

**TO THE
MASTER MASON**

--- Book 4 ---

**The Texas Lodge System
Of Candidate Information**

The Grand Lodge of Texas, A.F. & A. M.

The material contained herein is taken, in part, from the Texas Lodge System of Masonic Education, printed in 1959, and adapted from material published by the Grand Lodge of New Mexico. However, we are also grateful to many Masonic Grand Lodges, many writers, many sources, for the information contained in these pages. To the Grand jurisdictions of Georgia, Iowa, New York, Scotland, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington-and even to our own Texas predecessors of 1935-go our deep thanks for their contributions.

**THE COMMITTEE ON MASONIC EDUCATION
AND SERVICE, 1980**

PART I

**A SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL
LECTURE FOR THE NEW
MASTER MASON**

You are now a Master Mason, a member of one of the oldest and largest associations in the World, an institution whose beginnings are lost in the mists of antiquity.

You will never receive a higher honor-nor accept greater responsibility-than you have in being raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. You are entitled to all the Light your Lodge can bestow-and all of the responsibilities that go with membership in the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

Your enjoyment and appreciation of-- Freemasonry, its influence in your life, your contribution to its grand design, will be in direct proportion to your understanding of its secrets. If you will recall the Degree you have just received, you do not yet have all of these secrets, for they can only be gained by your own future efforts, and the assistance of your Brethren. Your success will depend entirely on your devotion to Freemasonry's ideals. For it has been wisely said that the true realization of the Brotherhood of Man depends greatly upon the manhood of the Brothers.

To fully appreciate and realize your Masonic potential-to become a true Master Mason:

- you must have a desire for knowledge;
- you must strive to define and improve your own personal philosophy;
- you must actively seek to understand Freemasonry's philosophy, its history, its religious implications, and its tried and true principles of life; and finally,
- you must recognize that the Master's Degree is just the beginning, and not the end of your search.

Much has been written of Freemasonry. Its field of knowledge is so broad that men have studied a lifetime without scratching its surface. Your Grand Lodge Library possesses thousands of volumes on its history, philosophy, symbolism, and jurisprudence. They are always at your disposal. You CAN learn the mysteries of Freemasonry if you WILL. The WILL you must furnish yourself.

Each new concept, each new level of Masonic Learning you explore will be deeply satisfying and exciting. The old adage "the more you participate, the greater your reward" is particularly true in Freemasonry. The more involved you become, the more you learn, and, in turn, the daily practice of Masonic principles will make your life more secure.

Thus, the real purpose of this discussion is to further introduce you to the great field of Masonic learning. If we can furnish you with a starting point for your search for Masonic knowledge, you may be encouraged to search further. If you do, you will be richly rewarded.

Freemasonry has many sides. To the lover of ritual, it is the quintessence of beauty. To a man interested in law, Masonry reveals a great field of jurisprudence in its landmarks, traditions, customs, constitutions, and laws. If you like research, a whole new world is ready for your exploration. The philosopher discovers in Masonry a simple, yet profound, solution to the problem of human relationships. To EVERY MAN, Freemasonry offers unlimited opportunities for helpful friendship, fellowship, brotherly love.

Much of the symbolism of the Master's Degree has already been explained to you. But not all. Some of it is not so obvious or self-explanatory, yet is very important to an understanding of the mysteries of the Master's Degree.

The circumambulation in the Degree is accompanied by a scripture reading. Hear the words of Carl Claudy, in his Introduction to Freemasonry, as he speaks of this scripture reading:

"Read it how you will, the majestic and the awe-inspiring poetry rings here the solemn warning with a shake of the heart and a shiver up the back... `Remember now thy Creator'...now, before the fearsome storms of life, or the decay of old age is upon you, wait not until `fears are in

the way' to cry for help to the Almighty. Delay not until toothless, sightless, white-haired age asks for help from on high because there is no help left on earth! Remember now thy Creator, while limbs are strong and desire ardent, while life pulses ready and the world is all before...

"No man thinks of his Master Mason's Degree, but hears again in his heart at least the beginning and ending of this sermon in poetry: 'Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth;... then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the Spirit shall return unto GOD who gave it.' The solemn strokes of the bell which is Ecclesiastes, and the heart-gripping drama of the legend of Hiram Abif are never to be known apart by him who has met them together!"

For in the Hiramic Legend is the very essence of Freemasonry, the foundation of its philosophy, the answer to its questions-and yet-its mystery of mysteries.

To understand the symbolism of the Hiramic drama is to UNDERSTAND Freemasonry-to miss its significance is to remain in darkness!

