



TO: Our newest Fellow Craft Brother:

Again, for a third time, we congratulate you... this time on your advancement to the Second Degree, that of Fellow Craft. We are pleased to count you among our number and trust that you will be pleased with what you experience and learn in your travels through Freemasonry.

You probably still have many questions. Hopefully, some of your first questions have been answered and others will be now and later; but as you can see, the more questions that are answered, the more arise. Again, you will be learning a catechism. But, for you to be an informed Mason your Masonic education must go beyond the mere rote or repeating of the catechism's words. You must understand the meaning of the words and lessons buried in the degrees. Again, the following papers or lectures have been prepared to help you to better understand the Second or Fellow Craft Degree. As before, they may be given in the form of Lectures, but we suggested that you also read and re-read them before proceeding to the Third or Sublime Degree of Master Mason. If you have any questions regarding this or the previous Degree of Freemasonry in general, ask your catechism coach or contact the brother previously recommended to you or another learned brother in the Lodge.

Subject No. 1: MEANING OF THE TERM "FELLOW CRAFT"

"Fellow Craft" is one of a large number of terms which have a technical meaning peculiar to Freemasonry and are seldom found elsewhere. A "Craft" is an organization of skilled workmen in some trade or calling: masons, carpenters, painters, sculptors, barbers, etc. A "Fellow" means one who holds membership in such a craft, 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. In Freemasonry it possesses two separate meanings, one of which we may call the operative meaning, the other the speculative.

In its operative period Freemasons were skilled workmen engaged in some branch of the building trade, or art of architecture; like other skilled workmen, they had an organized craft of their own, the general form of which 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, vigorously binding on all members.

It divided its membership into two grades, the lower of which was composed of Apprentices. When such an apprentice proved acceptable to the members, he was required to swear to be obedient, upon which he was apprenticed to the master and worked under a Fellow of the Craft. If he proved worthy, his name was formally entered in the books of the lodge. During his long apprenticeship he was really a bond servant with many duties, few rights, and little freedom.

At the end of his apprenticeship he was 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 thus became a full member he was called a "Fellow of the Craft."

Now that the craft is no longer operative the term possesses a very different meaning, yet it is still used in its original sense in certain parts of the Ritual, and of course it is frequently met with in histories of the fraternity.

Operative Freemasonry began to decline at about the time of the Reformation when lodges became few in number and small in membership. A few of these in England began to admit into membership men with no intention of practicing operative Masonry, but who were attracted by the craft's antiquity and its opportunities for expressions of freedom of thought without fear, to enjoy fellowship with those of kindred spirit and to work for the moral improvement of self and others. These were called Speculative Masons. At the beginning of the eighteenth century these speculatives so increased in numbers that they gained control. Although they adhered as closely as possible to the old customs, they made some changes to fit the Society for its new purposes.

The term Fellow Craft is now used as the name of the Second Degree of the ritualistic ceremonies, of a member of it, and of a lodge when opened in it. You are a Fellow Craft.

Freemasonry is too extensive to be exemplified in a ritual or to be presented through initiation in one evening. There is far too much for a man to learn in many evenings. One degree follows another and the members of each stand on a different level of rights and duties; but this does not mean that the Masonry presented in the First, or in the Second



Degree, so far as its nature and teachings are concerned, is less important, or less binding, than that presented in the Third Degree. All that is taught in the First and Second degrees belongs as 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 of the Masonry presented in each grade. Do not, therefore, be tempted to look upon the Fellow Craft Degree as a mere stepping stone to the Third. Freemasonry gave to you one part of herself in the First, another portion in the Second, and in the Third she will give you yet another, but it is Freemasonry throughout. Therefore we urge on you the same studious attention while you are a Fellow Craft that you doubtless expect to give when you are a Master Mason.

Subject No. 2: INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL OF THE SECOND DEGREE

You are now a Fellow Craft Mason. Our purpose is to try to explain some of the meaning of the degree.

Because the Fellow Craft Degree lies between the Entered Apprentice and Master Mason Degrees you must not fall into the error of considering it a halfway station, a mere transition from one to the other. It has the same completeness, the same importance, as each of the others with a definite purpose. Unless you understand its teachings thoroughly, your initiation will fail.

Many great ideas are embodied in it, which if you understand them, will lead you into an understanding of others. One of these is the idea of adulthood. The Entered Apprentice represents youth standing at the portals of life, his eyes on the rising sun. The Master Mason is 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. Adulthood is a condition, a state of life, a station charged with duties.

