

The Holy Bible and the Square and Compasses are the three great lights of the lodge once its divine warrant and its chief working tools.

The Square is the oldest, and simplest and the most universal symbol in Masonry.

All the world over, whether as a sign on a building or a badge worn by a brother, it is known as one of the emblems of our ancient craft.

Nearly everywhere in our ritual we are governed by the Square. And that is as it should be. In the old days the earth was thought to be flat and square, the Square was an emblem of the earth and later of the earthly element in man.

The frequent mention of the square in the Masonic ritual and the moral significance which which free and accepted Masons associate with the working tools in general and the Square in particular, makes us desire to know its origin, the better to enable us to understand the application of the instrument to, shall I say, to the spiritual side of our Masonic lives.

There is no word in our mother tongue the etymology of which exhibits such a glorious array of fine attributes as does the word square. Looking the word up in the dictionary we find amongst its many meanings the following, viz. having a right angle, -having a straight front-an outline formed by straight lines-exact-fitting-true-that does equal justice-fair-complete-even-leaving no balance-settled-consequential-solid-full-satisfying-due proportion-order-equality-fairness-to adjust-to regulate-to accord-to agree-to square-on one square-a square deal-honesty.

Such a record must commend the word to our general attention. The understanding of the word and its attributes, must us feel the reality of its use, not only as an instrument used in architecture, but as one of the most important of the "working tools" of the craft as used in Masonic ritual.

There is no wonder that the square with such glorious traditions should have been selected as the emblem of the W.M.

Every sentiment of our ritual, and every act of our Masonic lives is controlled by the square.

The charge after initiation is, "I lay my hands on you, and I charge you to be true to the square." It is doubtful whether, in the whole Masonic ritual, there is any sentence which expresses more fully and establishes more firmly, the bond of brotherly love and fellowship than the opening of the "charge" of the duty to one's neighbour "by acting with him on the square."

Nor is the square used on candidates or initiates only. In the opening of the Lodge in the various degrees, the W.M. interrogates the J.W. and he has to rely on the square to satisfy the W.M. And so throughout the whole conduct of Masonic business, the square is event in many and various ways, and the frequent casual inquiry "Are you on the square" means in the best sense, are you a Mason.

The square the only instrument which may be termed universal. A square, to wit, a right angle-is always a right angle, and consequently, every object, a stone, wood, iron, brick etc tried to square, will fit with its fellow, which has been brought to perfection by the use of the same instrument. Hence every Mason tried to the square, will be able to take his place in the great brotherhood composed of other men who have been perfected by the same instrument.

It is in that cradle of civilisation, Egypt, that we find the earliest traces of the use of the square, and I propose to begin my retrospect from that country, in that country we find the earliest records of building with dressed or squared stones which shows that the square must have been in regular use. The discovery of the square opened a new era in the history of builders, and such was the effect of these discoveries that craftsmen, skilled in the use of them, began to be looked upon as possessed of magic powers, and so in the earliest times, under the influence of men of religious instinct, the square became the emblem of truth, justice and righteousness, and so it is with us today.

It was about 4115 B.C. during the III Dynasty we find that mode of building. About 4025 B.C. firm historical ground is reached then was built what is supposed the first and oldest complete pyramid at Medun. The large pyramid of Cheops built 3969 B.C. of large stones some estimated to weigh as much as 50 tons. all of extraordinary flatness and squareness, shows conclusively that the instrument known in architecture called a square was well known and in constant use.

The discovery of the square,

As to the first symbolic use of the square, there is no authority to guide us, but judging from its frequent use as a sign, we have evidence of its being found in Britain at the time of the Druids. In one of the old Chinese classics of the fifth century B.C. we read that a man should not do unto others, what he would not have them do unto him. this was called the principle of acting on the square. This was recorded, long, long ago.

Then we have what I believe is the oldest Masonic relic known, and still in the possession of a lodge in Ireland.

It is a curious old brass square, which was found in the foundation of a bridge near Limerick in 1830, dated 1517, inscribed the following words, "Strive to live with love and care, Upon the level by the square."

Brethren, How simple and beautiful it is, the very genius of our craft

Then we have in one of the earliest catechisms of the craft, dated 1725, the question is asked :How many make a lodge. The answer is specific and unmistakeable, "God and the square, with five or seven right or perfect Masons."

Long before our era we find the square teaching us the same lesson which it teaches us today.

Brethren, how simple and beautiful it is, the very genius of our craft, the square rules the Masons well as the lodge in which he labours. As he enters the lodge he walks with square step round the square pavement of a rectangular lodge, and during the ceremony his attitude keeps him in mind of that symbol. His feet formed in a square, his mind and his feet etc.

It is the duty of a Mason to be on the square in all his duties and dealings with his fellow men, and if he fails there he cannot win anywhere.