

THE ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE Some Fundamentals and Important Aspects

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In the Entered Apprentice degree there are fundamentals which we must accept, not only in Freemasonry, but in life.

The first fundamental is a belief in God. Freemasonry puts a profession of a belief in God right where it belongs, at the very beginning of the Masonic journey. This is not because of the fact that without a belief in God no obligation would be considered binding upon the candidate, but because such a belief is a fundamental of life. In a real sense it places the hand of the candidate in the hand of God and bids him proceed with confidence.

In the Entered Apprentice degree there is found the fundamental quest of life. We are searchers for truth. In whatever form we express it, and however qualified, that is our life long quest. Nor can there be any greater quest. It compels life's most desirable quality, sincerity. Truth knows no boundaries, nor does it ever come to the point where it says that there is nothing more beyond. Sincerity and progressiveness mark the seeker after truth.

The Entered Apprentice degree reveals also a fundamental relationship, that of brotherhood. In Freemasonry a man finds his fellowmen as brothers, and discovers that he has certain obligations to them. What we call the rite of destitution brings home to him in the strongest manner this fact of brotherhood and its obligations.

A Mason's first duty is to his home, and those who are dependent upon him.

This means, whatever else, that a man must be a Mason in his own home. If a Mason will not practice the principles of Freemasonry in his own home, where will he practice them? After that his obligation to help his fellowmen goes out in ever-widening circles; for brotherhood knows no limits.

This degree states rather definitely that brotherhood was not created nor discovered by Freemasonry, but is a fundamental relationship among all men. For we proclaim that, "by the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family--the high and low, rich and poor who, as created by one Almighty Parent and inhabitants of the same planet, are to support and protect each other." This is what is meant when we say that the Entered Apprentice degree introduces us to a fundamental relationship.

This degree presents to us a fundamental law, namely, that you cannot achieve a desirable end without adequate means. For we are presented with working tools -- those fundamental tools of the builders' trade, the 24-inch gauge and the common gavel.

It is a well known fact that the two great ends in Freemasonry are character and brotherhood. We are trying to build better men, and we are trying to establish the collective life of mankind in brotherhood. The working tools of an Entered Apprentice remind us that it is no use wishing for these ends until we are ready to will the means to attain them. By the common gavel which is used to break off the rough and superfluous parts of stones, we are taught that we are to divest our hearts and consciences of the vices and superfluities of life if we are to build the spiritual character worthy of heaven itself. There is something that we must do about these characters of ours to improve them. It is no use wishing for high character if we insist upon engaging in low acts. The 24-inch gauge further reminds us that we must make a proper use of our time. This part of the Entered Apprentice degree

fairly shouts at us that we must will the conditions of worthwhile character if we would achieve it.

Radio and television news editors cannot present a fair evaluation of the complex issues of the day in several minutes so they apply the standard "where is the action?" They show violence, conflict, opposition, excitement, drama, and all the charge and countercharge, all of which result in weighing of facts that can lead to distortion and misrepresentation. We, my Brothers, must demand our share of news coverage of our public appearances if we are to carry our message to the people.

Is your tick of Masonry loud enough that you can answer the call to public service: That you can pick the right path through the chaos of confusion?

Heed the words of Albert Pike:

"The citizen who cannot accomplish the smaller purposes of public life, cannot compass the larger. The vast power of endurance, forbearance, patience, and performance of a free people is acquired only by continual exercise of all the functions, like the healthful physical human vigor. If the individual citizens have it not, the State must equally be without it. It is of the essence of free government, that the people should not only be concerned in making the laws, but also in their execution. No man ought to be more ready to obey and administer the law than he who has helped to make it. the business of government is carried on for the benefit of all, and every co-partner should give counsel and cooperation."

Brethren, I would urge each of you to listen carefully to that tick which sounds so clearly in the hall and carry it with you when you leave your lodge to face again the multiple problems and complexities of this modern world.

