Freemasonry is serious and whilst it confers favours on its members, it also makes great demands on them, and these demands we are bound, by our obligation, to endeavour to carry out to the best of our ability.

We must always remember that the All Seeing Eye beholds us, and that whilst we continue to act according to the principle of the Craft we must never fail to discharge our duty towards Him with fervency and zeal.

Where has there ever been a greater or nobler fraternity than ours, whose whole teaching is to unite us into one great band of brothers, with branches stretching from North to South and between East and West.

It seems to me that the essence of every Masonic lesson is presented in the symbolism of the E.A Degree. All Masonic business at one time was transacted in a Lodge opened only on the E.A. Degree.

The Masonic lessons are practical lessons. The Senior Warden tells us that he became a Freemason in order that he might receive master's, or larger, wages. That there may be no misunderstanding as to his meaning monetary wages, he further says, in order to better support himself and family. If we will look honestly into our own hearts, we will see that we paid the price for the Masonic Degrees because we hoped to receive the equivalent or a greater return. If we have not received a return equal to our original and annual investment, it is because we have not applied ourselves to the study of Freemasonry with freedom, fervency and zeal.

But let us understand each other. There is little chance of our making much headway unless we agree on a clear and definite meaning of the terms we use.

It is not only good and pleasant, but it is necessary for us to dwell together in unity of thought, if we would arrive at a harmonious conclusion.

We should therefore endeavour to clearly define our subject.

The word symbol is derived from the Greek, meaning "to compare". A symbol is the expression of an idea by comparison. Often, an abstract idea may be best conveyed by a comparison with a concrete object. A dictionary definition of a symbol would be a sign or representation which suggests something else.

Symbolism, therefore, is the science of symbols or signs, the philosophy or art of representing abstract truths and ideas by concrete things. Symbolism is suggestion; in painting, by colours; in language, by words; music by sounds.

The symbolism of the E.A. Degree is for the apprentice. An apprentice Freemason is one who has begun the study of Freemasonry. Certain qualifications are necessary for every apprentice. The qualifications of a Masonic apprentice are a belief in a God, a desire for knowledge and a sincere wish to be of service to his fellow creatures. Possessing these qualifications, the candidate must follow a course of ancient hieroglyphic moral instruction, taught agreeably to ancient usages by types, emblems and allegorical figures. This is symbolism and symbolism is universal language.
It is the language in which GOD reveals himself to man. The manifestations of nature are only symbolic expressions of GOD.

Children learn best from symbols. Blocks and toys are crude representations of the more complicated things of life. Most of us learned our alphabet and almost everything else by the relationship or correspondence to things with which we were familiar. We are only children after all. Older children call themselves scientists and make their experiments in their laboratories.

Each experiment is a symbol of what is taking place in the real world outside. The Entered Apprentice Freemason in the moral science should give up the rags of his own righteousness and also all precious metals, symbolical of worldly wealth and distinction, and all baser metals, symbolical of offence and defence, in order that he may realize his dependence upon moral forces only. He should be clad in a garment signifying that he comes with pure intentions to learn the noble art and profit by its lessons.

He is carefully examined to ascertain whether he is worthy and well qualified to receive and use the rights and benefits of Freemasonry. Being satisfied that he is worthy and well qualified, he is admitted and is immediately impressed with the fact that he must undergo sacrifice and suffering if he would attain the end he seeks.

Realizing that the good intentions of the candidate, his own righteousness, or even the Lodge organization, are not sufficient, we invoke the blessing and aid of T.G.AO.T.U. upon our search for knowledge and truth. We follow the system of symbolism. When we would know the truth in regard to things too great for our minds to comprehend, we take as a symbol that which is within our mental grasp. We know that the truth about the things we cannot comprehend is identical with the truth in relation to the symbol which we do comprehend.

The apprentice must advance on the square by regular upright steps.

Obligations are duties assumed. We must assume them if we would advance, and having assumed them we are bound by them. Then the light breaks and we begin to see. We find that others, even the most learned, stand like the beginners.

The Worshipful Master is on a level with the Apprentice, and extends a hand which is grasped fraternally, and the Candidate is raised. There is the key to the Master’s word - an open book, but he may never find the word itself.

Then, as before, the Candidate must follow the course of the sun. As is the greatest, so is the smallest. The seeker after light always emerges from the North in the East and passes by way of the south to the West and again into darkness, with full faith and perfect confidence that day will follow night.

He is continually subjected to tests and trials and always held responsible for what he has learned and for that which has gone before.

The lesser lights are the Sun, Moon and Worshipful Master or the Lodge.

The Sun symbolizes the great active principle, the Moon the great passive principle. The Worshipful Master is symbolical of the offspring of the great active and passive principles.

He is the mediator, the child of the two great forces. He sets the Craft to work upon their symbolic studies, which is no light responsibility to be assumed by the unin-
formed. Only chaos and disaster can overtake him who attempts the work he is not qualified to perform. When the E.A has received his Degree he is given his working tools and the primary or elementary instructions as to how to work.

The working tools of an E.A Freemason are the twenty-four inch gauge, the common gavel and the chisel, full explanations of which would be too lengthy to discuss at this time.

The lambskin apron, a most ancient symbol, signifies that it is only by honest, conscientious toil that the moral laws can be learned and applied and that this toil must be done in purity and innocence.

In the lectures which follow the ceremony of the E.A Degree the E.A Freemason is given preliminary information. Again I say it would be too tedious to analyze these lectures at this time. Suffice it to say they are very superficial and of little worth in themselves. They must be understood and felt, if they are to be of any value. Briefly we may describe a Lodge as a place to work, a place to study, analyze and master the moral science so that we may make use of the moral laws and principles in our everyday life.

Symbolically, it is representative of the world, our daily working place.

The foundation of the Lodge and its teaching is squareness. It is, however, supported by three pillars, Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. From which we may learn that in every undertaking, when intelligence or wisdom directs, and strength or power works, then beauty and harmony result. The Lodge is covered with the blue vault of Heaven. Blue is the symbol of equality; it is a proper mingling of all colours; it is perfect concord. It is also symbolical of the universality of that charity, which should be as expansive as the blue vault of Heaven itself.

Charity is not the giving of money alone. It is also necessary to have charity toward the weaknesses and mistakes of others.

In conclusion, I would remark that all the foregoing points out the great necessity of extreme caution in the admission of candidates to our mysteries.

If the E.A Freemason pursues his studies in the moral art with freedom, fervency and zeal, he will receive master’s, or larger, wages and be thereby the better enabled to support himself and family and to contribute to the relief of the distressed.

One of the greatest dangers that the Masonic Student has to guard against is jumping to conclusions without a sufficient basis of reality to warrant his inferences. There are plenty of well-vouched for facts in connection with Freemasonry that merely want carefully collecting and codifying; there is ethical teaching in abundance that only requires to be applied, and no member of the Order can possibly derive all the mental and moral benefits that ought to result from his membership, until he has made an endeavour to master the AB.C. of Masonic teaching, and to understand the meaning of our beautiful ritual and of much of the lovely symbolism that underlies the whole of the system.

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