

“LANSDOWNE MS.” (C)

About A.D. 1560.

“HERE BEGINETH THE TRUE ORDER OF MASONRIE.

“The might of the *Father of the Heavens* The *Wisdome of the Glorious Son*,  
And the goodnesse of the *Holy Ghost* three persons and one *God* be with vs now  
and ever *Amen*.

“Good Bretheren and Fellows our purpose is to shew you how and in what  
manner this *Noble and Worthy Craft of Masonry* was first founded and begun,  
And afterwards how it was confirmed by worthy *Kings and Princes* and by many  
other Worshipfull men, And also to all those the be heere, Weeminde to shewe you  
the Charge that belongs to every trew *Mason* to keep. for in good Faith if you take  
good heed it is well worthy to be kept for A worthy Craft and curious *Science*.  
*Srs* there be *Seaven Liberall Sciencies* of which the *Noble Craft of Masonry* is one,  
And the Seaven be these, The first is *Gramer* and that teacheth A man to Spell  
and Write trewly, The second is *Rethorick* and that teacheth A man to speake  
faire and Subtill, The third is *Lodgick* and that teacheth A man deserne the trew  
from the false, The fowrth is *Arithmeticke* and that teacheth A man to Reckon and  
Account all manner of Accompts, the fifth is *Geometry* and that teacheth A  
man† and Measur of Earth and of all things of the which this  
Science is called *Geometry*, The sixth is called *Musick*, and that teacheth A man  
to sing with Voyce and Tongue and Organ Harp and Trump, The Seaventh is  
called *Astronomy* and that teacheth A man to know the Course of the Sunn and  
the Moone and the Starrs, these be the *Seaven Liberall Sciencies* of the which all  
be founded by one which is *Geometry*, and thus a man, may prove that all the  
*Seaven Sciencies* be founde by Geometrie for it Teacheth A man† and  
Measure Ponderation weight on all things on Earth, For there is noe Workman  
that Worketh any Craft but he worketh by some Mett or Measure. And every  
man that buyeth or Selleth they buy or Sell by some weight or Measure, And all  
this is *Geometry*, And the Merchants and all other Craftsmen of the *Seaven*  
*Sciencies*, and the Plowmen and Tillers of the Earth and Sowers of all manner of  
Graines Seeds and Vine plants, and Setters of all manner of ffruits: For *Gramer*  
or *Arithmeticke* nor *Astronomy* nor none of all the *Seaven Sciencies* can no man  
finde Mett or Measure in without *Geometry* wherefore methinks that the said  
Science of *Geometry* is most worthy, And all the other be founded by it, But how  
this worthy Science and Craft was first founded and begun I shall tell you before  
*Noyes* flood there was A man which was called *Lameth* as it is written in the Bible  
in the 4th Chapter of Genesis, and this *Lameth* had 2 Wifes the one called *Ada*  
the other *Sella*, by the first wife *Ada* he begat a Sonne and a Daughter And these  
4 Children found the beginning of all these Crafts and Sciencies in the World for

† Space in MS.

the Eldest Sonne *Gabell* found the Craft of Geometry and he fed flocks of Sheep and Lambs in the feild: And first wrought houses of Stone and he and his Brother *Tuball* found the Crafts of *Musick* song of mouth harp and Organs and all other Instruments. The third Brother *Tubalican* found the Smith Craft of Gold and Silver Iron and Copper and Steel, And the Daughter found the Craft of Webbing and these Children knew well that God would take vengeance for Sinn either by fire or Water, wherefore they wrought the Scyences they had founded in 2 Pillers of Stone, that they might be found afterwards, and the one Stone was called Marble for that would not burne in the fire, and the other Stone was called Latherne and that would not be drowned with water; *Our* Intent is to tell you how and in what manner these Stones were found that these Sciencies was written on the *Herminerus* that was *Cubb* his Soune, The which *Cubb. Semet.* Sonne the which Sonne was *Noaths* Sonne this same *Herminerus* was afterwards called *Armes* the ffather of the Wisemen he found one of the 2 pillers of Stone and found the Science written therein and he taught it to others, And at the makeing of the tower of *Babilon*, was *Masonrie* first made there much of, and the *King of Babilon* called *Nemroth* who was a Mason himselve and loved well the rest as is said with the Masters of Stories, And when the City of *Ninevey* or the City of the *East Port* should have bin made *Nemroth* the *King of Babilon* sent thither Sixty *Masons* of his Region to the *King of Ninevey* his cozen, And when he sent them forth he gave them a Charge in this manner.

"The first was that they should be true to their *King* Lord or Master that they served and that they shoulde Ordaine the most wise and cunning man to be Master of the *King* or Lords worke that was amongst them, and neither for Love Riches nor favour to sett another that had little cunninge to be Master of that Worke whereby the Lord should bee ill served And the *Science* ill Defamed.

