



Sussex Freemasons - West Group

'The West Wing'  
(Bognor, Chichester, Clapham, Littlehampton,  
Midhurst, Pulborough, Steyning and Worthing)

'The West Wing' Learning and Development Team.

'The West Wing' Lodge of Instruction.

Lesson 8: Commentary on the Charge After Initiation.'

## Preceptors Notes

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## **Lesson Aim**

Explain the Charge After Initiation.

## **Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this lesson the student will be able to:

- Explain the Origins of Freemasonry.
- Analyse and understand the meaning of the Charge after Initiation.
- Follow the writings of the Rev. Neville Barker Cryer.



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## Commentary on the Charge after Initiation.

In order for us to understand the Charge after Initiation I feel it is important to know a little of our Masonic origins. Let us therefore have a brief look at craft "Guilds"

A guild is "an association of craftsmen or merchants formed for mutual aid and protection and the furtherance of their professional interests". (Britanica.com)

Guilds were at their height in Europe between the 11th and 16th centuries. Of the two types of Guilds, Merchant and Craft, we will be looking more specifically at the Craft Guilds. The Craft Guilds would consist of Master Craftsmen in a town or city coming together to regulate the standard of work, pay and conditions for that industry. Each industry would have their own Guild of artisans and craftsmen. For example, Guilds of weavers, dyers and fullers in the wool trade, and masons and architects in the building trade. Other Guilds included; blacksmiths, butchers, bakers etc. The Guilds became very influential in local government and in the local economy. They were also very heavily into helping their members, improving their community and philanthropy.

A Master Craftsman would have apprentices who would learn the secrets of their trade. The apprentices would be in early adolescence, about 14 years of age, and would complete an apprenticeship of between five and nine years. They received no pay but were given food and lodgings. In fact some families paid the Master Craftsman for their son to serve an apprenticeship with them.

Maintaining a good reputation as a man as well as a Master Craftsman meant there was work. Living with the Master Craftsman the apprentice was taught to respect the Master's wife, his daughter and his maid. He would be dressed appropriately at the meal table and be prompt. He would treat all the Master's clients courteously for that would bring in the work. If he did not keep to this professional and personal standard he was sent back to his own family, unqualified.

After completing their apprenticeship the qualified craftsman would then become a journeyman, travelling from job to job, Master to Master, following the work and honing his skills. To become a Master himself he must produce a "masterpiece" which would be judged by established Masters in the Guild. If successful he could then open up a workshop of his own with his own apprentices working to the high standard set by the Guild not only in the work produced but also as a citizen, ensuring that they did not bring the Guild into disrepute. The Guilds held their own professional courts to investigate complaints in order to maintain their high standing in the community.



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It is at the heyday of the Guilds (or in London the Livery Companies) that Freemasonry has been alleged to originate. If we look at the Coat of Arms of the United Grand Lodge of England you will see, on the left as you look at it, three castles a chevron and compasses. This was also that of the "Moderns" and the Coat of Arms of the Worshipful Company of Masons registered with the College of Arms in 1472, but with a sable (black) field and not gule (red) field as in that of the UGLE Coat of Arms, which itself was registered in 1919.

At the time the Guilds were developing in Europe, Europe was going through religious turmoil. It was a time of pilgrimages and the Crusades of the Middle Ages. The English monarchs from Henry VIII to William III were changing between Catholicism and Protestantism. A period known as the Reformation which began in 1517 and culminating in the Act of Settlement in 1701 stating that the Monarch had to be a Protestant. England during this period was very religious to the point that employers, members of the Guild's, insisted their employees attended church.

The reputation of the Guilds (or in London the Livery Companies) became such that honourable and established Freemen of the town or city wanted to be associated with them and so these honourable men were accepted as social or 'speculative' members, hence the phrase "Free and Accepted or Speculative".

Now let us compare the Charge after initiation with what we have learned from the above information.

### **Ritual**

*Bro. AB, as you have passed through the ceremony of your initiation, let me congratulate you on being admitted a member of our antient and honourable institution. Ancient no doubt it is having subsisted from time immemorial, and honourable it must be acknowledged to be, as by a natural tendency it conduces 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 promotors of the art, have not thought it derogatory to their dignity to exchange the sceptre for the trowel, have patronised our mysteries and joined in our assemblies.*

The fact that there is a 'ceremony' of admittance indicates that you are entering something which is quite special and not a job. It is special because the people in the Institution make it so. They have a code of moral conduct which they put into practice that makes them deserving of respect – being 'honourable'. "Words have to become deeds" (Rev. Neville Barker Cryer: What do you know about Ritual?) The Rev. Neville Barker Cryer argues that 'Antient' refers to the fact that it is old and its precepts can be traced back to the Guilds. The word 'immemorial' means "originating in the distant past" again, he argues, referring back to the Guilds and not to the Egyptians or the Greeks. In the original make up of a Freemasons Lodge the newest



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member would be given an apron and trowel and act as the Inner Guard. He would prick the chest of the Initiate with the trowel to test one of the five senses on the Initiate's entrance to the Lodge. The Initiate would then become the newest member and take on that role. We now use a poniard in place of the trowel. Monarchs have "exchanged the sceptre for the trowel" referring to the likes of Edward VII (as Prince of Wales) and George IV (as the Prince of Wales and Prince Regent) taking the humblest of positions, the Inner Guard, as the newest Lodge member.