The man in his middle years carries the responsibilities. It is he upon whom a family depends for support, on whose shoulders rest the burdens of business, his skill and experience sustain the arts and to his keeping are entrusted the destinies of the State.

What does the Second Degree say to the Fellow Craft, whether in Masonry or in the world at large? The answer brings us to a second great idea that the Fellow Craft may so equip himself that he will prove adequate to the tasks which will be laid upon him. The degree gives us at least three ideas.

The first is that the Fellow Craft must gain direct experience from contact with the realities of existence. You will recall what was said about the Five Senses. Needless to say, that portion of the Middle Chamber Lecture was not intended as a discourse on either physiology or psychology. It is symbolism, and represents what a man learns through seeing, touching, tasting, hearing and smelling — in short, immediate experience. A man garners such experiences only with the passage of time. Each day he comes into contact with facts and what he learns one day must be added to the next until at last, he comes to understand that world and how to deal with it.

The second idea is education. An individual's possible experience is limited. If we learn of life only that with which we are brought into contact by our senses, we would be poorly equipped to deal with its complexities and responsibilities! To our store of hard-won experience we add the experience of others, thus supplementing our information by that of countless men.

We have a picture of this in Freemasonry. In the days when Masons were builders of great and costly structures, the Apprentice was a mere boy scarcely knowing one tool from another, ignorant of the secrets and arts of the builders. Yet, after only seven years, he was able to produce his master's piece and perform any task to which the Worshipful Master might appoint him. This miracle was accomplished, not by his own unaided efforts, but by the Masters guiding his clumsy hands and passing on to him what they had been years in acquiring.

Education is symbolized in the Second Degree by the Liberal Arts and Sciences. Perhaps you were somewhat confused by hearing what was said about grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy, and wondered what such school-room topics had to do with Masonry. The explanation of these subjects was not intended as an academic lecture. Like so much else in the degree, they are symbols, signifying all that is meant by education -- our training by others in skill and knowledge to do or to understand certain tasks.

A Fellow Craft of life, then, must be equipped with experience and knowledge. Yet the third idea is of more importance than either of the others. The third idea is wisdom.



Experience gives us awareness of the world at points of immediate contact. Knowledge gives us competency for special tasks in the arts, professions, callings and vocations. 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 richer than that! It comes to us in all manner of ways, a great variety of experiences, a constant succession of situations, a never ending list of new problems. It is full of people with 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 daily tasks.

If we are to be happy in our life in such a world, we must understand and 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 the 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.

The conductor is not a misleading picture of wisdom. A man may see, hear, touch, and handle things to win rich experience and yet not have knowledge; and a man may have mastered some task, art, or trade, and yet be unhappy and a failure as a human being because he cannot adjust himself to life as a whole.

The Middle Chamber, which is so conspicuous in the Second Degree, has many meanings. It is a symbol of wisdom. By the experience of the Five Senses, through the knowledge gained by the Liberal Arts and Sciences, the candidate is called to advance 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 and balance. If the Fellow Craft will thus equip himself, he need not shirk from his toil nor faint beneath the heat and burden of the day.

Subject No. 3: SYMBOLS AND ALLEGORIES OF THE SECOND DEGREE

Among the allegories peculiar to this degree the most striking and important is that rite in which you acted the part of a man approaching King Solomon's Temple . You came into its outer precincts, passed between the Two Pillars, climbed a flight of winding stairs and at last entered the Middle Chamber where our ancient brethren received their wages of Corn, Wine and Oil. During certain stages of this allegorical journey you listened to various parts of a discourse which Masonry calls the Middle Chamber Lecture.

This allegory is a symbolic picture of the inner meaning of initiation. The Temple is the life into which a man is initiated. That which lies outside the walls of the Temple, from which you were supposed to come, represents, what in Masonry is called, the profane or outside world. A profane is an uninitiated person, that is, one who is not a Mason. The stairs you climbed represent the steps by which the life of initiation is approached -- qualification, petition, election, and the Three Degrees. The Pillars represent birth into the Masonic world. The Middle Chamber represents initiation completed; once arrived there the candidate received the rewards for the ordeals and arduous labors he has endured on the way.

The interpretation of the allegorical picture of Masonic initiation 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 ask, then, what is symbolized by Masonic initiation? It symbolizes the experience of every man who seeks the good life. It teaches us how the good life is found. This will be best explained by one or two examples.

