

SWADDLING CLOTHES

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You are taught that, as an Entered Apprentice, you are passing through the period of early Masonic youth. As a Fellowcraft, should you attain that higher estate, you will learn that your condition, then, is emblematic of manhood; while as a Master Mason, if it is your happy fortune ever to be raised to the Light, you will learn that true Freemasonry makes a man sure of a well spent life, and gives him assurance of a glorious immortality.

When newly born into the world, a human baby is the most helpless of all animals. His first tender years are wholly a time of learning; learning to eat, learning to manage his members leaning to walk, learning to make himself understood, learning to understand. the period you, as an Entered Apprentice, must spend before you can receive the degree of Fellow of the Craft, corresponds to these early years of childhood; you must learn to manage your Masonic members, you must learn to understand Masonic language, and to make yourself understood in it.

The Entered Apprentice is more like a child in an institution than like one in a home. In the home the child has the undivided attention of his parents; in the institution he has, necessarily, only the divided attention of those who must mother and father many children, and the help he individually receives is less as the number who claim it is greater. The lodge is an institution; as an Entered Apprentice you will receive careful instruction in the necessary arts of Masonry, in so far as you can prepared to receive them, but, obviously, there can be no coddling, no tender individual attentions to you which are not also given to all other Entered Apprentices of your lodge.

One child stands out above another in its development in an institution because of its inherent brightness, and because of its willingness to study and to learn. As an Entered Apprentice Mason, you will stand out above your fellows as you pay strict attention to those brethren who are your instructors, and as you are willing to study and to learn. For your monitors, my brother, no matter how great their erudition, and how large their charity and willingness to serve you, can only point for you the path, and give you those elementary instructions in Masonry which are the minimum with which you can walk onward.

Your feet have been set upon a path. In your hands has been thrust the staff of ritual, the bread of knowledge, and the water of prayer. With these alone you can proceed up the path until you come to the wall marked "Fellowcraft," and the

straight gate through which you can pass only if you have digested the bread, drunk the water and still have your staff. But you can climb the quicker, see more of the beauties by the way, and arrive with greater strength for the next highway upon which you will travel, if you are not content with the least which you can take as aids, but demand a greater equipment.

There are books, my brother; many, many books. First, there is what is known as the Monitor of your jurisdiction; a small book which contains all the ritual of all the degrees, which may be printed. A careful study of it will recall in your mind much that you heard while receiving your first degree and suggest many questions to your mind; questions which any thinking candidate must ask, and queries which, answered, will make him a better Entered Apprentice. The answers to many of these questions you will find in many good books on Freemasonry. Any Entered Apprentice who will read and ponder a good volume which deals with the first degree of Freemasonry, will approach the West Gate for his Fellowcraft degree in a more humble attitude, a more reverent spirit, and with a happier and more confident heart than he who is satisfied merely with his staff, his bread, and his water.

For consider, my brother; Freemasonry is old, old. No man knoweth just how old, but deep students of the art have gathered unimpeachable evidence; evidence of the character which would be convincing in a court of law, that the principles which underlie Freemasonry, and which are taught in its symbolism, go back beyond the dawn of written history. Freemasonry's symbols are found wherever the physical evidence of ancient civilizations is unearthed. secret orders of all ages, all climes, all peoples, have independently of each other, sought the Great Truths along the same paths, and concealed what they found in much the same symbols. freemasonry is the repository of the learning of the ages, a storehouse of the truths of life and death, religion, and immortality; aye, even of the truths we know regarding the Great Architect of the Universe, which have been painfully won, word by word and line by line, from the books of nature and of the inquiring mind, by literally thousands of generations of men.

No man has a mind big enough, to absorb and understand in an evening even the introduction of what Freemasonry knows, not in a month of evening! No degree, no matter how impressively performed, can possibly take him far along this road. All that the Entered Apprentice Degree can do is to point the way and give you the sustenance by which you may travel.

You may travel with your ears closed, and your eyes upon the ground. You will arrive, physically, even as a traveller with bandaged eyes may arrive after a toilsome journey. But to travel thus is not to learn. and the Freemason who does not learn, what sort of a Freemason is he? Pin wearer, only: denying himself the greatest opportunity given to man to make of himself truly one of the greatest brotherhood the world has ever known.

Therefore, my brother Entered Apprentice, use the month or more which is given you between this and the Fellow craft Degree, not only to receive your monitorial instruction and learn, letter perfect, the ritual in which so much more is hidden than is revealed, but also to investigate for yourself; to read, for yourself; to learn, for yourself, the meaning of some of our symbols and how they came to be.

