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### SYMBOLISM.

We present a few thoughts on Symbolism so constantly in use in earlier as well as in modern times. All great teachers acknowledge the advantage and power of imagery, of using metaphor, of symbolism, whether expressed by a fixed material object or by verbal symbolism, or the symbol of a series of ideas clothed in language. This symbolism was used as a warning by a Great Teacher when the direction was given to go forth with the patience of sheep, the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove, as also by another when the angel food was showered from heaven upon the Israelites when famishing in the desert. We reiterate such allusions to sensible objects were the earliest, the easiest and most engaging methods of instructing mankind in moral and divine truths. Assembling images from nature symbolism speaks to the understanding by the senses. These pleasing illustrations lead us, by an easy process, to form the most important and oftentimes the most sublime ideas, from things most familiar and intelligible. Hence the loftiness of style and sentiment, the rich imagery, the animated description, the enchanting grace, which pervade and embellish all the production of the East. Hence the admirable tissue of allegory and metaphor with which they decorated wisdom and virtue. This method of imparting the most sage and salutary lessons was accepted and repeatedly used with the happiest efficacy by all the great moral and religious reformers of the past. The very life blood of the Masonic

Institution is this process of giving instruction to its initiates through symbols. We teach them to be patient, cautious and submissive. The lamb is a bright symbol in the advancement of the new student, for in addition to patience and innocence it teaches him to be silent and discrete. Thus that prominent symbol in Masonry, the serpent, is intended to imply wisdom, perspicacity, circumspection. It was known by its Greek name, because of its quickness of sight. Hence serpents were placed as the keepers of the garden of the Hesperides. By the quickness of sight, advantages accrued and danger avoided. We acquire by the serpent also the lesson of secrecy and retirement, and in them find security, tranquility and peace, the leisure, opportunity and inclination to think; hence the ability and vigor to perform. Its wisdom does not permit it to be charmed, the force of the enchanter is evaded—Bochart tells us—by its laying one ear close to the ground and covering or stopping the other with the extremity of the body, which naturally warns the Masonic student to close his ears to the improper enchantments of pleasure and voluptuousness, the spell of undue wealth, the delusion of ambition and the temptation of sin. Who has not heard of the serpent as the emblem of immortality, rejuvenation or regeneration in consequence of its annually shedding its skin, its growing, as it were, young again? The natural instructions that we should continually throw aside our rough exterior, and become pure, true and undefiled; be possessed of a moral renovation in our life, by putting off the old man, and donning the new which is being re-created in righteousness and holiness.

Need expression be given of the symbolism of the dove or of its application to Masonic thought and action? Does not, at once, harmlessness, mildness and heavenly innocence overshadow the mind?