First, look at the story of our Grand Master Hiram Abif as drama, through the words of one of the world's great actors, Edwin Booth:

"In all my research and study, in all my close analysis of the masterpieces of Shakespeare, in my earnest determination to make those plays appear real on the mimic stage, I have never, and nowhere, met tragedy so real, so sublime, so magnificent as the legend of Hiram. It is substance without shadow-the manifest destiny of life which requires no picture and scarcely; a word to make a lasting impression upon all who can understand. To be Master of a lodge, and to throw my whole soul into that work, with the candidate for my audience and the Lodge for my stage, would be a greater personal distinction than to receive the plaudits of people in the theaters of the world."

My Brother, are you satisfied with the legend as drama? I hope not. For you must look further to understand the drama's true symbolic significance, and your search will carry you back to the very beginning of spiritual thought among men.

Always remember that the legend of Hiram is allegorical. There is a Hiram in the Biblical story of the building of Solomon's Temple. He is no doubt the same Hiram. But there is no trace of the legend of his death as *we have it* anywhere in history, either sacred or profane. Thus, to pass through the second section of the Third Degree with the thought that you are portraying an historical event is to miss the meaning of the Degree.

Your first step in understanding the story of Hiram Abif is to see, and never to forget, that the whole Degree is symbolical using that word in its largest sense. A few facts borrowed from history are used in it, but not many, and in each case, not for the sake of history.

Ritual cares for neither time nor place, takes its materials where it finds them, works them over to suit its own purpose. Ritual moves in a timeless, spaceless region; makes its appeal to your mind through your imagination, and has as its purpose the making effective in the experience of a man certain realities of the moral and spiritual life. Therefore, if no record of Hiram Abif is found in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, or if you find that the historical facts given in the ceremony do not agree with the records of the Sacred Writings, or even if they contradict them outright, do not be uneasy. The history, such as there is of it, is fluid, freely re-shaped for ritualistic purpose, just as Shakespeare re-shaped the history of the English Kings in his dramas.

The idea that lies behind the Hiramic legend is as old as religious thinking among men. The same elements existed in the story of Osiris, celebrated by the Egyptians in their temples. The Persians told it concerning Mithras, their hero god. The Dionysian mysteries in Syria had the same elements in the story of Dionysius. And, there is the story of Tammuz, older than any of these. These legends are collectively referred to as the "ancient mysteries." They were celebrated

by secret societies, with appropriate ceremonies, during which the initiates were advanced from one degree to another. Read these old stories for yourself, and see how men of all ages taught the same great truths in the same very effective way.

Hiram's doom is the fate of every man who falls victim to those enemies that interrupt his work, the mastership of himself and in the end becomes buried under all kinds of rubbish, disgrace, and evil habits. The manner in which he was raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular represents the way any man rises from self-defeat to self-mastery. The power that raised Hiram Abif is the same God that will raise us out of the grave of defeat, sin, and death if we will but create the environment in which he can work.

No man can ever fully explain the tragedy of Hiram Abif to another; each must learn for himself. For that reason, you were made to participate by yourself in your own drama. You could not be a spectator because it takes place in your own soul; and if you ever are to be a Master Mason in reality and not in name only, you must experience it yourself. For to truly be a Master Mason is to be master of yourself.

Fix the study of Hiram Abif firmly in your mind. It will furnish you guidance, strength and wisdom when you come face to face with your enemies, both within and without yourself. It can strengthen your character, help you master yourself, and let you stand tall as a Master Mason and as a Man.

The Degree of a Master Mason has one other great mystery to show us. We speak of it sometimes as "The Word," sometimes as "The Secrets of a Master Mason," sometimes as "That Which Was Lost," and again as "The Lost Word." To us, it is the symbol of the truth concerning God and man, and the relationship of God to man and of man to man. We spend a lifetime searching for "The Word," with only the assurance that sometime, somewhere, when our labors here on earth are ended, when Wisdom, Strength and Beauty exist at one and the same time, then we shall know it in all its fullness. Until then, we must be content with a substitute.

Again, as in the story of Hiram Abif, we are not original in our philosophy of the Word. The Jewish people had a tradition of a great word of which none but the High Priest knew the pronunciation, and he could pronounce it only in the Holy of Holies of the Temple.

But, you may ask, why are we so continually admonished to search for this Master Mason's Word? Why this ceaseless, endless search for perfection and truth, only to receive a substitute? Because, my Brother, in the very search for perfection, we come nearer to it. Like the cathedral spires of a great Church, which point upwards though they never reach Heaven, we find that in our seeking after the perfect life, we do come nearer and nearer to it. Because of this constant, life-long search, you and I become better men, and live better lives.

Thus, the seeking for the Master's Word is the real purpose of Masonry. It should be the purpose and the object of every true and worthy brother to search for the Secrets of a Master Mason. With the thought of the Unity of God, the hope of immortality, and the seeking after the perfect life, we will build a temple that will be eternal.

ARE YOU A MASTER MASON?

