

THE BEGINNING and first foundation of this most worthy Science of Masonry with the Charges and Orders belonging to the Science. The Might of the Father of Honour, and Wisdom of the Glorious Son through the Great Goodness of the Holy Ghost - that is three persons in one.

Godliness be with us now in our beginning and give us Grace so to govern ourselves in our life working that we may come to his Bliss that never shall have ending.

AMEN

Good Brethren and Fellows our purpose is to tell how and in what manner the Worthy Craft of Masonry was begun and how it was founded by Worthy Kings and Princes and by many other Free Men.

And also to them that be here we will rehearse other Charges that belongeth to everytime Mason to keep, for in good faith if they take good heed thereto it is worthy to be well kept as being a Worthy Craft and Curious Science. For there be Seven Liberal Sciences of which seven it is one, and the names of them be these;

FIRST GRAMMAR which teacheth a man to speak truly and write truly.

AND SECOND is RHETORIC and that teacheth a man to speak fair in public tongues.

THE THIRD is DIALECTICS (LOGIC) and that teacheth a man to discern truth from falsehood.

THE FOURTH is ARITHMETIC which teaches a man to reason and ACCOMPT all manner of numbers.

AND FIFTH is GEOMETRY and that teacheth a man METTE (Measurements of Boundaries) and measures of earth and of all other things which Science is also called MEASURE.

THE SIXTH is called MUSIC and teacheth a man the Craft of Song and the tuning of the voice of tongues and Organ, Harps and Trump.

AND THE SEVENTH is called ASTRONOMY which teacheth a man to know the course of the sun, the moon, and the stars. These are the Seven Liberal Sciences which seven be all founded by One Science - that is to say - GEOMETRY. And this of man may prove that the Science of all WORKS is founded by GEOMETRY, for GEOMETRY teacheth a man METTE and measures PUNDE RATOID and weights of all manner of things on the Earth, for there is not a man worketh any Craft but he worketh by some METTE or some measures, and no man buyeth or selleth but he buyeth or selleth by some measure or weight all of which is GEOMETRY.

Wherefore we think that the science of GEOMETRY is most worthy as that which findeth all others.

NOW - how this worthy science was first begun I shall now tell:-

Before Noah's flood there was a man called LAMECH as is written in the Bible in the Chapter of Genesis, and this LAMECH had two wives and one was called ADAH and the other LILLAH. And by his first wife ADAH he begott two sons - the one called JABAL and the other JUBAL.

And by the other wife LILLAH he begott a son and a daughter and these four children founded the BEGINNING of all the Crafts and Sciences in the world.

For the eldest son JABAL founded the Craft of GEOMETRY and he parted flocks of sheep and lambs in the field, and first wrought houses of STONE and how as it is noted in the Bible Chapter above (V 21).

And his brother JUBAL founded the Craft of Music, and SONG of tongues, harp and organ.

And the third brother TUBALCAIN founded SMYTHY CRAFT of Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron and Steel.

And his daughter founded the Craft of WEAVING.

And these children knew well that God would take vengeance for sin, either by FIRE or WATER, wherefore they wrote their Sciences that they had founded in two pillars of STONE that they might be found after NOAHS FLOOD.

And the one stone was MARBLE for that would not burn with any fire, and the other stone was called LATTEN (IRON COVERED WITH TIN) and that would not drown in the water.

OUR intent is to tell you truly and in what manner these stones were found wherein these sciences were written.

The great HERMAINES that was CUBB, his son, which CUBB was CHAM his son, and CHAM - NOAH his son. The said HERMAINES was afterwards called HERMES, the father of the wild man. He found one of the two pillars of stone and found the Sciences written there, and he taught it to other men.

And at the making of the tower of Babylon, Masonry was first made much of and the King of Babylon, that Knight NEMROTH, was a Mason himself and loved the Craft of Masonry (as it is said in the MASTER OF HISTORIES). And when the City of NINEVEH and other cities of the East should be made, NEMROTH, the KING of Babylon sent thither three score Masons at the ROGALON of the KING of Nineveh, his cousin. And when he sent them forth he gave them a Charge in this manner, that they should be true - each of them to the other. And that they should serve their Lord truly for their pay so that their Master may have worship and all that belongs to him. And other charges he gave them and this was the first time that any Mason had any Charge of his Craft.

Moreover, when Abraham and Sarah, his wife, went into Egypt, there he taught the Seven Sciences to the Egyptians. And he had a worthy scholar called EUCLID, and he learned right well and was a Master of all the Seven Sciences Liberal.

And in his days it befell that the Lords and Estates of the realm had so many sons that they had gotten; some by their wives and some by other Ladies of the realm (for that land is a hot land and a plenteous of GENERATION) and they had not competent living for their children which caused much care (concern).

And then the King of the land made a great Counsell and sought to wit (know) how they might find their children honestly as Gentlemen, and they found no manner of good way.

Then they did make a cry throughout all the realm, that if there were any man that could inform them, that he should come to them and he should be so rewarded for his travail that he should be well pleased.

