

## FOREWORD

The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts presents these volumes to all candidates as an important part of their initiation into the Masonic Fraternity. Freemasonry is not merely a social organization. It is not merely a mutual benefit organization. Still less is it a casualty insurance organization. It does indeed offer social opportunities and social pleasures. Its members do indeed help each other in many ways. It does indeed contribute to the necessities of a deserving brother, his widow and orphan children when adversity lays them low. These things are only subsidiary to its real purpose. That purpose is the development of a certain type of character. Upon the foundation of a belief in God and in immortality it tries to build a structure of character of which the materials are the moral and social virtues. Kindly and joyous social intercourse, helpfulness to the brethren, relief of the necessities of a brother or of his widow and orphans, are the natural expressions of Masonic character.

In order that the initiate may become a true Mason and may have and express Masonic character it is necessary that he be educated in the principles and practices of the Fraternity. While all this is contained in the ritual, the ritual itself is not enough. There is very real danger that the ritual may come to be regarded as mere ritual and listened to or even repeated without much serious thought about the content.

The ritual is very brief and needs amplification and explanation to bring out its real meaning and point its application to everyday life.

We provide for this education in two ways. We require familiarity with the ritual before permitting advancement. We present the supplementary instruction in the Lodge of Instruction. The Lodge of Instruction, however, is a part of the candidate's education, taken in passing and not, like the ritual, a permanent part of his Masonic life.

We therefore place these books in your hands to carry still further this process of instruction. These books further amplify the work of the Lodge of Instruction, and put it in permanent form for your study and reference. We hope that you will not only read these books, but give them careful study and make their contents a permanent part of your mental equipment. We hope that the study of these books, which are only an introduction to the riches of Masonic thought and knowledge, will stimulate you to further study of the great field of Masonic principles and practices, law and history.

The Grand Lodge wishes you God speed in your Masonic career, and hopes that Freemasonry may be to you a great source of spiritual profit and abiding happiness.