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The Trestleboard
Special Edition – 24-inch gauge, gavel of authority, and make a Master Mason

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Brethren of Phoenicia Lodge,
In your hands you hold a special edition of our Trestleboard. In operative masonry, the Trestleboard is used by the master architect to draw his designs and plans, which are then used by the laborers to construct the building, agreeable to the designs laid down for them.

The three articles contained herein are the 24-inch gauge, Gavel of Authority and what does it take to make a Master Mason.

Respectfully presented to the members of Phoenicia Lodge No. 58 F&AM,
Bryon P Howe, PM

Twenty-four-inch gauge

The Masonic essence of the lesson is ability, preparedness and readiness, recalling the suggestion of William Shakespeare to the workmen in Julius Ceasar (act 1, scene i, line 5), "Where is thy leather apron and thy rule? What dost thou with thy best apparel on?"

TWENTY-FOUR INCH GAUGE

by: Unknown

In the early editions of his Monitor (1797 and on) Thomas Smith Webb wrote:

"The twenty-four-inch gauge is an instrument made use of by my operative Masons, to measure and lay out their work; but Free and Accepted Masons are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of dividing their time; it being divided into twenty-four equal parts, is emblematical of the twenty-four hours of the day, which they are taught to divide into three equal parts; whereby are found eight hours for the service of God and a distressed worthy brother; eight hours for their usual avocations; and eight for refreshment and sleep."

Time and the often-witless tinkering of well-meaning but uninformed brethren have altered here a word and there a phrase; in some Jurisdictions it is now "Vocations," in others it is "we" instead of "they" and so on.

But in essentials most American Jurisdictions use the paragraph as the great ritualist phrased it for us a century and a third ago. Unfortunately, he did not go deeply into the symbolism of the gauge, leaving it to us to dig out for ourselves its concealed meanings, and learn from it, as we are able to learn; thinking through it, as we are able to think.

Like most Masonic symbols, it conceals far more than it reveals. Like many, the Monitorial explanation deals only with the obvious meaning, leaving the inner symbolism for the delver in the rubbish of the Temple's verbiage who seeks the hidden truths Freemasonry discloses to all who look.

Among the oldest of man's beginnings of civilization, measures seem to have originated among all peoples with parts of the human body - the foot,

the hand, the palm, the digit, the cubit (elbow to tip of the middle finger) etc. The word inch comes (as does ounce) from the Latin "uncia," a unit divided into twelve parts. Some contend that origin of an inch was in the thumb joint. Both foot and Roman "uncia" are very old and our ancient brethren of the

Gothic Cathedral building age must surely have known both. But what is important is not the name of the measure but the division of the gauge into units than its total, and their applicability to time.

The relation of twenty-four inches to twenty-four hours is plain enough, but when we examine just what it is that is divided into twenty-four parts, the explanation becomes difficult. What is time? To most of us it is the duration between two noons; the elapsed interval between any two events; the passage of a certain fraction of life. To the philosopher, time is an unknown quantity. Like space, it appears to be a conception of the mind, without objective existence. Modern mathematicians contend that time and space are but two faces of the same idea, like the two sides of a shield. While we can comprehend one without reference to the other, we cannot "use" one without the other. Every material thing occupies space for a certain time; every material thing existing for a specified time, occupies space.

We pass through space in three directions - up and down, right and left, forward and back. We pass through time, apparently, continuously in one direction from birth to death. We cannot go back for even the smallest fraction of an instant.

Omar wrote:

"The moving finger writes; and having writ, Moves on; nor all Piety nor Wit Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, Nor all your tears wash out a Word of it."

The operative workman measures his stone with his gauge; if the ashlar is too long, he shortens it. If it is too broad, he narrows it. If it too crooked to make square, he casts it on the rubbish heap and begins anew with a rough ashlar.

But the Speculative Mason, measuring his time with the twenty-four-inch gauge, has no such latitude. The ruined minute is forever away; the crooked hour can never be made straight. The day unfit for the Building Not Made with Hands can never be set in the Eternal Wall, nor can the workman find in any quarry a new day to mould. Thinking of it thus, could any symbol cry a more clarion call for accuracy of

labor? For skill with which to work? For care and pains in building?

“Eight hours for the service of God and a worthy distressed brother, eight hours for their usual avocation, and eight for refreshment and sleep.”

