

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
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**THE RECOMMENDER**

by

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What is in a name? It is the means by which, we as individuals are identified. If it is used with concern and care, it will be respected. If it is overused and abused, it will be questioned - and often there will be debate as to its value. For example, who respects a person who has the reputation of passing bad checks? He develops the reputation of a person who cannot be depended on - so it is, my Brothers, in Masonry.

The name of a Master Mason can bring pleasure to himself, and profit to the Fraternity, if wisely used. It is an instrument to loose, as well as to make fast, the gates of the Fraternity.

When we recommend a person for the degrees of Masonry, do we realize the importance of this act? Does the prospective member possess the qualities and character necessary to become a good Mason? This is the first and most important safeguard of the Fraternity. Like the checks we give out, there must be sufficient funds to make the transaction good, or it will bounce and the reputation of the recommender and the petitioner will be jeopardized.

When we sign a petition, are we just practicing our penmanship and leaving our responsibility behind? In recent years, possibly this has been the situation with too many of our petitions.

The first responsibility, in regard to a petitioner, is to determine if he possesses the desire to become a Mason, and if so, has he been given some idea of what Freemasonry is and what it is not? Has he been informed that he will have to meet certain moral and financial obligations.

In some jurisdictions and in some of the lodges, the recommender is expected to stand up in open lodge and make a brief statement about the person he is recommending for membership.

The persons who sign a petition should always be in lodge when the petition is read, and by all means they should be present when it is balloted on. Failure to do so leaves a question among the Craft that the recommenders may not be completely sold on the individual. If they are convinced, they would display their conviction by being present. If you would - a credit reference for a good man. Isn't this practicing the teachings of our Fraternity, that of concern for our fellowman?

If the persons who have given this credit reference are concerned Masons, they can make a very important impression by being present at lodge every night when the candidate receives his degrees. Better yet, they should take him to lodge and introduce him to the membership. By so doing, they will be available to answer all the questions that he may have. This act will establish the first tie of Brotherhood; therefore causing the candidate to think, "Say, these fellows are serious. They are concerned with Masonry and with me."

We say that when the candidate has completed the necessary requirements of

the three degrees of Masonry, he is a Master Mason and is thereby commended to the kind care and protection of Master Masons withersoever dispersed. My Brethren, he is just starting to become a Master Mason at this point. To this new Brother of the Craft, the recommenders should assume a greater responsibility than ever before. They are the two Masons who can whisper good counsel to the new Brother, take him to a neighboring lodge and let him be examined, assist him with the formalities of balloting in lodge, inform

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him on what honors are to be given at the proper time what books are good for his further enlightenment, and can offer assistance to those questions that most members hesitate to ask when they are so new. By so doing, they are thereby developing a deep and lasting impression of Masonry. Therefore they would be enabling him to become a better Mason.

By their demonstration of interest and concern in the new Brother, they are demonstrating that there are sufficient funds to make the transaction good - to the petitioner they are demonstrating that he is important, and that they are willing to help him to a better way of life.

"LET GEORGE DO IT" is somewhat the way of our lives - passing the buck. Too much responsibility has been placed on the coach, and letting the brothers who recommended him go somewhat free of responsibility in laying this important foundation. If the coach does not do a good job, the candidate does not receive the start to which he is entitled. Whose responsibility is it to see that the new brother received good coaching, and that he understands the teachings of the Masonic Degrees? The recommenders, in signing the petition, have in effect, stated that the candidate is potentially a good Mason, and if they are serious about it, they will see that he receives a proper start in Masonry.

Possibly we should return to the practice of standing up in lodge and demonstrate our pride in the use of our names. This would require the recommender to express a deep belief in the character and reputation of the person proposed for membership and attest to his good character, as well as the recommenders willingness to follow through.

If there is a loss of Brother's interest and involvement in Masonry, and the discharging of his financial obligation begins to decrease to the point where he must be dropped from the rolls, then the recommenders and the other Brothers must assume their responsibility once more. Here again there has been too much of "LETTING GEORGE DO IT". The Lodge Secretary, should never have to do any of the soliciting of dues (other than in open lodge). It is the membership's responsibility, particularly the recommender, to demonstrate their concern in their fellowman and Brethren.

So, what is in a name? Has it some meaning? Is it as good as the individual it represents? In the roll of the recommender, we are the most important person in Masonry. What kind of a reference are we giving when we sign our names, and in the role we play after that?

Think back to the times you have used your name on petitions in the past. Is the Brother still a Mason, and how good a Mason is he? What did you do in this important act - in safeguarding and opening the gates to a better way of life?