My Brother, we have tried to give you some insight into the nature and purpose of this great Masonic Degree. To understand it, to live by the power of it, and to walk in the light of it will mean a new life for you. Some men become members of our Fraternity and pay dues for a lifetime, and never truly become Masons. Other men never join the Fraternity at all, yet lead beautiful lives of true Masonic excellence. How will you know yourself to be a Mason? Joseph Fort Newton expressed it for all time when he wrote:

"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, yes, 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 highminded 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 a songglad 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."

MY BROTHER, ARE YOU A MASTER MASON?

PART II

TO THE NEW MASTER MASON:

In the preceding pages, we have endeavored to give you a reasonable explanation of the Master's Degree, and its importance in your life. We sincerely hope that you now fully realize, as it was earlier pointed out, "that the Master's Degree is just the beginning, and not the end of your search" for Masonic knowledge.

In Part II of this booklet, we have assembled some additional material for the continuation of your search. Please note that the last item included is a suggested reading list of Masonic books, all of which are available from your Grand Lodge Library for only the cost of the return postage.

The additional reading contained in this booklet includes:

1. **LODGE COURTESIES.** A discussion of Masonic "manners," the traditional conventions and practices observed in the Lodge by all well-informed Masons.
2. **THE BLACK CUBE.** A very important essay on the Mason's most serious responsibility: the ballot.
3. **THE GREAT LIGHT.** Masonry's first and greatest Landmark, the Holy Scriptures, and their importance to our Fraternity.
4. **THE GRAND LODGE.** A short explanation of the background and history of the Grand Lodge concept.
5. **THE DUTIES, RIGHTS, AND PRIVILEGES OF A MASTER MASON.** A brief resume of your responsibilities as a Master Mason, and what you can look forward to in future years.
6. **SUGGESTED READING LIST FOR A MASTER MASON.** A list of twenty-five books readily available from the Texas Grand Lodge Library—a challenge to a forward looking Mason!

LODGE COURTESIES

Conventions are the rules which society makes for itself, without the force of law, by which its members live together with the least friction. It is not a sin to eat with one's knife or to keep one's hat on in the house, but these are not "good form" or good manners.

Masonry has developed its own conventions, by which its members act toward each other in lodge and the anteroom. Not to act according to their dictates is not a Masonic offense; it is merely a lack of Masonic manners.

As you passed through the degrees you received the obligation and instructions in the Ritual. You were carefully taught those essential things which a man must know in order to be a Mason. But unless you belong to a most unusual Lodge, or had a most wise brother for a mentor, it is doubtful if you were told much about these little niceties of Lodge conduct. You are supposed to attend your Lodge and learn by observation.

Not all brethren are observing, however. It is not uncommon to see some brother, old enough in Masonry to know better, crossing the lodge room between the Altar and the East. He might have observed that his brethren did not do it, except in the ceremonial rites on certain occasions; but it is more difficult to note the absence of an act than to take cognizance of something done.

Brethren do not pass between the Altar and the East in Lodge, except as before stated. It is a convention; there is no penalty for its infraction. It is a courtesy offered the Master. It is rooted in the theory that, as the Great Lights and the Charter of the Lodge are essential to the regularity of the meeting, as these are in the particular care of the Master, and he should never be interrupted in his plain view of them, even for an instant.

Well informed brethren do not take seats in the East without invitation. All brethren within the tiled door are deemed to be equal. All seats, then, might ordinarily, be considered open to all. But the East is reserved for the Master and those who have presided over a Lodge. Past Masters have worked hard and long for the Lodge they love. The Master recognizes their devotion and their loyalty with a special word of welcome, and by an invitation to them, to occupy a seat with him in the East where they once sat. From this custom has also developed the invitation to a "seat in the East" to any distinguished visitor, or some member the Master wishes especially to honor. If all in the Lodge helped themselves to seats in the East there would be no opportunity for the Master to offer that courtesy.

Brethren who respect the formalities of their Lodge will not enter it until properly clothed as such; that is, without their aprons on, or while putting those aprons on. The spectacle of a brother walking up to the Altar, tying the strings and adjusting his apron while the Master waits for his salute, is not a pretty one.

A man who entered church putting on his collar and tying his necktie could hardly be arrested, but he would surely receive unflattering comment. The strangeness of the new badge of a Mason, and unfamiliarity with its meaning, cause many to forget that it is important to a Mason in Lodge, as clean clothing, properly adjusted, is to the man in the street.

The Worshipful Master in the East occupies the most exalted position in the gift of the Lodge. A Lodge which does not honor its Master-not because of what he himself may be-but on account of the exalted office he holds, is lacking in Masonic courtesy. The position he occupies, not necessarily the man, must be given the utmost respect, if the traditions of the Fraternity are to be observed.

