

1°

GRAND LODGE

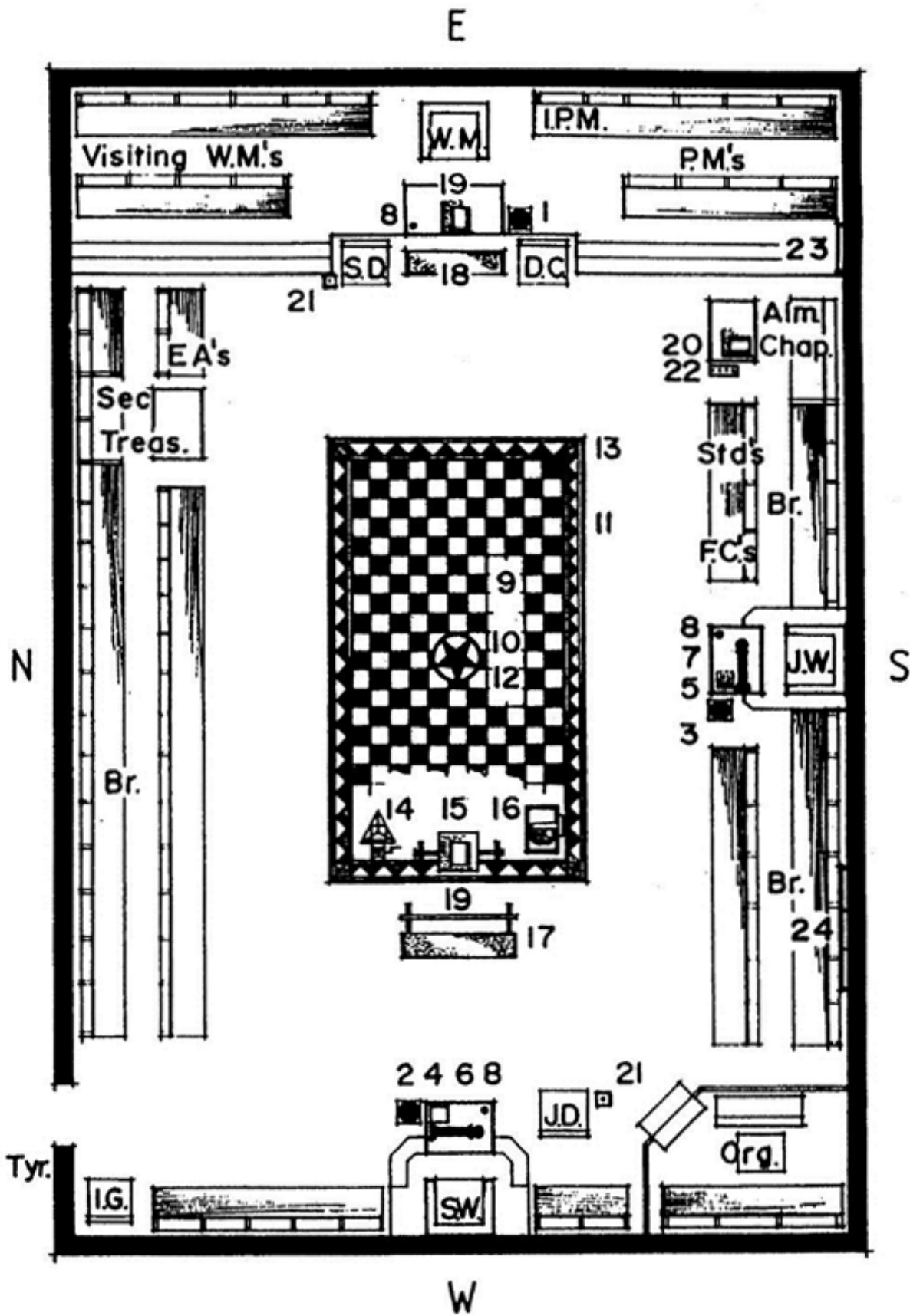
South Australia and the Northern Territory Inc