There is an instrument, the Trowel, which spreads the cement of Masonry, and I quote in part - that cement which unites us into one sacred band, or society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist, but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree.

My Brothers, there is another working tool of Freemasonry, the pen. When it is used to sign a petition, it is writing the future of Freemasonry.

The Persons admitted Members of a Lodge must be good and true Men, Free-born, and of mature and discreet Age, no Bondsman, no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report (Anderson's Constitutions of 1723)

All Preferment among Masons is grounded upon real Worth and personal merit only, that, so the Lords may be well served, and the Brethren not be put to Shame, nor the Royal Craft despis'd Therefore no Master or Warden is chosen by Seniority, but for his Merit. (Anderson's Constitutions of 1723).

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A lodge is a place where Masons assemble and work; Hence that Assembly, or duly organiz'd Society of Masons, is call'd a Lodge, and every Brother ought to belong to one, and to be subject to its By-Laws and General Regulations. (Anderson's Constitutions of 1723).

The only punishment ever inflicted by Freemasons upon Freemasons are reprimand, suspension (definite or indefinite), and expulsion from the Fraternity. The initiate who violates his obligation will feel the weight of no hand upon him. He will suffer no physical penalties whatsoever. The contempt and detestation of his brethren will be punishment enough.

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(The opinions expressed in the following paper are those of the Author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Victoria Lodge of Education and Research.)

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"THE OLDEST MASONIC CHARGES EXTANT"

Lecture by Wor. Bro. John Keziere

Taken principally from "Mackey's Jurisprudence of Freemasonry"

In the year 926 A.D. Prince Edwin obtained a charter from his brother King Athelstan "To persue and regulate Free Masonry". Accordily, Prince Edwin summoned all Masons to meet him in the City of York and composed the first Grand Lodge, of which he was Grand Master. He requested all known records, some of which were written in French, Greek, Latin and other languages to be brought.

These records are the oldest extant and were in Antique English, a language which would be incomprehensible today. They were discovered by a non-Masonic Historian named Hallewell in 1886, in the archives of the British Museum, slightly altered into more modern English as noted below in 1327, 1663, 1686 and 1720, they essentially remained the same and are presently used in their last revision.

Today we refer to them as the "Antient Charges" our equivalent of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount They were increased in detail to 39 in all. Some short, others quite lengthy, but all beautifully composed in lovely semi-modern English. Throughout, they convey a forceful, yet delicate spirit of Brotherly love.

1. The Master must be steadfast, trusty and true; provide victuals for his men, and pay their wages punctually.

2. Every Master shall attend the Grand Lodge when duly summoned, unless he have

a good and reasonable excuse.

3. No Master shall take an Apprentice for less than seven years.

4. The son of a bondman shall not be admitted as an Apprentice, lest, when he is introduced into the Lodge, any of the brethren should be offended.

5. A candidate must be without blemish, and have the full and proper use of his limbs; for a maimed man can do the Craft no good.

6. The Master shall take especial care, in the admission of an Apprentice, that he do his lord no prejudice.

7. He shall harbor no thief or thief's retainer, lest the Craft should come to shame.

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8. If he unknowingly employ an imperfect man, he shall discharge him from the work when his inability is discovered.

9. No Master shall undertake a work that he is not able to finish to his Lord's profit and the credit of his Lodge.

10. A Brother shall not supplant his Fellow in the work, unless he be incapable of doing it himself; for then he may lawfully finish it, that pleasure and profit may be the mutual result.

11. A Mason shall not be obliged to work after the sun has set in the west.

12. Nor shall he decry the work of a Brother or Fellow, but shall deal honestly and truly by him, under a penalty of not less than ten pounds.

13. The Master shall instruct his Apprentice faithfully, and make him a perfect workman.

14. He shall teach him all the secrets of his trade.

15. And shall guard him against the commission of perjury, and all other offences by which the Craft may be brought to shame.

#### THE FIFTEEN POINTS.

1. Every Mason shall cultivate brotherly love and the love of God, and frequent holy church.

2. The workman shall labor diligently on work days, that he may deserve his holidays.

3. Every Apprentice shall keep his Master's counsel, and not betray the secrets of his Lodge.

4. No man shall be false to the Craft, or entertain a prejudice against his Master or fellows.

5. Every workman shall receive his wages meekly, and without scruple; and should the Master think proper to dismiss him from the work, he shall have due notice of the same before H xll.

6. If any dispute arise among the brethren, it shall be settled on a holiday, that the work be not neglected, and God's law fulfilled.