It is, therefore, to the Master, not to John Smith who happens to be the Master, that you offer a salute when you enter or retire from Lodge. Like any other salute, this may be done

courteously and as if you meant it, or perfunctorily as if you did not care. The man who puts one finger to his hat brim when he speaks to a woman on the street compares poorly with his well-brought-up neighbor who lifts his hat. Taking the hat off is the modern remains of the ancient custom of knights who removed their helmets in the presence of those they felt their friends, and, thus, before those they wished to honor by showing that they trusted them. A man removes his hat before a woman to show his respect. Touching the brim is but a perfunctory salute. Similarly, the salute to the Master is your renewed pledge of fealty and service, your public recognition before all men, of your obligation. It is performed before the Master and the Altar to prove your right to sit in the Lodge as well as to show your veneration for his authority, your respect for all that which he represents. To offer your salute as if you were in a hurry, too lazy properly to make it, or bored with its offering, is to be, Masonically, negligent.

A man in Lodge is expected to always be courteous to his brethren, if he engages in any Lodge activity. Therefore, no Mason sits while speaking, whether he addresses his remarks to an officer or to the Lodge. This of course, does not refer to casual conversation or during refreshment, but to discussions on the floor while the Lodge is at labor.

During refreshment the Master relinquishes the supervision of the craft to the Junior Warden in the South. All that has been said about the respect due the Master in the East applies now to the Junior Warden in the South.

It is illegal to enter or leave the room during the ballot. It is discourteous to leave during a speech, or during a degree, except at several natural periods which end one section and begin another.

A courteous brother does not refuse a request made in the name of the Lodge. There are three duties which devolve upon the membership which are too often "the other fellow's business." Every Lodge at some time has a knock upon the door from some visiting brother. This requires the services of Brethren from the Lodge on the examination committee. Someone has to do that work. To decline it, on any ground whatever, is discourteous to the Master, to whom you have said, in effect, "I don't want to do my share; let George do it. I just want to sit here and enjoy myself while the other fellows do the work."

A degree cannot well be put on without the services of several Brethren. When you are assigned such work, it is not Masonic courtesy to refuse, for the same reasons given above. And if you are selected as a member of the Fellowcraft team in the Master Mason degree, the only excuse for not accepting is that of physical disability. Like other matters discussed here, refusal is not a Masonic offense. Neither is it a legal offense to drink from a finger bowl, or seat yourself at table before your hostess. But the convention of good manners is what makes society pleasant, and Masonic good manners make Lodge meetings pleasant.

A considerate Mason does not talk during the conferring of a degree. The Lodge room is then a Temple of the Great Architect of the Universe; with the Brethren working therein doing their best to make better material for His spiritual Temple. Good manners as well as reverence, dictate silence and attention during the work. Officers and degree workers cannot do their best if distracted by conversation, and the irreverence cannot help but be distracting to candidates.

There is a special Lodge courtesy to be observed in all debates to any motion. One speaks to the Master; the Master is the head of the Lodge. One should not turn one's back on him to address the Lodge.

Failure to obey the gavel at once is a grave discourtesy. The Master is all powerful in the Lodge. He can put or refuse to put any motion. He can rule any brother out of order on any subject at any time. He can say what he will, and what he will not, permit to be discussed.

Brethren who think him unfair, arbitrary, unjust, or acting illegally, have redress; the Grand Lodge can be appealed to on any such matter. But in the Lodge, the gavel, the emblem of authority, is supreme. When a brother is rapped down, he should at once obey, without further discussion. It is very bad manners to do otherwise; indeed, it is close to the line between bad manners and a Masonic offense.

It is a courtesy to the Master to privately advise him beforehand that you intend to offer a motion, or wish to bring up a matter for discussion. You have the right to do so without apprizing him in advance, just as he has the right to rule you out of order; but the Master may have plans of his own for that meeting, into which your proposed motion or discourse might not fit. Therefore, it is a courtesy to ask him privately if you may be recognized for your purpose, and thus save him the disagreeable necessity of seeming arbitrary in a public refusal.

Lodge courtesies, like those of the profane world, are founded largely on the Golden Rule. They oil the Masonic wheels and enable them to revolve without creaking. They smooth the path of all in the Lodge, and prove to all and sundry the truth of the ritualistic explanation of that "more noble and glorious purpose" to which we are taught to put the trowel.

THE BLACK CUBE*

"The white balls elect, the black cubes* reject."

This statement is always made prior to voting on the application of one who would be an initiate of Texas Freemasonry.

The ballot on the petition of an applicant is taken secretly that is, with no brother knowing how another may vote. In Texas it is an infraction of Masonic law to endeavor to ascertain how another brother will vote, or has voted on an applicant or to disclose how he voted or will vote.