You will find Masons who will say to you that all of Masonry which any man needs to know is found in the degrees. So will you find those who say to you that all any man needs to know of God or religion is found in the Great Light which rests upon our holy Altar. But be no discouraged by these, my brother, nor put your faith in the vision of any Mason; the only eyes with which you may truly see are your own; the only faith, which is truly valuable to any man, is his own. Reason it out for yourself; every man needs an education in Holy Writ to expound for him the hidden truths which are in the Great Light, therefore you require some writer or student to expound for you the hidden truths which are in Masonry's ritual and symbols. But a legion of devoted men of God have spent thousands of years digging in the Book of Books, and always they have discovered some new gold. With no irreverence, nor any comparison of the fundamentals of Freemasonry with the Bible, it can be said that generations of men have sought in the mountain which is Freemasonry for the Gold which is Truth of God and found it; and that without such patient delving, the gold could not be seen. Do you, then, dig for yourself, but dig by the light of the lamps lit by those who have gone this way before you.

This United States of ours has its ritual, its Declaration of Independence, its Constitution, its Bill of Rights. Doubtless you have read all of these; perhaps, in school, you memorized them, as now you must memorize Masonic ritual. but you would not be contending that the mere learning by heart of the declaration of Independence or the "Constitution ever made any man an authority upon them, nor that the foreigner investigation our institutions for the first time could become a good American merely by such memorization. we require the highest tribunal in all the world, The Supreme Court, to interpret to us our own Constitution, and not yet have any of our legislators come to the end of the meanings of those liberties

for which we declared when this country first lifted up its head among the nations of the world and cried the birth cry.

As an Entered Apprentice you are barely born, Masonically. You must learn, my brother, and learn well if you are to enter into your heritage. That which is worth having, in this world, is worth working for; indeed, as you know from your experience in life, anything which you must not work for, turns soon to ashes in your mouth. Without labor, there can be no rest; without work there can be no vacation; without pain, there can be no pleasure; without sorrow, there is no joy. And equally true it is, that while men do receive the degrees of Masonry at the hands of their brethren, there is no Freemasonry in a man's heart if he has not been willing to sacrifice some time, give some effort, some study, ask some questions, digest some philosophy, to make it truly his own.

A certain ceremony through which you recently passed not only has the immediate and obvious significance of charity to the deserving; a man may be divested of all wealth to teach him something else than the giving of alms and the succoring of the distressed. If you will suppose yourself marooned upon a desert island, the only man upon land shut in by the sea, you will readily recognize that all the wealth of the Indies might there be of less real value to you than a box of matches, a cup of water, a tool of iron. the richest man in the world could gain nothing with his gold if he were forced to live at the poles of the earth. Money is only of value where material things may be obtained by bartering labor; Money being the measure and token of labor. A man may be moneyless and still wealthy, as you might be upon your desert island if you had tools, nails, materials, with which to build yourself a boat in order to make your escape.

So this ceremony, which you have already been taught, was not performed to trifle with your feelings, should make not only a deep and lasting impression on your mind as to charity and giving aid, but should serve to point out to you that Freemasonry's Deepest and truest treasures are those of the mind and heart; not to be bought, not to be received as a free gift, not to be obtained by you in any way whatsoever except by patient search, and willing, happy labor.

Read, my brother; read symbolism and read a history of Freemasonry; read the Old Charges; read your Monitor. Read study, and digest; make your own some of the store of knowledge which is Freemasonry's; make of yourself an Entered Apprentice in the hidden as well as the literal sense of the word.

You are called an "Entered Apprentice" when there has been performed over you and with you, a certain ceremony, but you cannot in reality be "entered" unless you are willing to enter, there is homely truth in many an old saying. The horse who is led to the water will only drink if he is thirsty; no man can make him swallow if he will not. freemasonry which has conferred upon you the distinction of its First Degree, has brought you through a green pasture and made you to lie down beside the still water of its truth. but there lives not the Grand Master of any jurisdiction, all powerful in Freemasonry though he is, who can make you drink of those waters; there lives not the man, be he king, prince, or potentate, with no matter what temporal power or what strength of army or of wealth, who a force you through the door your brethren have swung wide at your approach.

The Pathway is before you. The Staff, the bread, the water is in your hand. Whether you will travel blindly and in want, or eagerly and with joy, depends only and wholly upon you

And very largely upon what you now do, how soon you emerge from your swaddling clothes, and how well you learn, will depend the epitaph some day to be written of your memory on the hearts of your fellow lodge members, it is for you to decide whether they will say of you: "Just another lodge member," or "A true Freemason, a faithful Son of Light."