent, educational, and religious society. Its principles are proclaimed as widely as men will hear. Its only secrets are in its methods of recognition and of symbolic instruction.

It is charitable, in that it is not organized for profit and none of its income inures to the benefit of any individual, but all is devoted to the promotion of the welfare and happiness of mankind.

It is benevolent, in that it teaches and exemplifies altruism as a duty.

It is educational, in that it teaches by prescribed ceremonials a system of morality and brotherhood based upon the Holy Bible.

It is religious, in that it teaches monotheism; the Holy Bible is open upon its altars whenever a Lodge is in session; reverence for God is ever present in its ceremonial, and to its brethren are constantly addressed lessons of morality, yet it is not sectarian or theological.

It is a social organization only so far as it furnishes additional inducement that men may foregather in numbers, thereby providing more material for its primary work of education, of worship, and of charity.

Through the improvement and strengthening of the character of the individual man, Freemasonry seeks to improve the community. Thus it impresses upon its members the principles of personal righteousness and personal responsibility, enlightens them as to those things which make for human welfare, and inspires them with that feeling of charity, or good will, toward all mankind, which will move them to translate principle and conviction into action.

To that end, it teaches and stands for the worship of God; truth and justice; fraternity and philanthropy; and enlightenment and orderly liberty, civil, religious, and intellectual. It charges each of its members

to be true and loyal to the government of the country to which he owes allegiance, and to be obedient to the law of any state in which he may be.

It believes that the attainment of these objectives is best accomplished by laying a broad basis of principle upon which men of every race, country, sect, and opinion may unite, rather than by setting up a restricted platform upon which only those of certain races, creeds, and opinions can assemble.

Believing these things, this Grand Lodge affirms its continued adherence to that ancient and approved rule of Freemasonry which forbids the discussion in Masonic meetings of creeds, politics, or other topics likely to excite personal animosities.

It further affirms its conviction that it is not only contrary to the fundamental principles of Freemasonry, but dangerous to its unity, strength, usefulness, and welfare, for Masonic bodies to take action or attempt to exercise pressure or influence for or against any legislation, or in any way to attempt to procure the election or appointment of government officials, or to influence them, whether or not members of the Fraternity, in the performance of their official duties. The true Freemason will act in civil life according to his individual judgment and the dictates of his conscience.

Bibliography

- The Holy Bible
- Introduction to Freemasonry
Carl H. Claudy
- The Builders Joseph Fort Newton
- The Newly Made Mason . . . H. L. Haywood
- Freemasonry in the Thirteen Colonies
J. Hugo Tatsch
- Symbolism of the Three Degrees
Oliver Day Street
- Great Teachings of Masonry
H. L. Haywood
- Short Talks on Masonry
Joseph Fort Newton
- Masonic Jurisprudence Roscoe Pound
- Ahiman Rezon of Pennsylvania