The "secrecy of the ballot" and the requirement that a ballot be unanimous to elect are two of the greatest bulwarks of the Fraternity. Occasionally both the secrecy and the unanimity may seem to work a hardship on a man apparently worthy of being taken by the hand as a brother; but no human institution is perfect, and no human being acts always according to the best that is in him. The occasional failure of the system to work complete justice may be laid to the individuals using it, and not to the Fraternity.

Harmony is the chief strength and support of all well regulated institutions, especially this of ours. Harmony-oneness of mind, effort, ideas and ideals-is one of the foundations of Freemasonry. Anything which interferes with Harmony, by so much; hurts the Institution. Therefore, it is essential that lodges have a harmonious membership; that no man be admitted to the Masonic home of any brother against his will. For this reason it is required that the names of applicants to a Lodge be set before the entire membership, prior to a vote that all may know that he is to be balloted upon; that any who think him unfit timber for the Lodge, or who have personal objections to entering into the sacred relation of brotherhood with him, may have the opportunity to exclude him.

The power thus put in the hands of the individual Master Mason is very great. No officer, not even the Grand Master, may inquire as to how you vote, or why you voted as you did. No

NOTE: The ballot box in a Masonic Lodge is composed of white balls, and usually, black cubes. However, some Lodges still use black balls, instead of cubes. The black cubes are strongly preferred, since they materially reduce balloting error due to failing eyesight or lack of attention. Grand Master has the power to set aside the black cubes you cast. If in the ballot box there is a single black cube, the applicant is rejected.

The brother who casts a ballot, then, upon the petition of an applicant, wields a tremendous power. Like most powers, it can be used well or ill. It may work harm or good, not only upon him against whom it is used, but to him who uses it. Unlike many great powers put into the hands of men, however, this one is not subject to review or control by any human agency. No king, prince, potentate; no law, custom or regulation; no Masonic brother or officer, can interfere with the individual's use of his power with the ballot.

For no one knows who uses the black cube. No one knows why one is cast. The individual brother and his God alone know.

The very absence of any responsibility to man or authority is one of the reasons why the power should be used with caution and intelligence, and only when, after solemn self-inquiry, the reason behind its use is found to be sound.

Any one can think of a hundred reasons why black cubes are cast. If the lodge might suffer, we have the best of reasons for seeing that he is rejected. Such use of our power is proper, Masonic, ethical, wise and just.

But there is another side of the shield. Unfortunately, no hard and fast rule can be laid down. There is no way to explain "this is a good reason, but that is not a good reason" for casting a black cube.

The black cube is the great protection of the Fraternity; it permits the brother who does not desire to make public his secret knowledge to use that knowledge for the benefit of the Craft. It gives to all members the right to say who shall not become members of their lodge family. But at the same time it puts to the test the Masonic heart, and the personal honesty of every brother who deliberates on its use. The black cube is a thorough test of our understanding of the Masonic teaching of the cardinal virtue Justice, which "enables us to render to every man his just due without distinction." We are taught of justice that "it should be the invariable practice of every Mason, never to deviate from the minutest principles thereof."

Justice to the Lodge requires us to cast the black cube on an applicant we believe to be unfit.

Justice to ourselves requires that we cast the black cube on the application of the man we believe would destroy the harmony of our Lodge.

Justice to the applicant-we are taught to render justice to every man, not merely to Masons-requires that no black cube be cast for little reasons, small reasons, mean reasons.

And justice to justice requires that we think carefully, deliberate slowly, and act cautiously. No man will know what we do; no eye will see, save that All Seeing Eye which pervades the inner most recesses of our hearts, and will, so we are taught, reward us according to our merits.

The black cube is a giant's strength to protect Freemasonry, but used thoughtlessly, carelessly, without adequate reason, it not only crushes him at whom it is aimed, but degrades him who casts it.

"The white balls elect, the black cubes reject."

"Be careful how you vote," but a good Mason will always cast his ballot for what he deems to be for the best interest of the Order.

THE GREAT LIGHT

As a Master Mason you will discover how important in the system of Freemasonry are the Ancient Landmarks. Like every other regular Master Mason in the world you stand under the gravest and most solemn obligation to preserve them inviolate; at the time of his installation the Worshipful Master takes an oath to see that his Lodge makes no innovation in them; the Grand Master and his Wardens are similarly charged by Grand Lodge. Loyalty to them is a test of Masonic regularity, and one Grand Lodge will not fraternize with another that is guilty of abrogating them. They are to our Craft what a man's identity is to a man; without them Masonry would cease to be Masonry.

One of the chief of these Landmarks is the law that the Holy Scriptures must be open on the Altar of every Lodge. This is the first to be grasped in our study of the place occupied by the Bible in Freemasonry. The display of the Book at the center of the Lodge room is not for the sake of appearances, as a pious but insincere gesture, or as a badge of respectability; rather it is there to be to the Lodge what the sun is to its planets, a giver of light and of life, a source of law and teachings, a center of gravity about which many things revolve.

