

brethren, are a few out of the many lessons which this Church teaches by symbols. And the beautiful morality of our Order is also illustrated by symbols. From the gavel, rule and square how often have I heard the Masters draw deep lessons for our use. No Mason can look upon the gavel, which the laborer uses to hew off the roughness and produce a level surface, without being reminded that his duty is to strike of the offensive eccentricities of his character, and smooth down its moral inequalities.

To us the rule with its 24 divisions is a symbol of each day of life, its 24 hours to be measured out with diligent care and graduated into seasons of labor, rest and devotion. In the square a Mason reads great moral truths that underlie the whole structure of society. Therein he sees divine principles asserted, undeviating laws established. Looking on that symbol of a just and upright life, he recalls the solemn pledges he has made that he will square his actions to all men, but especially the brethren, by the square of virtue—and dull and dead must his heart be who does not feel strengthened in good resolves and stimulated to a correct and upright life whenever he looks upon the symbols of Masonic justice between man and man. Take again the implement with which the cement is spread, which makes the parts of the building into one united and harmonious whole. To the common eye it is simply a trowel. To the Mason it reveals important truths. It reminds him of deep principles. It preaches. It teaches him that, as a Mason, he must liberally spread the cement of fraternal love, that so the moral edifice may be neither unstable, unsightly, nor unworthy of the Master whose Temple it is. As a last example of the truth that Masonry is a system of morality, take another implement, one of the most common of those used by the builder, viz., that by which we are taught to circumscribe and keep our passions under bounds. You, brethren, know that the most valuable secrets of your craft may be found between its points, and that while you keep within that charmed circle it describes, you cannot materially err. In one word, the symbolism of Free Masonry is not “a spectacle to amuse full grown boys.” It is a means, and “the simplest and most expressive means, to impress upon our minds the moral duties of brotherly love, relief and truth. One feature which I must note in passing is the unobtrusiveness of Freemasonry. It courts no observation. Whenever the attention of the world has been drawn to it, it has been by its enemies. We have all heard of an anti-Masonic party, but no man ever heard of a Masonic party. The craft never strives to proselytize. When attacked it does not fight; it does not even defend itself. It is this quiet, unobtrusive spirit which has made us so many enemies.

We give no opportunity for criticism, and this very modesty on our part enrages those who, while ignorant of our real spirit, excommunicate and libel us. Another characteristic of Masonry is its *comprehensiveness*. All it asks of those who would share its privileges is, “Do you believe in God, the immortality of the soul, and in a future world of reward and punishment? Are you a man, freeborn, of mature age and sound judgment?” If you believe these things, if you are all this, then welcome, whether rich or poor!—You need not give up one iota of religious faith; one tittle of your political convictions. Enter and see that within our “safe and sacred retreat,” it is possible for men of the most opposite ideas to meet on the broad ground of humanity, to live in perfect accord and work together happily for the attainment of knowledge and for the diffusion of charity. Here we offer a pleasant retreat where men may forget the world and its conflicts in the enjoyment of friendship and social intercourse. And because we prize this union so highly we are careful to “guard well the outer door.” This is the first and last duty of every Mason. “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” We are sworn to admit only those who will add strength as well as numbers to our ranks, those who will become “centres of union and the means of conciliating true friendship.” That we do guard the door, the fact that nearly twelve thousand applicants were rejected last year in North America alone is abundant proof. It is, I think, worth while on an occasion such as this to examine an objection which is often made with regard to our fraternity. “It is,” they say, “a secret society,” and, it is often added, “wherever there is secrecy there is iniquity.” Well, I must remind objectors that so long ago as the year 1793 one of our English bishops defended the fraternity from this very charge. A bill was passing through the House of Lords to suppress secret societies, but Bishop Headley clearly showed that Masonry could not be embraced under the name of secret, and secured its exemption from the Act. Masonry, it is true, has its secrets, but its objects and aims are not secret. Secrecy, we must remember, also prevades public and private life. The naval commander sails under sealed orders—his destination is a secret—and so the enemy is not kept informed of the plans formed against him. The Cabinet deliberates in secret. Every Councillor is sworn to secrecy. I read the other day that on the Roy case the Methodist Conference sat in secret. In a business partnership there are secrets known only to the firm. In every family there are secrets. The heads of households have secrets which are not imparted to their children or servants. Everywhere, and in every rank of life, prudence enjoins secrecy, and why should not our Order have its