7 No Mason shall debauch, or have carnal knowledge of the wife, daughter, or concubine of his Master or Fellows.

8. He shall be true to his Master, and a just mediator in all disputes or quarrels.

9. The Steward shall provide good cheer against the hour of refreshment, and each Fellow shall punctually defray his share of the reckoning, the steward rendering a true and correct account.

10. If a Mason live amiss, or slander his Brother, so as to bring the Craft to shame he shall have no further maintenance among the brethren, but shall be summoned to the next Grand Lodge; and if he refuse to appear, he shall be expelled.

11. If a Brother see his Fellow hewing a stone, and likely to spoil it by unskillful workmanship, he shall teach him to amend it, with fair words and brotherly speeches.

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12. The General assembly, or Grand Lodge, shall consist of Masters and Fellows, Lords, knights and Squires and Mayor and Sheriff, to make new laws, and to confirm old ones when necessary.

13. Every Brother shall swear fealty, and if he violate his oath, he shall not be succored or assisted by any of the Fraternity.

14. He shall make oath to keep secrets, to be steadfast and true to all the ordinances of the Grand Lodge, to the King and Holy Church, and to all the several Points herein specified.

15. And if any Brother break his oath, he shall be committed to prison, and forfeit his goods and chattels to the king.

They conclude with an additional ordinance - alia ordinacio - which declares -

That a General Assembly shall be held every year, with the Grand Master at its head, to enforce these regulations, and to make new Laws, when it may be expedient to do so at which all the brethren are competent to be present; and they must renew their O. B. keep these Statutes and Constitutions, which have been ordained by King Athelstan, and adopted by the Grand Lodge at York. And this Assembly further directs that, in all ages to come, the existing Grand Lodge shall petition the reigning monarch to confer his sanction on their proceedings.

11 - The Constitutions of Edward III.

Anderson informs us, on the authority of an old record, that in the reign of King Edward III, (that is, between the years 1327 and 1377) the Grand Master, with his Wardens, at the head of the Grand Lodge, with the consent of the Lords of the realm, who were generally Freemasons, ordained the following Constitutions:

1 That for the future, at the making or admission of a Brother, the

Constitutions and Charges shall be read.

2. That Master Masons, or Masters of the work, shall be examined whether they be able of cunning to serve their respective lords, as well the highest as the lowest, to the honor and worship of the aforesaid art, and to the profit of their lords; for they be their lords and employ them for their travel.

3. That when the Masters and wardens meet in a Lodge, if need be, the Sheriff of the county, or the Mayor of the city, or Alderman of the town, in which the congregation is held, should be made fellow and sociate to the Master, in help of him against rebels, and for upbearing the rights of the realm.

4. That Entered Prentices at their making were charged not to be thieves, or thieves-maintainers; that they should travel honestly for their pay, and love their Fellows as themselves, and be true to the King of England, and to the realm, and to the Lodge.

5. That at such congregations it shall be enquired, whether any Master or Fellow has broke any of the articles agreed to. And if the offender, being duly cited to appear, prove rebel, and will not attend, then the Lodge shall determine against him that he shall forswear his Masonry, and shall no more use this craft; the which if he presume for to do, the Sheriff of the county shall prison him, and take all his goods into the king's hands, till his grace be granted him an issue: for this cause principally have these congregations been ordained, that as well the lowest as the highest should be well and truly served in this art forsaid throughout all the kingdom of England.

111 -Regulations of 1663

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In the reign of Charles 1, Henry Jermy, Earl of St Albans, being chosen Grand Master, he held a General assembly and Feast on Saint John the Evangelist's day, 1663, when the following regulations were adopted:

1. That no person, of what degree soever, be made or accepted a Freemason, unless in a regular Lodge, whereof one to be a Master or a Warden in that limit or division where such Lodge be kept, and another to be a Craftsman in the trade of Freemasonry.

2. That no person shall hereafter be accepted a Freemason but such as are of able body, honest parentage, good reputation, and an observer of the laws of the land.

3. That no person hereafter who shall be accepted a Freemason, shall be admitted into any Lodge or assembly, until he has brought a certificate of the time and place of his acceptation from the Lodge that accepted him, unto the Master of that limit or division where such lodge is kept; and the said Master shall enroll the same in a roll of parchment, to be kept for that purpose, and shall give an account of all such acceptations at every General Assembly.

4. That every person who is now a Freemason, shall bring to the Master a note of the time of his acceptation, to the end of the same may be enrolled in such priority of place as the Brother deserves and that the whole company and Fellows may the better know each other.