The Holy Scriptures have occupied this central place in the Fraternity from the beginning. In our oldest written records it is reported that Operative Masons took their obligations with their lips upon the Book. Long before Operative Masonry became completely transformed into Speculative Masonry, the Craft, to signalize even more clearly to what an extent the Holy Scriptures were the rule and guide of faith, made them The Great Light.

In our technical phraseology in this country, the Holy Bible, along with the Square and Compasses, are styled the "furniture" of the Lodge. You will see at once the great significance of this term. A family cannot live in a house, or maintain itself as such, unless the house is equipped with chairs, tables, beds, stoves and such necessities; in the same manner a family of Masons cannot make a Lodgeroom into a Lodge home without its own furniture and just as the chairs, the benches, and the carpets are the furnishings of the room, so are the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses the furniture of the Lodge which meets in that room; the members of that Lodge, in a symbolical sense, cannot keep house without them.

It is on the Holy Bible that a candidate seals his obligations. The Book in its physical sense, as made of print and paper, is the visible sign of the will of the true and living invisible God. To take one's oath upon it means that the oath is taken so sincerely that the all-searching eye of God can itself find no equivocation or reservation hidden away in the candidate's inner mind. It would be impossible for a man to take a more sacred and binding vow, and he who could be false to it, necessarily, is morally corrupt at the center of his being.

The Holy Bible represents that which is sacred, which is central in a man's spiritual life and in the experiences of his own soul with his God. It is for this reason that the Craft makes no attempt to interpret the Book in a theological sense, or to bind a Mason to this creed, rather than to that but leaves each man free to read it according to his own insight, and in the light of his own conscience. God has his own message to each of us, because no two of us have quite the same needs, and it is not for any other to dictate to a man concerning the mysteries of his own spiritual necessities.

All such facts together mean that Freemasonry is erected upon a foundation of religion-not upon a religion-not upon this religion rather than that-but on religion itself, which is the ground under all the creeds, the sky over all the churches, the one universal source out of which all

creeds and churches have come. Let a man have any name for the Father of all that best pleases him, the name matters not-what does matter is that the Father of all shall be in that man's knowledge and experience, and that is the prime meaning of religion.

Since it is religion in this sense, rather than religion in a merely sectarian sense, that lies as the foundation of Freemasonry, it inevitably follows that religious tolerance is required of every Mason. Indeed, religious tolerance possesses the power and value of a Landmark. Religion is like the gentle rain from heaven which, once it has fallen upon the earth, finds its way underground into this spring, that well, or yonder cistern, and overground into a pool here, a lake there, a brook yonder, into a river, or into a sea; in the same manner faith in God, though it is the life of the whole world, must find its way to the individual, and when it does it becomes translated into the individual's experience and takes the form of his life and conditions. It is everywhere the same faith in general but it is nowhere quite the same in detail. And just as it would be shortsighted and vain to quarrel with the rain because the cistern in which we catch it differs from a neighbor's cistern, so also is it an act of bigotry to quarrel with the fact that religion takes the shape of the habits and modes of thought of the men to whom it comes. If another differs from us in the form of his faith, it is not the difference that should impress us, rather, we should rejoice that he also has found faith.

The denominations and sects, therefore, are to religion what the languages and dialects are to man's power of speech; the number and variety of them are a testimony to the riches of that which they express. Toleration is not merely a restrictive and negative thing-on the contrary it is constructive and positive and is built on the fact that in this world religion is so great and so necessary that it must take many forms to satisfy the many needs of the multiform life of mankind. Not only does Masonry not make war on any church nor permit any of its members to do so in its name, but instead its policy is to look with approval upon all true and sincere churches whatsoever. And if, out of some private dogma of its own, some church should chance to make war upon Freemasonry, we attribute it to a lack of correct information and ignore it, because we wish to be as tolerant of those who differ from us as of those who differ from each other.

THE GRAND LODGE

Prior to the time of the Reformation, Masonic Lodges had very little, if any, organization outside of the individual Lodges. They were individual in their rules and regulations, and their attachment to and with one another was meager. The earliest known meetings among the Craft were called Assemblies. The Assembly was a meeting or an organization nearest related to our present Grand Lodge. One of the earliest known records of the Assembly was published in the York Manuscript No. 1 about the year 1600 wherein it is said "the Edwin procured of ye King his father a Charter and Commission to hold every year an Assembly wheresoever they would within ye realm of England." In the Harleian Manuscript published about 1660 it is ordered "that every Master and Fellow come to the Assembly if it be within five miles about him, if he have any warning."