1st Degree Education

Information for the New Apprentice

THE LAYOUT OF THE LODGE ROOM



LEGEND OF TYPICAL LODGE ROOM ARRANGEMENT

- 1 Ionic Pillar
- 2 Doric Pillar
- 3 Corinthian Pillar
- 4 Perfect Ashlar
- 5 Rough Ashlar
- 6 Column with Celestial Globe
- 7 Column with Terrestrial Globe
- 8 Lights
- 9 Mosaic Pavement
- 10 Blazing Star
- 11 Tessellated Border
- 12 "G" (suspended over)
- 13 Tassels
- 14 Lewis (with system of pulleys)
- 15 Point within Circle
- 16 Tracing Board
- 17 Kneeling Rail
- 18 Kneeling Stool
- 19 V.S.L. (with square and compasses)
- 20 V.S.L. (for Chaplain)
- 21 Deacons Wands
- 22 Stewards Wands
- 23 * Warrant of Lodge (on display)
- 24 * Tracing Boards of Three Degrees

(* Typical locations)

WHO'S WHO IN THE LODGE ROOM

The Officers of the Lodge, together with their symbols and seating positions, are generally as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Worshipful Master (square) | In the East Principal Officer. |
| Senior Warden (level) | In the West Principal Officer. |
| Junior Warden (plumb rule) | In the South Principal Officer. |
| Immediate Past Master (square with 47th proposition of Euclid) | To the left (South) of the Worshipful Master. |
| Senior Deacon (dove bearing olive branch) | To the right (North) of and to the front of the WM. |
| Junior Deacon (dove bearing olive branch) | To the right (South) of and to the front of the SW. |
| Inner Guard (two swords in saltire) | Inside the entrance doorway. |
| Tyler (sword) | Outside the door of lodge. |
| Director of Ceremonies (two rods in saltire) | In the East, on the South side of the lodge. |
| Treasurer (key) | In the north side of the lodge. |
| Secretary (two pens in saltire) | In the north side of the lodge. |
| Chaplain or Acting Chaplain (Volume of the Sacred Law on a glory within a triangle, surmounting a glory) | In the South East Corner. |
| Care Officer or Almoner (scrip purse, with a heart thereon) | In the South East part of the lodge room. |
| Stewards (cornucopia between the legs of compasses) | In the South East part of the lodge room. |
| Organist (lyre) | At the musical instrument he is assigned to play, normally an organ. Usually in the South West corner. |

The Entered Apprentices, as you were informed by the Worshipful Master, will always have a seat found for them in the North East part of the Lodge room.

REASONS FOR THE DEGREE SYSTEM

The scope of Masonry is too great for it to be conveyed in one ceremony. Thus the Degrees are spread over three ceremonies, with a suitable time lapse between them to give an opportunity for understanding and absorption. In some European jurisdictions a year elapses between the taking of each of the degrees.

THE FIRST DEGREE

Now that you have taken the first regular step in Masonry you begin to prepare yourself for the second step, being passed to the Second Degree and so becoming a Fellow Craft Freemason.

The Worshipful Master is responsible to assist in your further education, together with your proposer and seconder, Induction Officer and/or Education Officer.

You are asked to memorise the questions and answers on the card presented to you by the Master. These answers will be recited by you during the ceremony of the Second Degree.

Be sure to visit another Lodge working the First Degree, and try to attend an Installation.

In the coming degree your clothing will again be arranged in a particular manner, the meaning of which will be later explained to you.

To assist in the further understanding of the First Degree you are encouraged to communicate with the Grand Librarian, so that he may arrange suitable reading.

You have probably built up many thoughts regarding the Craft and its ceremonies; please ask any question, and we will endeavor to provide you with answers.

MEANING AND ORIGIN OF THE TERM ENTERED APPRENTICE

Introduction

You are now an Entered Apprentice Freemason. Having completed this first step you will find that it will lead you to further degrees in Masonry.

You are now also a member of a worldwide fraternity of the highest standing. Through our fraternity in most parts of the globe you will always find a warm and brotherly welcome. An outstretched hand will be offered should you be in need of companionship or assistance.

You are now entitled to be present in the work of any lodge working in the First Degree.