5. That for the future the said fraternity of Freemasons shall be regulated and governed by one Grand Master, and as many Wardens as the said society shall think fit to appoint at every annual General Assembly.

6. That no person shall be accepted, unless he be twenty-one years old or more.

#### IV - The Antient Installation Charges

These Charges appear from their style to be very old, although their date is uncertain. They were contained in a Manuscript written in the reign of James 11, which extended from 1685 to 1688, which Manuscript, according to Preston, was in possession of the Lodge of Antiquity in London. They are said to have been used at the installation of the Master of a Lodge. Probably they are older than the year 1686; but that date is often used as a means of reference. The Charges are as follows:

1. That ye shall be true men to God and the holy church, and to use no error or heresy by your understanding, and by wise men's teaching.

2. That ye shall be true liegemen to the King of England, without treason or any falsehood, and that ye know no treason but ye shall give knowledge therof to the king or to his counsel; also ye shall be true to one to another, that is to say, every Mason of the Craft that is Mason allowed, ye shall do to him as ye would be done onto yourself.

3. And ye shall keep truly all the counsel that ought to be kept in the way of Masonhood, and all the counsel of the Lodge or of the chamber. Also, that ye shall be no thief nor thieves to your knowledge free; that ye shall be true to the king, lord or master that ye serve, and truly to see and work for his advantage.

4. Ye shall call all Masons your Fellows, or your brethren, and no other names.

5. Ye shall not take your Fellow's wife in villainy, nor deflower his daughter or servant, nor put him to disworship.

6. Ye shall truly pay for your meat or drink, wheresoever ye go to table or board. Also, ye shall do no villainy there, whereby the Craft or Science may be slandered.

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#### V - The Antient Charges at Makings

The Manuscript in the archives of the Lodge of Antiquity from which I have quoted the preceding charges, adds to them fifteen more, which are said to be "Charges single for Masons allowed or accepted," that is to say, as is added at the end, "Charges and covenants to be read . . . at the making of a Freemason or Freemasons." They are as follows

1. That no Mason take on him no lord's work, nor any other man's, unless he know himself well able to perform the work, so that the Craft have no slander.

2. Also, that no Master take work but that he take reasonable pay for it; so that the lord may be truly served, and the Master to live honestly, and to pay his Fellows truly. And that no Master or Fellow supplant others of their work; that is to say, that if he hath taken work, or else stand Master of any work, that he shall not put him out, unless he be unable of cunning to make an end of his work. And no Master or Fellow shall take no Apprentice for less than seven years. and that the Apprentice be free born, and of limbs whole as a man ought to be, and no bastard. And that no Master nor Fellow take no allowance to be

made Mason without the assent of his Fellows, at the least six or seven.

3. That he be made able in all degrees; that is free born, of good kindred, true, and no bondsman, and that he have his right limbs as a man ought to have.

4. That a Master take no Apprentice without he have occupation to occupy two or three Fellows at least.

5. That no Master or Fellow put away any lord's work to task that ought to be journeywork.

6. That every Master give pay to his Fellows and servants as they may deserve, so that he be not defamed with false working. And that none slander another behind his back to make him lose his good name.

7. That no Fellow in the house or abroad, answer another ungodly or reproveably without cause

8. That every Master Mason do reverence to his elder; and that a Mason be no common player at the cards, dice or hazard; or at any other unlawful plays through the which the Craft and Science may be dishonored and slandered.

9, That no Fellow go into the town by night, except he have a Fellow with him, who may bear him record that he was in an honest place

10. That every Master and Fellow shall come to the assembly, if it be within fifty miles of him, if he have any warning. And if he have trespassed against the Craft, to abide the reward of Masters and Fellows.

11. That every Master Mason and Fellow that hath trespassed against the Craft, shall stand to the correction of other Masters and Fellows to make him accord; and if they cannot accord, to go to the common law.

12. That a Master or Fellow make not a mould stone, square, nor rule, to no lowen, nor let no lowen work, work within their Lodge nor without, to mould stone.

13. That every Mason receive and cherish strange Fellows when they come over the country, and set them on work, if they will work, as the manner is; that is to say, if the Mason have any mould stone in his place, he shall give him a mould stone, and set him on work; and if he have none, the Mason shall refresh him with money unto the next Lodge.

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14. That every Mason shall truly serve his master for his pay.

15. That every Master shall truly make an end of his work task or journey. whitherso it be.

At the quarterly communication of the Grand Lodge of England held on 24th June 1720, new and revised charges were approved which were the last revision, known today as the charges of 1725 and will be found in the Book of Constitutions" page 112.

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