There is no time to waste. There is not time to be lost. There is no time for idleness. Thomas Smith Webb builded better than he knew when with so sparing a hand he laid out the Speculative Mason’s time for the lighter side of life. In his conception, all such must be taken from the eight hours allotted to refreshment and sleep. He who would “pass the time away” - he who would indulge in “pastimes,” must, according to the Monitor, take these hours from bed! To divide our twenty-four hours into three equal parts is a very practical, everyday admonition. Here is no erudite philosophy such as “laborer est orare” - to labor is to pray. Nor is there any suggestion that even refreshment may be in the “service of God.” Again, the old ritualist knew his audience. His instructions are simple; their profundity is only for those who wish to look beneath the surface. For these, indeed, the whole twenty-four hours may be literally “in the service of God” since labor and sleep are necessary for life as we have to live it, and it is a poor theology which does not teach the common lot to be the Will of God.

In 1784 Sir William Jones wrote:
“Seven hours to law, to soothing slumber seven, Ten to the world allot, and all to heaven.”

Webb does not so put it, but if the eight hours for labor us also to be “in the service of God,” it must be labor which results in good work, true work, square work. Refreshment of mind and body which is an offering to heaven must be clean and wholesome, if on the morrow the laborer is to be wholesome and clean for new labor, and prayer and service.

The Mason interested in a further interpretation of the three-fold division of twenty-four hours need look no further than the Great Light upon his Altar - indeed, he need only turn back from Ecclesiastes XII to Ecclesiastes III to find the inspiration of this Monitorial admonition that there is a time for everything. We read: “To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven; a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill and a

time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.” But nowhere in the wise counsel of prophet or patriot, preacher or teacher, is there set forth a time to waste time. Time is the very substance of life, its golden minutes the only stones we have with which to build. Every accomplishment of man, be it Temple of marble or Temple of character, act of selfishness or selfless giving to others, building a nation or building a house, must be accomplished with “Time.” Without time nothing is ever done.

Hence, he who wastes either his time or another’s, squanders that which he cannot replace; which comes from we know not whither, to go we know not whence, which once gone, is gone forever. About us are many varieties of men with as many ideas of how time should be spent. Every human being has the same number of minutes in an hour, of hours in a day, of days in a year. Some have little or nothing to show for their thirty, forty, or fifty years. Others have great accomplishments to exhibit as the product of their time. Lincoln used all the time he did not need to devote to his usual avocation to mastering geometry, learning politics, understanding the question of slavery. Albert Pike made himself a learned scholar by constant use of spare time. These men knew what the twenty-four-inch gauge really meant, how profound a symbol it is - aye, Lincoln knew, though he was a Freemason only “in his heart” and not a member of any Lodge. It provokes sober thought to apply the Masonic rule to a determination of how long we really have. Our days are allotted as three score and ten. We rarely start on our life work before we are twenty. Of the fifty years of actual time for labor, we are admonished to spend a third of in the service of God and a distressed worthy brother, a third in refreshment and sleep, and but a third in labor - not quite seventeen years in which to accomplish all we have to do! No wonder so few of us leave behind a monument which will stand long enough to be seen by the coming generation, still less one which will last through the ages.

“But the harder the task, the greater the joy of accomplishment!” Much has been made of the

amount of time spent in the “service of God and a distressed worthy brother” by enemies of the Craft, who have tried to read into this admonition the thought that the other sixteen hours are to be used without service to God, and that only a distressed “brother” is to share in our labors. This, of course, is pure casuistry. If we instruct a workman to build a wall, we mean that he is to carry the brick, make the mortar, lay the courses, level the whole, leave an opening for the gate, point up the joints - do the whole job!

“Service to God,” then, does not mean merely spending time upon one’s knees in prayer, but living life acceptable to the Great Architect. By “worthy distressed brother” we have no reason to assume that Masonry means only “brother of the Mystic Tie.” Masons are repeatedly bidden to turn to the Great Light as the rule and guide of faith and practice. Here we find “inasmuch as ye do it into the least of these . . . “And all men who own to a common Father are brothers.

The attentive Freemason quickly notes how frequently are the Masonic allusions to work, and how few to refreshment. Our twenty-four inch gauge gives us - almost grudgingly, it seems - eight hours for two occupations of which we know one needs the greater part - eight hours for refreshment and sleep. The other sixteen are for labor, work, effort, doing.