After that this cry was made, then came this worthy scribe EUCLID, and said to the King and all his great Lords, "If you will take me your children to govern I shall teach them one of the seven sciences wherewith they may live honestly as Gentlemen should under condition that you will grant me and them a Commission, that I may have power to rule them after the manner that the Sciences ought to be ruled".

And the King and all his Counsell granted him anon and Sealed him, their Commission. And then this worthy doctor (= teacher) took to him these Lords' sons and taught them his science of Geometry to work in Stone all manner of worthy work that belongeth to building of Church, Temple, Castle's Towers and Manors of all manner of orders. And he gave them a Charge as followeth:

The FIRST was that they should be true to the King and Lord that they serve, and that they should love together and be true each one to another, and that they should call each other Fellow or else Brother, and use none other foul names.

And that they should truly serve their pay of the Lord or Master that they serve, and that they should ordain the wisest of them to be Master of the Work.

And neither for Lord or Great Linage nor either yet for favour to set another that hath little cunning to serve the Lord's work, wherethrough the Lord should be evil served, and they ashamed.

And many other Charges that were too long to tell.

And to all these Charges he made them swear a great oath that men used in that time, and ordained for their reasonable pay that they might live honestly by.

And also that they should come and Assemble once every year how they might best work to serve the Lord for his profit and their own worship, and to correct within themselves them that had trespassed against the Craft.

And this worthy Craft Governed and grounded there first and that worthy man Euclid gave it the name of Geometry and now it is called MASONRY.

And long after that when the Children of Israel came into the land of Behest that is called amongst us the country of Jerusalem:

David began the Temple that is called Templum DOMINI and is named with us the TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

And the same KING DAVID loved Masons well and cherished them much and gave them good pay.

And he gave them the Charges and manners as he had learned of the Egyptians given by Euclid and other Charges which you shall hear afterwards.

After the decease of King David, Solomon that was David's son performed out the Temple that his father had begun.

And he sent after workmen into diverse countries and gathered them together so that he had four score and thousand (1080) workers of stone. And all were named Masons. And he be Master and Governor of the work.

And furthermore there was a King of another region that men called HIRAM and he loved well King Solomon and he gave timber for his work and sent him a man also named Hiram who was a Master of Geometry and Chief Master of all his Masons and Master of all his Grooving and Carvings and of all other manner of Masonry that belonged to the Temple. This is witnessed in the Bible KINGS 7:13 and 2, Chronicles, 2:13,14.

And this Solomon confirmed to Masons both Charges and the manner that his father had given and thus was the worthy Craft of Masonry confirmed in the country of Jerusalem and in many other kingdoms.

Curious Craftsmen walked about into diverse countries; some because of learning more crafts and cunning and some to teach them that had but little cunning.

And so it fell out that there was one curious Mason that was called WINUS GRACUS (that had been one at the making of Solomon's Temple) and he came into FRANCE and there he taught the Sciences of Masonry to the men of FRANCE.

And there was one that was called CHARLES MERRILL and he was a man that loved well such a craft, and went to this WINUS GRACUS and learned of him the Craft and took upon him the Charge and Manners.

And afterwards by the Grace of God he was elect to be King of France, and when he was in his Estate he took Masons and helped to make men masons, that were none, and did set them on work and gave them both the Charge and the Manner and good pay as he had learned of other Masons.

And he confirmed them a Charter from year to year to hold their Assembly where they would, and cherished them much, and thus came the Craft into France.

ENGLAND - in all this season stood void of any Charge of Masonry unto St. Alban's time, and in his days the King of England was a Pagan and walled the town about that is called ST. ALBANS.

And St. Alban was a worthy knight and steward of the King's household and had Government of the Realm, and also the making of the Town Walls.

And he loved well Masons, and cherished them very much, and he made their pay very good standing as the realm did, for he gave them 21 PENCE a week and three pence to their children and before that time through all this land a Mason took but a penny a day and his meat until St. Alban amended it.

And he gave them a Charter of the King and his Council to hold a general Council and gave it the name of an Assembly and thereof he was himself and helped to make Masons and gave them Charges as you shall hear afterwards.

Right soon after the decease of St. Alban there came diverse wars into the realm of England of diverse nations so that the good rule of Masonry was destroyed unto the time of King Atelston that was a worthy king of England and brought the land unto good rest and peace and builded many great works of Abbeys, Castles' Towers and diverse other buildings.

And he loved well Masons. And he had a son that was called EDWIN and he loved Masons much more than his father did and he was a great practicer of Geometry and he loved much to talk and commune with Masons and to learn of them the Craft and afterwards for love that he had to Masons and to the Craft he was made Mason and he got of the King his father a Charter and Commission to hold every year an Assembly wheresoever they should within the realme of England, and to correct within themselves all faults and trespasses that were done within the Craft, and he held himself an Assembly at York and there he made Masons and gave them Charges and taught them the manner and Commands that were to be kept ever after, and took them the Charter and Commission to keep, and made Ordinance that the same should be renewed from King to King.

