



THE ANCIENT CHARGE

As you have passed the ceremony of your initiation, let me congratulate you on being admitted a member of our ancient and honourable institution. Ancient no doubt it is as having subsisted from time immemorial and honourable it must be acknowledged to be as by a natural tendency it conduces to make those so who are obedient to its precepts. Indeed no institution can boast a more solid foundation than that on which Freemasonry rests - the practice of every moral and social virtue. And to so high an eminence has its credit been advanced that in every age monarchs themselves have been promoters of the art, have not thought it derogatory to exchange the sceptre for the trowel, have patronised our mysteries and joined in our assemblies.

As a Freemason, let me recommend to your most serious contemplation the volume of the sacred law, charging you to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice and to regulate your actions by the divine concepts in contains. Therein you will find the important duties you owe to God, to your neighbour and to yourself. To God, by never mentioning his name but with that awe and reverence which are due from the creature to his creator, by imploring his aid in all your undertakings and by looking up to him in every emergency for comfort and support. To your neighbour, by acting with him on the square, by rendering him every kind office that justice and mercy may require, by relieving his necessities and soothing his afflictions and by doing to him as in similar cases you wish he would do to you. And to yourself, by such a prudent and well regulated course of discipline that will best conduce to the preservation of your corporeal and mental faculties in the fullest energy, thereby enabling you to exert those talents wherewith God has blest you, as well to his glory as to the welfare of your fellow creatures.

As a citizen of the world I am to enjoin you to be exemplary in the discharge of your civil duties, by never proposing or at all countenancing any act which may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society, by paying due obedience to the laws of any state which may for a time become the place of your residence or afford you its protection, and above all, never losing sight of the allegiance due to the Sovereign of your nature land, ever remembering that nature has implanted in your breast a sacred and indissoluble attachment toward that country whence you derived your birth and infant nurture.

As an individual, let me recommend to you the practice of every domestic as well as public virtue; let Prudence direct you, Temperance chasten you, Fortitude support you and Justice be the guide of all your actions. Be especially careful to maintain their fullest splendour those truly Masonic ornaments, which have already been amply illustrated – Benevolence and Charity.

Still as a Freemason, there are other excellences of character to which your attention may be peculiarly and forcibly directed: amongst the foremost of these are Secrecy, Fidelity and Obedience. Secrecy consists in an inviolable adherence to the Obligation you have entered into – never improperly to disclose any of those Masonic secrets which have now been or may at any future period be entrusted to your keeping, and cautiously to avoid all occasions which may inadvertently lead you so to do. Your Fidelity must be exemplified by a strict observance of the Constitutions of the fraternity, by adhering to the ancient landmarks of the Order, by never attempting to extort or otherwise unduly obtain the secrets of superior degree, and by refraining from recommending anyone to a participation of our secrets unless you have strong grounds to believe that by a similar fidelity he will ultimately reflect honour in your choice. Your Obedience must be proved by a strict observance of our laws and regulations, by prompt attention to all signs and summonses, by modest and correct demeanor in the Lodge, by abstaining from every topic of political or religious discussion, by a ready acquiescence in all votes and resolutions duly passed by a majority of brethren, and by perfect submission to the Master and his Wardens whilst acting in the discharge of their respective offices.

And as a last general recommendation, let me exhort you to dedicate yourself to such pursuits as may at once enable you to be respectable in life, useful to mankind, and an ornament to the society to which you have this day become a member; to study more especially those liberal arts and sciences as may lie within the compass of your attainment, and without neglecting the ordinary duties of your station to endeavour to make a daily advancement in your Masonic knowledge.

From the very commendable attention you appear to have given to this charge, I am led to hope you will duly appreciate the value of Freemasonry, and indelibly imprint on your heart the sacred dictates of Truth, of Honour and of Virtue.

LODGE

Presented to:

By: W. Bro.

W.M.