"*Secondly* that they should call the Governor of the Worke Master all the tyme they wrought with him and other many more Charges that were to long to write, and for the keeping of all those Charges he made them sware a great Oath which men vsed at that time, And ordained for them reasonable pay that they might live with honestie, and also he gave them in Charge that they should Assemble togethar every yeare once to see how they might Worke best to serve the *King* or Lord for their proffit and their owne Workship, And also that they should correct within themselves those that had Trespassed against the Science or Craft, And thus was this Noble Craft first grounded there, And the worthy *Mr Ewclides* gave it the name of Geometry, And how it is called throughout all the World *Masonrie* Long after when the Children of *Israell* were come into the Land *Berhest* which is now called the Countrey of *Jerusalem* where *King David* begun the Temple that is now called *Templu Dei*, and is named with us the Temple of *Jerusalem*, and the same *King David* Loved *Masons* then right well and gave them good pay, and he gave the Charges and Manners that he learned in *Egipt* which were given by that worthy Doctor *Ewclid* and other more charges that you shall heare after wardes; And after the decease of *King David*, then Reigned *Solloman* that was *King Davids* Sound and he performed out the Temple that his ffather had begun and he sent after *Masons* into Diverse Countreys and into Diverse Lands and he gathered them togethar so that he had 24000 Workers of Stone and were all named *Masons* and he Chosed out of them 3000 and were all ordained to be Masters, Rulers and Governors of his worke, and then was there a *King* of another Region which men called *Iram* and he loved well *King Solloman* and gave

him Timber to his work and he had a Sonne that was called a man that was Master of Geometry, and was chiefe Master of all his Masonrie & of all his Graving, Carving and all other Masonry that belonged to the Temple, this is Witnessed in the holy Bible (in Libro Regium quarto et Tertio) and this same *Solloman* Confirmed both the Charges and the Manners which his ffather had given, And thus was the worthy Craft of *Masonrie* confirmed in that countrey of Jerusalem And many other Regions and Kingdoms men walked into Diverse Countreys some because of Learning to learne more Cunning, And some to teach them that had but little Cunning, and soe it befell that there was a Curious man named *Namas Greecious* who had beene at the makeing of Sollomans Temple And he came from thence into France and there he taught the *Science of Masonrie* to men of that Land and so there was one of the Royall Line of France called *Charles Marshall* and he was A man that loved well the said Craft and took upon him the Rules and Manners and after that BY THE GRACE OF GOD he was elect to be the *King* of ffrance and when he was in his Estate he helped to make those Masons that were now, and sett them on Work and gave them Charges and Manners and good pay as he had Learned of other Masons, and Confirmed them a Charter from yeare to yeare to hold their Assembly when they would and Cherished them right well, and thus came this Noble craft into ffrance and England, in that season stood void as fforagine Charge of Masons vntill St. Albanes and St. Albans was a worthy Knight and Steward to the King of his household and had Government of his Realme And also of the makeing of the Walls of the said Towne, and he loved well Masons and Cherished them much and made there pay right good for he gave them iijs vjd a week & iijd before that time all the Land a Mason took but one penny a day and his meat till St. Albones mended it and he gott them a Charter of the King and his Councill for to hold a Generall Councill and gave it to name Assembly. Thereat was he himselfe and did help to make *Masons* and gave them Charges as you shall heare afterwards, soone after the Decease of St. Albones there came Diverse Warrs into England out of Diverse Nations so that the good rule of Masons was dishired and put downe vntill the tyme of *King Adilston* in his tyme there was a worthy King in England that brought this Land into good rest and he builded many great workes and buildings, therefore he loved well Masons for he had a Sonne called *Edwin* the which Loved Masons much more then his ffather did and he was soe practized in Geometry that he delighted much to come and talke with Masons and to Learne of them the Craft, And after for the love he had to Masons and to the Craft, he was made *Mason* at Windsor and he gott of the *King* his ffather a Charter and Commission once every yeare to have Assembly within the Realme where they would within *England* and to correct within themselves ffaults & Trespasses that weere done as Touching the Craft, and he held them an Assembly at *Yorke* and there he made *Masons* and gave them Charges and taught them the Manners, and Comands the same to be kept ever afterwards And tooke them the Charter and Commission to keep their Assembly and Ordained that it should be renewed from *King* to *King*, and when the Assembly were gathered together he made a Cry that all old Masons or young that had any Writeings or Vnderstanding of the Charges and manners that weere made before their Lands wheresoever they were made *Masons* that they should shew them forth, there were found some in ffrench, some in Greek some in Hebrew and some in English, and some in other Languages, and when they were read and over seen well the intent of them was vnderstood to be all one, and then he caused a Booke to be made thereof how this worthy Craft of *Masonrie* was first founded and he himselfe Comanded and also then caused that

it should be read at any tyme when it should happen any Mason or Masons to be made to give him or them their Charges, and from that time vntill this Day Manners of Masons have been kept in this Manner and forme as well as Men might Gouverne it and furthermore at diverse Assemblies have been put and Ordained diverse Charges by the best advice of *Masters* and ffellows (Tunc vnus ex Senioribus tentat Librum et ille ponent manam Suam Super Librum) Every man that is a Mason take good heede to these Charges, If any man finde himselfe guilty in any of these Charges we pray that he may amend himselfe or principally for dread of *God* you that be charged take good heede that you keep all these Charges well for it is a great perill to a man to forswear himselfe vpon a Booke.