We are sure that you are anxious to learn more about this degree. Its ceremonies must have appeared strange to you, and deeper meanings not fully grasped. It is now strongly recommended that you take any opportunity to witness a First Degree ceremony so that you will be able to observe it as a non-participant. You will understand it better and appreciate it more. The Worshipful Master or your sponsor will assist you in your visitation.

Meaning and Origin

The ritual of the initiation ceremony would have reminded you that Masonry was associated with the Masons who built those magnificent buildings, the cathedrals of the Gothic period of architecture, about 1150 to 1500 A.D. In cities there were palaces, castles, churches, monasteries and various religious buildings, and secular buildings, such as halls, and grand houses built in stone. Apart from palaces, towns had to a lesser extent the same. In the numerous villages there were stone-built churches, halls and manor houses.

Near each building site there was first built a lodge or large wooden building, where the masons if needbe lodged, that is lived, eating and sleeping. In the main part of the lodge they prepared plans for the building, dressed the ashlar, formed the rounds of pillars, the curves of windows, or sculptured. Their meetings were also conducted in the lodge. In the case of a cathedral, which could take a hundred or more years to build, the masons built houses for themselves and their families in the nearby town. There was, however, always a lodge building for the unmarried and the usual reasons.

To keep their trade secrets private and exclusive to their fellow builders, and to keep the unqualified and unworthy from their midst, the operative masons adopted means to identify themselves. You, as a Speculative Mason, have also been entrusted with such means.

The Middle Ages was a time when women had few rights. There were a fair proportion in the building industry, but these were usually at the labouring end of the scale and were not allowed to become apprentices. They were not initiated into operative masonry. Only males were eligible to go to operative lodge meetings.

The term 'apprentice' means a learner whose aim is to master a trade or profession, by being legally bound to an employer for a certain number of years. The apprentice, who was usually aged between 10 and 15 years, had to be free born, possess sound physical and moral qualifications, and be strong and healthy. To satisfy the members that the candidate had these qualifications he was admitted into the lodge building where the Mason in charge asked questions relating to these areas.

If approved, the apprentice was instructed in the nature and objects of the craft, its history and tradition and what was expected of its members both in their work and socially. To complete the ceremony he was required to promise solemnly to perform his duties diligently, faithfully to observe the laws and rules, to be obedient to his superiors and to keep the secrets confided to him. He was then indentured to a well-experienced fellow of the craft for a period usually not less than seven years.

After several years, on proving himself of being capable of mastering the art and becoming a worthy member, the apprentice's name was 'entered' into the lodge's books. He was now referred to as an 'entered apprentice mason or Freemason'.

THE FIRST OR ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

Introduction

This degree has already been explained to you as the First Degree of Freemasonry. You have now taken your first *regular step* in Freemasonry, one of a total of three. Two more steps or degrees follow, named the Fellow Craft and Master Mason.

As an Entered Apprentice Freemason you are now part of a worldwide organization dedicated to brotherhood. Your Masonic enlightenment has begun. As a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, so the Masonic first step has the capacity to lead a candidate from a moral and intellectual world which in some cases may have been of some darkneses to a world of more light, the light of knowledge and understanding.

It is recommended that you closely read the ritual of the First Degree. This, together with the by-laws and ancient Charges, was presented to you by the Worshipful Master. All will add to your understanding of the degree and of your Lodge and the Craft.

Some of the following observations may assist you to more readily understand and appreciate this stage of your progress through the three degrees.

The Obligation and its Significance to Masons

You have now taken your first Masonic Obligation. It is a vital preliminary to your initiation into Freemasonry. The word 'obligation' means a binding agreement to do or refrain from doing certain things.

The Masonic Obligation includes observing the strictest secrecy relating to certain matters confided to you. The Obligation is entered into on your own volition and is therefore self-imposed. Being such, its binding strength lies not in threats of physical or monetary penalties but in your conscience. On the value you place on your honour. As with all obligations including secrets, the Masonic Obligation is binding for life. Therefore, whether you remain in the Craft or not it can never be forsaken. Once a Mason always a Mason.

The Word and Grip

The Word and Grip are our means of recognising Freemasons amongst strangers. By using these we are able to prove to others that we are Freemasons.