The Grand Lodge organizations as we now have them are probably in historical continuity with the Grand Assembly. Doubtless the most authentic account of the organization of the first Grand Lodge is found in Dr. James Anderson's work, "The New Book of Constitutions," which was published 1738, and which document was approved by the Grand Lodge itself. Anderson's statement as to the formation of the first Grand Lodge is recorded as follows:

"King George 1. enter'd London most magnificently on 20 Sept. 1714. And after the rebellion was over A. D. 1716, the few Lodges at London finding themselves neglected by Sir Christopher Wren, thought fit to cement under a Grand Master as the Center of Union and Harmony, viz., the Lodges that met,

- "1. At the Goose and Gridiron Ale house in St. Paul's Church-Yard.
- "2. At the Crown Ale-house in Parker's Lane near Drury, Lane.
- "3. At the Apple-Tree Tavern in Charles-street, Covent-Garden.
- "4. At the Rummer Row, Westminster.

"They and some other old Brothers met at the said Apple-Tree, and having put into the chair the oldest Master Mason (now the Master of a Lodge), they constituted themselves a Grand Lodge pro Tempore in Due Form, and forthwith revived the Quarterly Communication of the Officers of Lodges (called the GRAND LODGE), resolved to hold the Annual Assembly and Feast, and then to chuse a Grand Master from among themselves, till they should have the honor of a Noble Brother at their Head.

"Accordingly, on St. John's Baptist's Day, in the 3d year of King George 1. A. D. 1717, the ASSEMBLY and Feast of the Free and Accepted Masons was held at the aforesaid Goose and Gridiron Ale-House.

"Before Dinner, the oldest Master Mason (now the Master of a Lodge), in the Chair, proposed a list of proper Candidates; and the Brethren by a majority of hands elected Mr. Anthony Sayer, Gentleman, Grand Master of Masons (Mr. Jacob Lamball, Carpenter, Capt. Joseph Elliott, Grand Wardens), who being forthwith invested with the Badges of Office and Power by the said oldest Master, and installed, was duly congratulated by the Assembly who paid him the Homage.

"Sayer, Grand Master, commanded the Masters and Wardens of the Lodges to meet the Grand Officers every Quarter in Communication, at the place that he should appoint in the Summons sent by the Tyler."

The organization of New Grand Lodges within the United States has been essentially the same as that adopted by the four Lodges which formed the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. Three or more legally constituted Lodges, working in any State, Territory, or other political subdivision, where no Grand Lodge already exists, may organize, adopt a Constitution and laws and elect officers. The Lodges within the new jurisdiction surrender their warrants or charters to the Grand Lodge which had issued them, and new warrants or charters are then issued by the New Grand Lodge.

There is probably no account of the beginning and development of a Masonic Grand Lodge in the United States more replete with interesting and thrilling details than the account of the early meetings among the Craft in the Grand Jurisdiction of Texas, and which meetings later resulted in the organization of the Grand Lodge of Texas, a short history of which was given you among the first information you received. From that humble beginning, the Grand Lodge of Texas has grown until today it boasts of over nine hundred eighty Lodges within its jurisdiction, and a membership of 220,000.

The Grand Lodge of Texas meets annually in Waco, on the first Friday of December, beginning at 10 am. All Master Masons are welcome to attend Grand Lodge sessions, although only authorized Lodge representatives and Past Masters are entitled to vote on Grand Lodge business.

The annual meetings are held in the awe-inspiring Memorial Grand Lodge Temple, one of the most impressive and beautiful Masonic buildings in the world. Situated on Columbus Avenue, high on a hill overlooking downtown Waco, this striking building dominates its surroundings. Along with the huge blue and gold auditorium, which seats over 3,700, this beautiful building also houses the Texas Grand Lodge Library and Museum, the Grand Secretary's Office, the Texas York Rite Offices, and other interesting features. The building is open during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, and visits by Masons and their families are heartily welcomed.

The purposes of the Grand Lodge of Texas, as set forth in its Constitution, are to control and regulate the practice of Freemasonry throughout its Jurisdiction, in accordance with the immemorial usages of this ancient and honorable Craft; to advance the moral and social interest of its membership; to cultivate the exercise of charity in its best and broadest sense; to assist the widows and orphans of its deceased members; to stimulate friendship, harmony and brotherly love, and generally to promote in its own way, the happiness of mankind. In short, it is a fraternity of good men, linked together by honorable and indissoluble bonds, to accomplish these noble purposes, eschewing all interest in factional politics and sectarian religion, and free from the dictation of both.

THE DUTIES, RIGHTS, AND PRIVILEGES OF A MASTER MASON

The *first duty* of a Master Mason is to live by and act consistently with his obligation.

He must pay his dues promptly and share the financial costs of the Fraternity. A current dues card, which you should carry with you at all times, indicates that you are in "good standing" in your lodge. Failure to pay dues by the end of a period subjects a Mason to suspension.