And when the Assembly was gathered he made cry that all old masons and young that had any writings or understanding of the Charges and Manners that were made before in this land or in any other, that they should show them forth. And it was proved that there were found some in French, some in Greek, and some in English, and some in other languages, and the intent of them all was found to be all one.

And he commanded a Book to be made thereof, and how the Craft was founded and he himself commanded that it should be read or told when that any Mason should be made and so to give him his Charge and from that day to this time Manners of Masons have been kept in that form as well as man might govern it.

And furthermore at diverse assemblies have been put and ordained certain Charges by the advice of the best Masters and Fellows.

THEN shall one of the most ancient of them hold a book that he or they (which are to be made Masons) may lay his or their hand or hands upon the same and these precepts following ought to be read;-

EVERY man that is a Mason take right good heed to these Charges and if any man find himself guilty in any of these Charges, that he amend himself towards GOD, and principally you that be to be Charged take good heed that you may keep these Charges right well, for it is great with a man to swear himself upon a book.

THE FIRST CHARGE is that you shall be (a) true man to GOD and that you use neither error nor heresy by your understanding, nor by discreet and Wise Men's teaching.

And also that you shall be true LEIGEMEN to the King of England without treason or any other falsehood. And that ye know no treason or heresy or treachery but that ye amend it privily, if ye may or else warn the KING and his Council.

And also that ye be true each one to another, that is to say - every Mason of the Craft of Masonry that be Masons allowed you shall do to them as you would they would do unto you.

And also that ye keep the Council of Lodge and of Chamber and other Councils that ought to be kept in the way of Masonhood.

And also that you be no thief nor cheat nor liar as you know.

And also that you shall stand to the Lord or to the Master and truly to serve to his profit and advantage.

And also that ye call all Masons your brethren or else your fellows, and none other foul name.

And also you shall not take your fellow's wife in villainy, nor defile his daughter nor put him to any dishonour.

And also that ye pay truly for your meat and wine when ye go to board.

And also that ye shall make no villainy in that place where ye go to Board whereby the Craft might be slandered.

These be the Charges in General that belong to every true Mason to keep - both as Master and Fellow.

Now will I rehearse other Charges Singular for Masters and Fellows:

FIRST - that no Master take upon himself any LORD'S work or any other man's work but that he know himself able and sufficient to perform the work so that the Craft have no slander nor dishonour, but that the LORD may be truly served and well.

And also that no Master take any work but that he take reasonable pay, so that the Lord may be truly served with his own goods and that the Master may live honestly and pay his Fellows truly their pay, as the manner is.

Also that no Master or Fellow shall supplant others of their work, that is to say, if ye have taken work or else stand Master of a work, you shall not put him out unless he be unable of Cunning to end the work.

And also that no Master nor Fellow take any apprentice with the term of seven years but that the apprentice be able of birth, freeborn, and whole of limbs as a man ought to be.

And also that no Master nor Fellow take any allowance to make any Mason without the Assent and Consent of his fellows (being at least six or seven).

And he that shall be made Mason to be able in all manner of degrees, that is to say - free-borne and of good kindred and true and not bond man and also that he have right limbs as a man ought to have.

And also that no Mason take Apprentice except that he have sufficient occupation for to occupy two or three fellows at the least in work.

And also that no Master nor fellow put any Lord's work to EASEB that was wont to go to Journey work.

And also that any Master shall give pay to his fellows as they may deserve so that they may not be deceived by false workmen.

And also that none slander another behind his back to make him lose his name or his worldly goods.

And also that no Fellow within the Lodge or without misanswer either irreverently or ungodly without reasonable cause.

And also that every Mason reverence his Elder and put him to worship.

Also that no Mason shall be a Common player at the dice, nor any other unlawful game, whereby the Craft might be slandered.

Also that no Mason shall use lechery nor be a baud.

Also that no Fellow go into the town in the night except that he have a Fellow with him to bear witness that he was of honest conversation, in honest company and peace.

And also that every Master and Fellow shall come to the Assembly if it be within fifty miles about him if he have any warning, and he have trespassed against the Craft shall stand to the Award of Masters and Fellows to make them agreed (if they may) and if they cannot, then to go to the the Common Law.

And also that no Master nor Fellow make MOULD SQUARES nor rule to any layer nor set any layer within the Lodge nor without to have any MOULD STONES.

And also that any Mason receive and cherish strange Fellows when they come over the countries and set them in work if they will, as the manner is; that is to say if he have MOULD STONES in his place he shall give him one and set him in work, and if he have none he shall refresh him with money unto the next Lodge.

And also that every Mason shall serve the Lord for his pay and every Master truly make an end of his work be it EASEB or JOURNEY WORK according to your Covenant.

These Charges that we now have rehearsed to you and all other that belong to Masons you shall keep.

So help your God unto your Power.

AMEN