Perambulations

The method by which a Mason traverses or walks around a lodge room is referred to as perambulating the lodge. This took its rise historically from the late 1600's through to the early period of the 1700's, when the present mosaic pavement was a rectangular drawing on a lodge's floor that contained various symbols. For the meeting night only this was drawn at the centre of the floor of the inn, tavern or other places where meetings were held. Chalk or charcoal was used. The drawing's shape followed the rectangular shape of the room, or the 'form of the lodge' (room). To preserve this drawing during the meeting everyone walked around it – thus squaring the lodge, that is, turning corners at right angles, came into being.

Walking is always done clockwise – from East to South to West to North. This follows the path of the sun where Masonry originated, the Northern hemisphere. Symbolically, this clockwise walking shows that in our eternal quest for Masonic knowledge and understanding we leave the dark of the North side of the lodge room and enter the light of the South.

The squaring of the lodge room also reminds us that the square is a symbol of morality, sincerity, rectitude and honesty. Being 'on the square' is a well-known saying. 'Square dealing' means dealing honestly.

When a brother perambulates the lodge room he must acknowledge the three principal officers, that is, the Worshipful Master, the Senior Warden and the Junior Warden, by placing his hand in the position we refer to as the 'attitude of reverence'.

Visiting

Soon after his own initiation the Entered Apprentice should be encouraged to visit another lodge that is working the First Degree. In a relaxed state he will be able to see, hear and better understand the path on which he himself journeyed.

The Entered Apprentice must be rehearsed in the method of proving himself at a different lodge. He must also carry his Masonic Record Book, the use of which needs to be explained to him. It also serves as a Masonic Passport. Inform him that, if possible, he should be accompanied by his Master, proposer or seconder. They can vouch that he is in good standing to enter the lodge, although the passport can now do that job.

Where possible the Entered Apprentice is encouraged to attend a Lodge Installation.

Attendance Book

Soon after the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 it was the custom of a lodge secretary to enter all the names of brethren present in the minute book. He was thus able to ascertain the names of those absent without reasonable excuse, and to debit them with the absentee fine laid down in the lodge's by-laws.

As all visitors were required to pay a visitor's fee they had to enter their names into another book, the Tyler's. The Tyler was usually a hired Freemason (he might go to different lodges several times a week) who was not in the meeting room and did most of non-meeting work.

At about 1790 it was found better if both visitors and the lodge's brethren signed the one book, the Tyler's. This is the origin of the present attendance or signing-on book. Visitors include the name and number of their lodge.

SYMBOLS AND ALLEGORIES

Introduction

Roberts (page 82) in his book *The Craft and its Symbols*, writes, "Nothing existing today is unconnected with the past. The connection may be remote, but it's there. The philosophy of Freemasonry is closely connected with the past. It has preserved, fortunately, the wisdom it took centuries for man to acquire. Masonry, through its symbolism, has kept this wisdom alive. It allows men to interpret this symbolism as his mind and heart dictate. It leaves men free to speculate, to think, to create."

Every symbol, emblem and allegory of the First Degree's ritual and ceremony has an important meaning. Taken together these meanings contribute the teachings and principles of the degree. Every Mason should seek out and understand these messages.

You are reminded that many of Freemasonry's symbols and allegories are not spelt out. A Mason may make of them as he wishes. However, there are a good many which are commonly agreed upon, and the commonest are given here. Alternative views for some are also given.

Due to the needed shortness of this introduction to the First Degree, however, many common things which may be symbolised are omitted. Note also that just about everything in Freemasonry can be interpreted in a symbolic way.

If you so desire further reading will give you insights into other symbols and allegories.

Reference. Roberts, Allen E: The Craft and its Symbols, Macoy, Richmond, 1974.

SYMBOLS OF THE FIRST OR ENTERED APRENTICE DEGREE

Entrance

Your entrance into a lodge for initiation is symbolically your rebirth (Roberts:p 13). A new birth, that is, a new entrance into the world. The ceremony of the candidate's entrance to the lodge and subsequent experiences and teachings signify initiation or birth (Wilmshurst:35), which mean the same thing, and symbolizes that you are entering the world of Freemasonry, where hopefully you will live a life of a new kind. Mackey (8), further points out that as you go through the ritual and ceremony you are a 'youth just entering the trials, and duties of an earthly and responsible existence'.