To him who finds labor irksome, the twenty-four-inch gauge must be a painful symbol. Alas, all symbols are painful for the idle! But for those who have learned life’s greatest lesson, that the most lasting joy comes from accomplishment; the symbol is beautiful. Fortunate is the man who is happy at his daily task; discontented he who has not found his work. For him who likes his job, sixteen hours a day are scarce enough. Find the carpenter who carves wood in his spare hours, the bookkeeper who spends his evenings doing mathematics, the doctor whose leisure is spent teaching his healing art, and you hear men singing at their labors; men who curse the clocks which go too fast!

Find the Mason interested in the Ancient Craft, prompt to offer his services for visiting the sick, doing committee work, helping the tiler, laboring on Fellowcraft or Degree Team, and you see one happy in his lodge. Such men have no time to waste - all have some division of their gauge of time which

makes every minute count with “sixty seconds worth of distance run.” Time - substance of life! Time - gift of the Great Architect! Time - building stone for the spiritual temple! Time - man’s greatest mystery, bitterest enemy, truest friend! Its care, conservation, employment, is the secret of the twenty-four-inch gauge - its waste and aimless spending is the sin against which this symbolic working tool unalterably aligns the Ancient Craft. The Scythe, emblem of Time, wins in the end. We can race with Father Time for but a little while. “But we can win while we are permitted to race.”

And at the end, the great ruler of our lives is merciful! As you think of the twenty-four-inch gauge and its three divisions, think also of these tender and beautiful words written of the mighty servant, mightier master, Time: I bring you woe and scalding tears and all life holds of sadness, Because I am remorseless, your heart in torture pays In bitter coin of memories of times when time was madness, “I am the passing hours; I am your march of days.” Enemy and best of friends am I to those who sorrow; Pitiless in passing, yet Oh, so slow, so slow. . . I hurry to the sleeping the grayness of tomorrow; Sluggard in my sun-down, I never seem to go . . . Little bit by even less, all pain I can diminish, slowly win the smile to eyes that now know but to weep. I began your race with life, and I shall see its finish; My arms, and none but mine, shall in the end give sleep. I linger not for anyone, yet I may not be hastened; You must bear your agony until I bid it cease . . . But when your head is in the dust, and all your pride is chastened, “At long last, I promise you, I bring the gift of peace.

THE GAVEL OF AUTHORITY

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by: Unknown

“The common gavel is an instrument used by operative Masons to break off the corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder’s use; but we as Free and Accepted Masons are taught to use for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our hearts and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting our minds as living stones for that spiritual building, that House Not Made With Hands, eternal in the Heavens.” Mackey, distinguished authority, states that the name comes from “Gabel” because the form of the common gavel resembles that of the gable of a house.

But the student will look in the ritual in vain for any allusion to the gavel as an instrument of authority, although in some form it is primarily the badge of power and authority of the Master, and, often in another form and always in a lesser degree, of the Wardens. In various Jurisdictions throughout the United States the interested visitor will find in use in the East common gavels, stone Mason's hammers made of both wood and metal, the ordinary mallet gavel of the legislative halls, the auctioneer's hammer, and a setting maul in all shapes and sizes. All these various implements, in diverse forms and materials, are used as the symbol of the authority of the Master. Apparently it is not so important that he have a particular symbol; that is, that he carry a "common gavel" or a "setting maul," but that he have always in open Lodge, in his possession, some instrument with which blows may be struck, as a symbol of his power, his authority, his right to preside and to rule.

Many studious Freemasons contend with some show of reason that inasmuch as the common gavel - the mason's hammer with one sharp edge - is one of the working tools of a speculative Entered Apprentice while the setting maul is not classified as a working tool, the gavel, and not the maul, is more logically the Master's symbol of authority. Certainly unless Grand Lodge has ruled otherwise there is no argument to be used against a Master presiding with common gavel, whether real, of metal, or imitation, of rose or other valuable wood. But those who find their only argument for the use of the common gavel as the symbol of a Master's authority in the undoubted fact that it is one of the striking tools of the stone mason, as well as a working tool of the Speculative Craft, hardly go far enough into antiquity.

As a symbol of authority the hammer is as old as mythology. Thor, the Scandinavian son of Odin and Freya, possessed a miraculous and all-powerful hammer which he threw to do his will. When this was accomplished - usually it was a slaying of enemies or a destruction of something which the God did not like - his accommodating hammer straightway returned to his hands!