Ignorance is one of the greatest of evils and enlightenment is one of the greatest of goods. How does a man pass from one to the other? In the beginning a man is a profane, stands in the outside darkness, is in that ignorance from which he would escape into the Middle 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. These may be teachers in the professional sense, or those who have themselves learned that which the seeker needs to know, or they may be books. What kind of path does the seeker follow? A winding path on which he must feel his way from stage to stage, for he has never walked it before; it is an ascending path, laborious, arduous, difficult, for there is no royal road to learning. What is the door through which he can enter? There are two - the Outer Door and the Inner Door - for which the Fellow Craft needs the Pass to use. Others may help, but their assistance is limited. Each man must learn by his own efforts. Knowledge is never permanent until it is made a part of ourselves.



What are the rewards? They are found in knowledge, which is useful not only because of what it enables us to do, but 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, 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 by ourselves and by all our forefathers who won it for us.

By the same methods a man wins to all great goods of life, knowledge of God, brotherhood, citizenship, science, and literature. A good life is one in which all good things are enjoyed.

All this is commonplace in the sense that it conforms to the experience of all wise men everywhere. It is not commonplace in the sense that all men understand it or follow it. For many do not understand it, or if they do, have not the will to follow it or else do not sincerely believe it in their hearts. Such men, when young, are so impatient, or indolent, or conceited, that they refuse to submit to a long and painful apprenticeship, but rust into adult life with all its tasks and responsibilities, without training and without knowledge, trusting to their luck.

This belief that the goods of life can happen by chance to the fortunate is a fatal blunder. The satisfying goods of life, spiritual, moral, intellectual, or physical, cannot be won by luck, like a lottery prize, or drop into a man's lap by accident. They cannot come at all except from toil to make them come, and even then only at the cost of changes in our own natures, which are often painful and costly to make.

Such is one meaning of your allegorical entrance into Solomon's Temple as a candidate in the Second Degree. Other symbols and allegories in the degree may be interpreted in the light of that meaning, when the degree as a whole becomes a living power by which to shape and build our lives, not only in the lodge room but in the world of human experience of which the lodge room is a symbol.

Subject No. 4: DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF A FELLOW CRAFT

The first and foremost duty of a Fellow Craft is to live according to the obligations of the degree, to be obedient to the officers of the lodge, and to the rules, regulations and laws of the fraternity; also he must learn well the work. It is expected that he will attend the lodge when opened on his degree as often as possible.

His limitations are equally plain. He can sit in lodge when opened in his own or in the Apprentice Degree, but not when opened in the Third; he is not entitled to vote, to hold office, to have a voice in the business of the lodge, or to enjoy such privileges of relief, burial and joining in public processions as are reserved to Master Masons.

He can ask to be coached and instructed and may counsel with well-informed brethren. He can make himself known to other Fellow Crafts by means of his modes of recognition. Within the necessary limits he may enjoy the social fellowship of the lodge.

A Mason remains a Fellow Craft, save in the legal sense, as long as he lives. Taking the First Degree is like drawing a circle; the Second Degree is a circle drawn around the first; the Third Degree is a still larger circle drawn around the other two and containing both. A portion of Freemasonry is contained within the; first; another part is the second: still a third in the last.

The ideas, ideals, and teachings of the Second Degree as permanently belong to Freemasonry as the Third; the moral obligations continue always to be binding. A Master Mason is as much the brother of Apprentices and Fellow Crafts as of Master Masons.

If you are to understand and possess Freemasonry in its entirety, it is as necessary for you to grasp the Second Degree as the others. Fellow Craft Masonry is Masonry, just as a house is the same house, whether you view it from front, side, or back.

Freemasonry has many faces. Running through all three degrees is the Masonry of the sentiments, fellowship, goodwill, kindness, affection, brotherly love. Also we learn the Masonry of benevolence, expressed in relief and charity. Again we have Masonry as an institution, organized under laws and managed by responsible officers. Yet again we have a Masonry of the ideal that holds before us those great ideals of justice, truth, courage, goodness, beauty and character, which we can always pursue but never overtake.



Masonry holds aloft the Liberal Arts and Sciences as a great symbol of the trained intellect, and declares ignorance to be one of the worst of misfortunes and deadliest of enemies. It proclaims that enlightenment is one of the great goods of life; and which holds that a man must be a Mason in his head as well as in his heart.