The Hoodwink

Masonry teaches that the uninitiated man is in a state of darkness. He enters the lodge room through a door in the North West, which in the Northern hemisphere is the darkest corner. This entry is symbolical of his dark state. In that room he will receive light.

As regards the Masonic teachings of life an uninitiated man is in darkness. To remove this darkness we demonstrate by symbols the great things of life, such as goodness, truth and beauty. In some men such moral, virtuous and ethical thoughts may be little realised, and in others may be realised probably better. These teachings are symbolically shown or found. They are always there, but a blindness may conceal them from us. In many cases the heart rather than the head must be reached. A powerful way to do this is by symbolism.

The ceremonial removal of the hoodwink at the completion of the candidate's Obligation indicates that he is ready to receive the teachings of Freemasonry.

The Cable Tow

The cable tow is a symbol of bondage, the bondage of ignorance. It teaches that we must strive for the freedom derived from moral and educational teachings, which, together with reasoning and common sense, will enlighten us.

Further, the cable tow is also a symbol of all those restraints by which a man is controlled by others, or by outside forces. If a man does not keep the law of his own free will he must be compelled to keep it. The removal of the cable tow signifies that when a man becomes master of himself by his own character and knowledge he will keep the law on his own accord.

The Lodge Room

The lodge room is a symbol of the world, more properly, the world of Freemasonry. In scope and extent Masonry is as broad as human nature and as wide as Mankind. As spirit and ideal the lodge permeates the whole life of every true Mason. In this sense, says Mackey (p:20), the room is seen as a symbol of life, its duties, trials and temptations, and that the candidate has entered the portals of Freemasonry to a new life.

The Obligation

The Obligation cements the candidate's symbolic rebirth. This is when he begins learning Masonry's messages.

The Penalty

The one real penalty for violations of his Obligations is the destructive consequence to a man's nature from being faithless to his vows, untrue to his word and disloyal to Freemasonry.

The Salutation

The salutation, in which the candidate salutes the Worshipful Master, is his recognition of the authority of the Lodge's Principal Officer. It is also a symbol of a Mason's respect for and obedience to all just and duly constituted authorities.

The Apron

The white lambskin apron is at once the emblem of purity and innocence and the badge or mark of an Entered Apprentice Freemason. White is the symbol of purity or innocence and is portrayed by the pure and unspoiled white lamb. The apron itself signifies that Masons are not drones and wreckers but workers and builders.

Our ancient brethren the operative masons wore aprons to protect their clothes and themselves. So as speculative Masons we wear the apron as a symbolic reminder that by the application of Masonic teachings we protect ourselves from civil and moral blemishes.

From the long and plain tan apron used in the days of the operative mason we now have one reduced in size and made white. An edging of blue donates the universal friendship (Mackey:33) which everywhere bonds the fellowship of Freemasons. Emblems added to the apron enable us to distinguish a brother's degree, rank and status.

The Lesser Lights

The lesser lights are the sun, the moon and the Master of the lodge. The sun and the moon gave light to build cathedrals and other buildings. This was done under the rule and guidance of the Master, who taught the apprentices building skills. In speculative Masonry the lesser lights symbolise the spiritual light that enables us to build our spiritual house.

The original speculative Masonry's physical lesser lights were three windows which gave light to a lodge room.

The North East Corner

The North East corner, half way between the North, a place of darkness and the East, the source of light, is traditionally the place where the cornerstone of a building is laid. The apprentice stands there because he is a cornerstone of the future Craft. What apprentices are today Freemasonry will become in the future.

The North East Corner is a testing place of the candidate's charity; he can choose that virtue, or he can reject it. More deeply, he can choose the path of selfishness or selflessness. The path of lightness or darkness.