Thor, like Jove, also controlled thunderbolts, and from this early myth we associate lightning and thunder with the hammer. We also invert the thought to develop the idea of the authority in a hammer or gavel from its age long association with the power of lightning. The connection is world wide, and by no means confined either to Freemasonry or to Norse mythology. Thor and his hammer are at the bottom

of the old "hammer rite of possession." Thor, God of lightning, by virtue of his control of fire was also the God of the domestic hearth. In ancient days a bride, on taking possession of her new home, received a hammer thrown in her lap as a symbol of possession.

When her husband purchased land, he took possession by throwing a hammer over it.

The Indian God Parasu Rama, or Rama of the Battleax, obtained land from the God of the sea by throwing his battleax over the earth, and became possessed of all that it spanned. The South Sea Islanders use a "celt" or hammer, often of huge size, before the chief's dwelling as a symbol of authority. Mrs. H.G.M. Murray Aynsley (English Authority on mythology), says "The Hammer has its uses in Freemasonry as a symbol of authority - the auctioneer, too, used a hammer - here we see possession implied by the falling or throwing down of a hammer.

Thus, when the Master of a lodge first brings down the gavel to convene the Lodge, he by that blow says in effect, "by this act I take possession of this Lodge."

G.W. Speth, famous writer on Freemasonry, draws attention to the curious articles drawn up by the stone masons of Torgau, in Saxony, in 1462.

And every Mason shall keep his lodge free of all strife; yea, his lodge shall be kept pure as the seat of justice. And no Mason shall bear false witness in his lodge, neither shall he defile it in any manner. Therefore shall no Mason allow a harlot to enter his lodge, but if anyone have ought to commune with her he shall depart from the place of labor so far as one may cast a gavel.

Grand Lodges are sovereign within their Jurisdictions. Whatever their ukase, it immediately becomes right within that Jurisdiction. We find anomalies in American Freemasonry as a result. Thus, most Jurisdictions demand that a Master elect "pass the chairs" or receive the Degree of Past Master in a Chapter of the Royal Arch before he may be installed. But that is not true in all Jurisdictions.

Where it obtains the practice is both right and ancient. Its absence is "right" when Grand Lodge has so ruled. Since the formation of the Mother Grand Lodge in 1717, Masonic jurists have conceded the right of a Grand Lodge to make Masons "at sight" as inherent; that is the right to convene an occasional or emergent lodge, under dispensation, set it to work and disband it when its work is done. Some American Grand Lodges have ruled to the contrary. It is "right" in those Jurisdictions that a Grand Master cannot make a Mason "at sight." In forty-three of our

forty-nine Grand Jurisdictions, two of the three Great Lights are the Square and Compasses. In the remaining six, Compasses is incorrect, and “compass” is right - aye, with every lexicographer, dictionary, encyclopedia and Masonic authority to the contrary, “compass” is right in these Jurisdictions.

Under the doctrine that whatever a Grand Lodge declares to be right, whether by actual words or by tacit agreement, is the law and the practice for that particular Jurisdiction, any form of striking instrument which is customary is the correct form in that Jurisdiction. The Grand Jurisdiction which sanctions setting mauls in all three stations, uses the tool which is correct in that Jurisdiction. If the Grand Lodge sets forth that the Master shall use a “common gavel” and the Wardens setting mauls, that practice is there correct. If nothing is said to imply that the Master must use the “common gavel” as a symbol of authority, then the familiar form of mallet or hammer - by far the commonest form of a presiding officer’s instrument - may be considered as correct as any other. We are not very liberal minded in our Masonic symbolism. The Square and the Compasses on our Altars are hardly large or strong enough to play Operative parts in stone cutting and setting. The “working tools” we present to initiates are but miniatures of the real tools they symbolize. The trowel which we tell a candidate is more especially the essential tool of the Master Mason, is usually far too small to spread real cement between real stones. Certainly, no gavel of wood, be its form what it may, can “break off the corners of rough stones.” So, while the beauty of the symbolism of the “common gavel” as the presiding officer’s instrument of authority is obvious, usage and custom and expedience in many lodges have metamorphosed it into a little mallet of wood, just as the tiny square upon the Altar is an expedient metamorphosis of the great metal tool of the Operative Mason. Perhaps it is not so important that the wood of the gavel be carved to imitate some particular striking tool of the Operative Masons, as that the brethren understand the power and authority inherent in it.