"*The First Charge* is that you shall be true to *God* and holy Church and to vse noe Error or Heresie you vnderstanding and by wise mens teaching, also that you shall be Leige men to the *King* of England without Treason or any falshood and that you know noe Treason or treachery but that ye amend and give knowledge there of to the King or his Councell also that ye shall be true to one another (that is to say) every Mason of the Craft that is Mason allowed you shall doe to him as you would be done to yo<sup>r</sup> selfe.

"*Secondly* and ye shall keep truely all the Councell of the Lodge or of the Chamber, and all the Councell of the Lodge that ought to be kept by the way of Masonhood also that you be noe theefe nor theeves to yo<sup>r</sup> knowledge free that you shall be true to the *King* Lord or Master that you serve and truly to see and worke for his advantage also you shall call all Masons yo<sup>r</sup> ffellows or yo<sup>r</sup> Brethren and noe other names :

"*Fowerthly* also you shall not take yo<sup>r</sup> ffellows wife in Villoney nor deflowre his Daughter or Servant nor put him to disworship also you shall truely pay for yo<sup>r</sup> meat or drinke wheresoever you goe to Table or Board whereby the Craft or Science may be slandered, These be the charges Generall that belong to every true Masons both Masters and Fellows.

"*Now I will rehearse other Charges single for Masons Allowed.*

"*First* that noe Mason take on him noe Lords worke nor other mans but if he know himselfe well able to pforme the work soe that the Craft have noe Slander.

"*Secondly* also that noe Master take worke but that he take reasonable pay for it, soe that the Lord may be truely served and the Master to live honestly and to pay his ffellows truely also that no Master or fellow suplant others of their worke (that is to say) if he have taken a worke or else stand Master of a worke that he shall not put him out without he be vnable of Cunnige to make an end of his Worke, alsoe that noe Master nor fellow shall take noe Prentice for lesse than Seaven yeares and that the prentice be able of Birth that is ffree borne and of Limbs whole as a Man ought to be and that noe Mason or fellow take no allowance to be maid Mason without the Assent of his ffellows at the least Six or Seaven, that he that he maide be able in all degrees that is free borne and of a good Kindred true and no bondsman and that he have his right Limbes as a man ought to have.

"*Thirdly* also that a Master take noe Prentice without he have Occupcon sufficient to Occupie two or three Fellows at least.

"*Fowerthly* also that noe Master or fellow put away Lords worke to Taske that ought to be Journey worke.

"*Fiftly* also that every Master give pay to his ffellows and Servants as they may deserve so that he be not defamed with false working.

“*Sixthly* also that none Slander another behind his back to make him loose his good name.

“*Seventhly* that noe ffellow in the house or abroad answere another Vngodly or repravably without cause.

“*Eighthly* also that every Master Mason reverence his elder also that a Mason be no Common player at the Dice Cards or hazard nor at any other Vnlawful playes through the which the Science and craft may be dishonerd.

“*Ninthly* also that noe Mason vse no Lechery nor have been abroad whereby the Craft may be dishonored or Slandered.

“*Tenthly* also that no ffellow goe into the Towne by night except he have a ffellow with him who may beare record that he was in an honest place.

“*Eleventhly* also that every Master and ffellow shall come to the Assembly if it be within 50 Miles of him if he have any warning and if he have trespassed against the Craft to abide the award of the Master and ffellows.

“*Twelfthly* also that every Master Mason and ffellow that have trespass'd against the Craft shall stand in Correcon of other Masters and ffellows to make him accord and if they cannot accord to goe to the Comon Law.

“*Thirteenthly* also that a Master or ffellow make not a Moulde Stone Square nor rule to no Lowen nor Sett no Lowen worke within the Lodge nor without to no Mould Stone.

“*Fourteenthly* also that every Mason receive or cherish Strange Fellows when they come over the Countrey and sett them on work if they will worke as the Manner is (that is to say) if the Mason have any Moulde Stone in his place on worke and if he have none the Mason shall refresh him with money vnto the next Lodge.

“*Fifteenthly* also that every Mason shall truely serve his Master ffor his pay.

“*Sixteenthly* also that every Master shall truely make an end of his worke taske or Journey whethersoe it bee.

“*These* be all the Charges and Covenants that ought to be had read at the makeing of a Mason or Masons.

“*The Almighty God who have you & me in his keeping Amen.*”

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(*A certified Transcript from the British Museum.*)