At a deeper level the candidate as a new initiate has another role. As recounted, initiation ceremonies have always represented a rebirth into physical life (Wilmshurst:34). Here he figuratively represents a newly laid foundation stone, and upon it, he is told, 'may The Great Architect Of The Universe enable you to raise a superstructure perfect in its parts'. It is accepted by all that this building is not a worldly or solid edifice, but a spiritual construction within ourselves. It is our own Inner Temple. At an even more profound level the newly laid foundation stone represents a refounding, a rebirth into spiritual life.

The Working Tools

The working tools represent those moral and spiritual virtues, habits and forces by which a man reshapes the crude and often stubborn materials of his nature, to adjust himself to the requirements of society.

To become a Freemason a man who has lived without aim or ideal must learn to organise his life and work to decent values, as symbolised by the twenty four-inch gauge.

The common gavel symbolises the force one's conscience needs in order to subdue vanity or self-conceit and unbecoming, inappropriate, offensive or evil behaviour.

A shaping and smoothing tool, the chisel symbolises the advantages of education, which makes us better men and thus better able to contribute to society.

The Three Great Lights

The Three Great Emblematical Lights in Masonry are the first objects the candidate sees when the hoodwink is removed. These are the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses.

The Volume of the Sacred Law

Almost since its inception the Craft has imposed no specific religious qualifications on aspirants, apart from candidates having a belief in an Omnipotent Creator God.

The South Australian and Northern Territory Constitution and regulations say nothing on specific religions. However, the Grand Lodge's Lodge Manual, article 1.7, names six religions and their Holy Scriptures as 'acceptable' for candidacy. These are given as Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Parsees and Buddhist. Article 18.3 adds Christianity, and elaborates a little on some of the Holy Scriptures.

The candidate is informed that, 'the sacred writings are to rule and govern our faith'. That's clear enough.

The Bible is a most important source of Masonic knowledge. For example, it provides the story of King Solomon's Temple. At the lodge's opening the Chaplain reads verses from the Book of Ruth, where we reminded of compassion, and Psalms, that speaks of brotherly love. It also gives those ancient and elegantly written rules for life, the Ten Commandments. The Sacred Volume of your particular religion contains the moral standards and qualities of human relationships by which you should strive to live, and you are recommended to make its study a part of your life.

The Square

The candidate is told that the square is to 'regulate our actions'. He is also taught that the first step in Freemasonry begins by standing erect and placing the feet in the form of a square. This position indicates the 'rectitude of your actions'. There are also common sayings derived from Freemasonry, such as 'being on the square' and a 'square deal'.

The Compasses

The candidate is then shown the compasses. These are to place him in 'due bounds', that is, within an encircling line or limit, when dealing with his brethren and rest of humanity. To keep within the line's boundary he must regulate his life. This is brought out at the Tracing Board when he is told that 'the Compasses and Square, when united are to regulate our lives and actions'.

The candidate is further told that 'the Compasses belong to the Grand Master in particular'; this is because the Grand Master has the responsibility to see that his brethren keep in due bounds with each other.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The First Degree has given you, or reinforced, principles and virtues which will help you in your life's journey. These include your responsibilities to God, Freemasonry, yourself, others, and society at large, and a direction to look towards Eternity.

An example is the First Degree's Charge. It instructed you about your duty to God, your neighbour and yourself. It gave expectations of your behaviour as an individual and as a citizen of the world. Expectations regarding Freemasonry were made clear, including charity and benevolence. Finally, you were exhorted to be an ornament to society, become useful to mankind, and to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

You should appreciate that the undertakings you gave to keep Freemasonry's secrets and mysteries, attend meetings and maintain its principles, are designed not only to protect and maintain the Order but to help build a candidate's strength of character.

In summary, the First Degree is a symbolic portrayal of the entrance of a candidate into a new physical and spiritual life. It is a Degree of preparation, self-discipline and enrichment. You are urged to study it carefully and give serious thought to its intents.

References.

Roberts, Allen E: The Craft and its Symbols, Macoy, Richmond, 1974.

Wilmshurst, WL: The Meaning of Masonry, Rider, London, 1922.

Mackey, Albert: A Manual of The Lodge, Clark & Maynard, New York, 1862.