Whatever form of gavel is used, the Master should always retain possession of the instrument and never have it beyond his reach. He should carry it with him when he moves about the Lodge, whether in process of conferring a degree, or when the Lodge in charge of the Junior Warden at refreshment. This, be it noted, is not only because it is his symbol of authority, but to remind him that, although his position is the highest within the gift of the brethren, he is yet but a brother among brethren. Holding the

highest power in the Lodge, he exercises it by virtue of the commonest of the working tools.

All powerful, within certain limits, in the Lodge, the Master has authority to temporarily transfer his power. He may honor a visitor by presenting him with the gavel (and should always remove his hat when the gavel passes). He may place another in the

Oriental Chair to confer a degree (in most Jurisdictions) at which time he hands over the gavel of authority. Because he has the right to transfer the authority, he should always be in position to exercise it; another reason for always retaining possession of his gavel! The authority by which the Master rules is not, of course, the mere physical possession of a piece of wood or iron. The Master may be a physical weakling. Some powerful two hundred-pounder may easily wrest from him the emblem of authority, but such forcible possession would not transfer the authority. The authority to use the gavel comes first from election and installation, the powers of both of which ceremonies rest on the authority of the Grand Lodge. Once installed, a Master cannot be deprived of his gavel of authority except by the Grand Lodge, or the Grand Master “ad interim” (or his deputy acting in his stead). The brethren elect to the East, but cannot “unelect” or take away the power they have once given. The gavel of authority is not transferable save by the will of its lawful possessor, except at the order of the Grand Lodge, or the Grand Master (or his deputy acting for him). In most Jurisdictions such an action by a Grand Master or Deputy, “ad interim” Grand Lodge. is reviewable by the Grand Lodge at its next succeeding regular communication.

The Master enforces the authority of which the gavel is the symbol - first and usually last and all the time - by the good will and the Masonic practices of his brethren. Few Lodges would tolerate disobedience to the gavel by any brother. Occasionally a hot-headed brother has attempted to defy its power. In such cases the Master may ask the offender to leave the room. His failure to respond lays him open to charges of un-Masonic conduct and a Masonic trial. The Master may request the Marshall or Master of ceremonies to remove the offender. Or the Master may - as sometimes has been done - use the gavel to call from labor to refreshment, during which period there will be plenty to admonish the offender of the enormity of his offense against Masonic law. good manners and good taste! The charges given a Mason at the close of all three Degrees are generally held to have the binding force of all other Masonic teachings and obligations. The brother who signs the by-laws

as a Master Mason agrees by so doing to abide not only by them but by all the unwritten usages and customs of the Fraternity and all the admonishments of the charges. Those who know their ritual will recall that in the charge of the third degree it is said:

“The ancient Landmarks of the Order you are carefully to preserve and never suffer them to be infringed, countenance a departure from the ancient usages and customs of the Fraternity.” Obedience to the gavel is indeed an “ancient usage and custom” of the Fraternity. Rarely is it defied - never with impunity. But to reach its fullest respect, the gavel must be wisely used. “It is fine to have a giant’s strength— It is despicable to use it like a giant!” applies here. The Master “may” do what he will in his Lodge. He may cut off discussion, rap a brother down, cause a brother to leave the room, refuse to put a motion, declare the Lodge at recess, close at his pleasure, control debate, arrange the work, refuse a brother permission to speak - all with the gavel. But the wise Master uses his great power sparingly and never arbitrarily. While the peace and harmony of the Craft are maintained, he need not use it except as the ritual or custom of presiding in the Lodge requires. If he so uses it, it will be respected, its possessor will be venerated, and its transfer to another hand will be considered by the brethren what it actually is, a great and signal honor.

No Master may pay a higher tribute to any brother than to intrust him with the gavel. He offers it to the Grand Master (or his Deputy representing him), because it is the right of those dignitaries to preside in all private Lodges. He offers it to another to preside during the conferring of a degree, or to a distinguished visitor, as a mark of the greatest respect and confidence. A gavel is not a necessity. A Master and two brethren can open and close a Lodge if they have the Great Lights and a Charter. Lesser Lights, a gavel, Warden’s columns, Aprons, and Altar are not essential. Without the Great Lights and a Charter (or dispensation) a Lodge cannot be opened, though it has every other accessory. The gavel, then, is the symbol of the authority, not the authority itself. Like all great symbols, it takes upon itself in the minds of the brethren something of the quality of the thing symbolized. As we revere the cotton in stripes and stars which became the Flag of our Country; as we revere the paper and ink which became the Great Light in Masonry, so, also, do Freemasons revere the little hammer, mallet, setting maul or common gavel which typifies and symbolizes the height of Masonic power and authority - the majesty of power, the

wisdom of Light which rest in and shine forth from the Oriental Chair.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MAKE MASONS

Do we make Masons by just giving a man three degrees and then moving on to the next candidate? I don’t think so.