A Mason is obliged to abide by the Constitution, Laws and edicts of the Grand Lodge of Texas, and by the BY-LAWS of his own constituent lodge. He must maintain and support the "Ancient usages, customs, and landmarks of the Fraternity."

It is your right and privilege to attend all stated and called meetings of your lodge; to enjoy fellowship with the brethren; to join in the discussions of the lodge, to vote, to hold office, and render other meaningful Masonic services; to ask for Masonic relief should such become necessary; and to be taught all that Masonry includes, and to enjoy the privileges it offers to the mind, heart, and spirit.

You may ask the Secretary of your lodge about your rights regarding the Masonic Home and School for children at Fort Worth and the Home for Aged Masons.

By previous arrangement or by simple request of your family, you have the right to a Masonic burial. These rites will be tenderly performed. Just as you have a right to expect your Brethren to attend your Masonic burial, they also have a right to expect your presence at theirs. The general public is greatly influenced by this Masonic service and judge us all by it.

It is your privilege to visit other regular lodges and jurisdictions; to be "vouched for" ("to bear witness to" or "to be sponsored by") by other members with whom you have sat in lodge; also, to vouch for others should you know them to be Masons. It is your privilege to reaffiliate, upon a letter of good standing or demit from your lodge, with another lodge provided the new Lodge votes favorably. In Texas, you may hold "dual membership," that is, be a member in good standing of two lodges at the same time.

Any act unbecoming a good man and true, as well as any willful violation of his obligation, is considered a Masonic offense. If brought to trial and found guilty, the offender may be punished by (1) a reprimand, (2) definite suspension, (3) indefinite suspension, or, (4) by expulsion. You have the right to trial by your peers should you transgress the laws of Masonry, and it is your right to appeal to the Grand Lodge of Texas if found guilty of Masonic misconduct. The decision of the Grand Lodge is final.

It is your privilege to recommend a man for Masonry. You should be careful, however, NOT to recommend one unless you are satisfied that he is a good man and will conform to the principles of the Order and be a credit to the Craft. Your Brethren will give considerable weight to your recommendation.

Freemasonry, in all its richness, belongs to you to use and enjoy. Take part, become involved and study this great Fraternity. There are literally thousands of books and short writings available to research. The Memorial Library of the Grand Lodge at Waco is a good source of materials.

Remember, every moment of your life, in public, at work, at play, with your family, and even when you are alone-YOU ARE A MASON. The non-Masons who know you will judge each of us, and Masonry itself, by the way you conduct yourself.

After you build a good foundation in the first three degrees, you are encouraged to seek additional light in the beautiful and significant degrees and orders of the York Rite, and in the

meaningful and dynamic degrees of the Scottish Rite. The education afforded by these Bodies will round out and supplement your Masonic life.

SUGGESTED READING LIST FOR A MASTER MASON

The following listed books are available from our great Texas Masonic Library in Waco. Simply write a letter or card giving the title or subject of the book or books you wish (up to three at a time), your name, address, and the name, number and address of your Lodge. Address your request to: TEXAS GRAND LODGE LIBRARY, P. O. Box 446, Waco Texas 76703. It's as simple as that! Your only cost is the return postage. The Grand Lodge Library even provides return mailing labels.

The following listed books are only a tiny part of the vast resources of your Masonic Library. Try them, and if you are interested in Masonic subjects that do not appear here, write the Library.

A Comprehensive View of Freemasonry, by Henry W. Coil
An Introduction to Freemasonry, by Douglas Knoop
A Short History of Freemasonry, by Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones
Beginnings of Freemasonry in America, by Melvin M. Johnson
Concise History of Freemasonry, by Robert Freke Gould
Famous Masons and Masonic Presidents of our Government, by Philip A. Roth
Freemasonry in American Revolution, by Sidney Morse
Freemason's Guide and Compendium, by Bernard E. Jones
History of Freemasonry, by H. L. Haywood and James E. Craig
Introduction to Freemasonry, by Carl H. Claudy
Illustrations of Masonry, by William Preston
Masonic Symbolism, by C. C. Hunt
Masonry in Texas, by James D. Carter
More About Masonry, by H. L. Haywood
Pocket History of Masonry, by F. L. Pick and G. N. Knight
Short Readings in Masonic History, by J. Hugo Tatsch
Spirit of Masonry, by William Hutchinson
Symbolism of Freemasonry, by Albert G. Mackey
Symbolism of the Three Degrees, by Oliver Day Street
The Builders: A Story and Study of Masonry, by Joseph Fort Newton
The Lodge in Friendship Village, by P. W. George
The Men's House, by Joseph Fort Newton
The Newly Made Mason, by H. L. Haywood
Treasury of Masonic Thought, by Carl Glick