This is not a fanciful picture of Freemasonry. Through all the changes of the craft and its transformation more than two hundred and fifty years ago into a speculative fraternity, the great intellectual tradition has remained and stands today embodied in the Second Degree, which teaches Masons to love the Liberal Arts and Sciences.

This masonry of the mind develops one of the real meanings of the Second Degree; it is what is truly signified by the word "Fellow Craft" in the system of Masonry. Whenever you prove yourself a friend of enlightenment, whenever you become a champion of the mind's right to be free to do its work without check or hindrance, when you are the enemy of bigotry or intolerance, support schools and colleges, and labor to translate into action the motto "Let there be light," you live; the teachings of the Fellow Craft Degree.

Subject No. 5: 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 in the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, already you have discovered that Freemasonry has a certain teaching of its own, to expound which is one of the principal functions of the ritual.

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, expounding its teachings in words, Freemasonry uses ritual, symbol, emblem, and allegory. This is not as easy to follow as the schoolroom method, but has a great advantage. It makes a Mason study and learn for himself, forces him to search out the truth, compels him to take the initiative so that the very act of learning is of 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 teaching, they reveal it, but in such a manner that a man must find it for himself. Only when a man finds truth for himself does it remain a permanent possession. A few interpretations of Masonic teachings can only suggest what you will find by your efforts, how you will find it, and where. Necessarily, there can be no exhaustive exposition of Masonic truth, because in its nature it is something each man must discover for himself.

Freemasonry has three tenets, or great teachings which are presupposed throughout: Brotherly Love, Morality and Relief. Brotherly Love is the relationship of blood brothers, a type of the relations of Masons with one another. Relief is the principle of benevolence, charity, sympathy and understanding.

Masonry teaches the necessity of morality, requiring its members to 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 and honorable. A candidate must possess such a character to be qualified for admittance and a Mason must persevere in it to retain his membership.

Freemasonry is devoted to brotherhood, exists to furnish opportunities to its members to enjoy it not only for its own sake but as means to something beyond. Brotherhood rests on a religious basis. We are all brothers because God is the Father of us all, therefore religion is one of the foundations of Masonry and teaches that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

Masonry is dedicated to God, the Great Architect of the Universe. An Altar at the center of every lodge room bears the Holy Bible open upon it. Lodges begin and end their meetings with prayer. When Freemasonry obligates a candidate, he must be upon his knees. Petitioners must believe in God as the Creator of the Universe. All this is genuine religion, not a formal religiousness; it is sincerely held and scrupulously upheld, and without this basis the craft would wither and die like a tree with roots destroyed. The Mason must come upon religion for himself and put it in such form as will satisfy his own mind, leaving others to do likewise. This is Masonic tolerance, one of the prime principles of the craft, and protected by the Old Charge which forbids all sectarian discussion in our assemblies.

Of Faith, Hope, and Charity our craft says, as did Paul, "the greatest of these is Charity." Through the lodge and the Grand Lodge, each of us gives support to the charities maintained by the jurisdiction and lodge. Also each of us must privately extend a helping hand in relief of an unfortunate brother, or of his dependents. Masonry does not advocate a



charity carried to the limits of fanaticism; there is a Cable Tow, the extent of ability and opportunity. We are not asked to give relief in damage to ourselves or hardship 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. In many respects men are very unequal, as in physique, in talents, in gifts, in abilities, and in character. It is, rather, the principle that we owe goodwill, charity, tolerance, and truthfulness equally to 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. Almost the whole of the Second Degree is a drama of education. Masonry is called the Royal Art, and it is expected that our candidates study its practice, consulting with well-informed brethren and making use of the Working Tools. To reverence the wise, to respect teachers, to value and uphold schools, and to encourage the Liberal Arts and Sciences is one of our most ancient traditions.\

The Mason is a good citizen, loyal to his government, taking no part in brawls and rebellions, conducting himself as a moral and wise man, remembering in all things that he has in his keeping his own good name as well as the good name of his fraternity.

These teachings are bound together into an organic unity by the nature and needs of that brotherhood for the sake of which the whole system of the craft exists. To endure, brotherhood must have a spiritual basis. 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 rupture those bonds, hence the need for tolerance. Men cannot easily come together except they have the same rights and privilege, hence the necessity of equality. They cannot work together except 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. Brotherhood cannot exist except in a nation 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 to the concept and practice of brotherhood; from that concept all teachings emerge. Gain a clear understanding of that and you will have that secret by which all else is made plain.

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 a statement of Masonic teachings:

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 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.