The definition of Masonry is a body of like minded men who are working for the improvement of society by improving themselves. We are supposed to make good men better. It serves no purpose to just get a man through three degrees and then move on, the job is not finished.

It is true that a man must of his own free will attempt to improve and add to the basics he is given in his three degrees but he needs to have direction. It has often been said that we must take a man to raise when we recommend him to the fraternity. What does that mean? Well, it seems that any of us had we not been led on into the deeper realms of Masonry would have floundered and possibly come to many different conclusions about how we should behave as Masons.

Society does not really prepare Men to become Masons, there are no instruction in school or in our jobs to guide us in that direction. In school we were striving to be in the top of our class no matter what course that took, rules were only somewhat important, of course cheating was frowned upon and you weren’t allowed to physically keep anyone else from succeeding but that was about it. You were not encouraged to help anyone do better than you.

Masonry is different. It says in the Ritual that we promote each other’s welfare and rejoice in each other’s prosperity. The competitive nature is not as important as in everyday life. That doesn’t mean we don’t challenge each other, that means we strive not to be better than our Brother but better than ourselves. What does that mean?

By being better than ourselves we are continually improving and in turn improving our society and those around us. We are constantly making our world better and thus making it a better place for conducting everyday life.

When asked what is Masonry we often answer that by saying what it is not. It is not a religion, it is not a secret society, it is not devil worshipers. These statements are all true but do they answer the question? Not really. It is not a religion because it does not meet the criteria to be one. It is not a secret society because most of the world knows we exist or they could not already be against us. Well we all know why it can't be devil worshipers because we believe in God, whatever the name. But what is Masonry?

Do we have secrets? Yes but no more so than any other family has secrets. How do new Brothers learn those secrets, by working with their mentors and thus becoming exposed to those secrets? The Masonic secrets are different for each Masson but they still stem from the same beliefs which are not out there to just look on the internet and find they must be guided by other Masons to find them. That is why the job is not finished at the end of the third degree or even when they have achieved "proficiency" in those degrees.

As an apprentice in my trade I completed my formal training in the prescribed number of years and was declared a "Journeyman" but was I completely knowledgeable in my Craft No. it took several more years to work on the various projects and encounter the different situations that were not covered in school until I could feel confident that I was a true Craftsman. The same is true with Masonry. A "Master Mason" is not truly prepared to go out and do the work of Masonry until he has been exposed to many different aspects of the Craft.

It may be said that sometimes a man is never completely trained to represent Masonry because he has not had opportunities to experience the craft in action.

We use a system of symbols to explain what we do and why we do what we do. It is said in one of the degrees that a man should understand the meaning of those symbols and if he does not perhaps he was too easily allowed to enter the sanctuaries of our Fraternity, but I contend it is more likely he has not been given enough instruction into what they mean, that is our fault.

If we give a man three degrees and then move on to the next candidate we are not giving that man a chance to learn. In the first degree we say we came to

Masonry to do three things: to learn, to subdue our passions, and to improve ourselves in Masonry. If we do not teach we are not giving the Brother the opportunity to do what he came here to do.

We must go further to make a man a Mason. Just because he signs the bylaws and pays dues does not mean we are finished, we have only just begun to make a MASON. Yes he is considered to be a Mason by others but we should not be satisfied with other people outside the Fraternity thinking he is a Mason nor should we ourselves be satisfied that we are Masons if we are not continually learning and striving to be better men forever. If we stop trying to be even better then we are not fulfilling the purpose of our fraternity. We are good men but as such we should be striving to be better, forever.

So in conclusion "What does it mean to make Masons" it means to bring a person to our portals and give him the basics to make him a Brother and then to give our Brother the necessary instruction to allow him to become truly proficient and to strive throughout our lives together to become better men as Masons.