### *Ritual*

*As a Freemason, let me recommend to your most serious contemplation the VSL, charging you to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice and to regulate your actions by the divine precepts it contains. Therein you will be taught 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 you lawful undertakings, and by looking up to Him in every emergency for comfort and support.*

It is in the VSL, which in English Lodges must be the whole Bible and must be open in order to make the Lodge 'regular', that we find the precepts that "regulate our actions". Books of other faiths may lay upon or alongside the Bible in English Lodges if it is requested of the candidate but not replace it. It signifies the unity of faiths. The Bible is not just a gesture to religion it is the "unerring guide" to our actions and so it must be present and open to enable it to be read by the Master when he "employs and instructs the Brethren in Freemasonry".

In the ceremony of Initiation you are asked "In all cases of difficulty and danger in whom do you place your trust?" A question that must be answered truthfully to fulfil a requirement of entry into our Institution. Above the Ark of the Covenant on the Coat of Arms of United Grand Lodge of England is written in Hebrew "Holiness to the Lord" and on the Coat of Arms for the Worshipful Company of Masons is written the motto "God is our guide"

### *Ritual*

*To your neighbour, by acting with him on the square, by rendering him every kind office which justice or mercy may require, by relieving his necessities and soothing his afflictions, and by doing unto him as in similar cases you would wish he would do to you.*

By "acting with him on the square" that is to say by acting with reverence and high morals both practically and emotionally, as well as financially to help your fellow man. Bible quote: "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31)



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### *Ritual*

*And to yourself, by such a prudent and well-regulated course of discipline as may best conduce to the preservation of your corporeal and mental faculties in their fullest energy, thereby enabling you to exert those talents wherewith God has blessed you, as well to His glory as the welfare of your fellow creatures.*

To set yourself "a course of discipline", a daily routine, which looks after your mental as well as physical health. At the time of the Guilds if you were not at your best mentally and physically you were not able to do the work that will enable you to provide for your family or be in a position to help others. There are not many Institutions that encourage the use of memory to express knowledge. A great benefit to mental wellbeing.

*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 that may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society, by paying attention 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, by never losing sight of the allegiance due to the Sovereign of your native land, ever remembering that nature has implanted in your breast a sacred and indissoluble attachment towards that country whence you derived your birth and infant nurture.*

Early Guilds existed by a Warrant or Charter signed by the Monarch and so the allegiance of Guild members was to the Crown. Within our ranks over the years we have had future kings and our present Grand Master, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, is of Royal blood and the cousin of Queen Elizabeth II. The civil wars of the 17th century brought disorder through the land but the Guilds pledged to the monarch to be peaceful and law abiding and so it is today.

### *Ritual*

*As an individual, let me recommend 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 in their fullest splendour those truly Masonic ornaments, which have already been amply illustrated – Benevolence and Charity.*

What you do in both your public and private lives will have an effect on your reputation and consequently on that of the Institution. Operative Masters in the past had to look after their apprentices, aged between 14 and 21, so they demanded respectful, polite and virtuous behaviour, to be a good man and uphold a good reputation so that the Master Craftsman's business continued to prosper.

To follow the dictates of Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice to be a credit to yourself and of benefit to your trade or calling.



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### *Ritual*

*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 of 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 avoid all occasions which may inadvertently lead you so to do.*

The Master Craftsman would convey a way of producing an item that is unique to his trade to his apprentices, a trade secret. He would not want that secret to be conveyed to people outside of his craft for that would have a very strong effect on his business, his livelihood and his reputation. The only secrets we have in Freemasonry are the manner in which we recognize each other. In conveying those secrets to people outside of the "Craft" would endanger the reputation of our members. A reputation that has been built up over three centuries. It is a test of your integrity.

### *Ritual*

*Your Fidelity must be exemplified by a strict observance of the Constitution of the fraternity, by adhering to the ancient Landmarks of the Order, by never attempting to extort or otherwise obtain the secrets of a 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 on your choice.*

Fidelity means "faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support." It is, therefore, important that you take time to read our Constitution for therein you will be "instructed in the duties you owe to the Craft in general" and from our By-laws "the duties you owe to this Lodge in particular"

With regard to the "antient Landmarks of the Order" it must be noted that Freemasonry does not have a controlling authority over individual Grand Lodges so the "antient Landmarks" may vary around the world. However these are six of the most common:

1. Belief in a Supreme Being or monotheism
2. Belief in the immortality of the soul
3. A book or volume of the sacred law as an indispensable part of the "furniture" of the Lodge.
4. The Legend of the third degree
5. The secrets of Freemasonry. The modes of recognition and the symbolic ritual of the Lodge



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6. That a Mason be a man, freeborn, and of lawful age.

It is easy enough, nowadays, to find the secrets of a superior degree but why would you want to? It would take away the mystery and drama of the ceremonies and make them less of a learning experience. It would also bring into question your own integrity, for being pressed further you would soon fall and identify yourself as someone not entitled to the rank, a "cowen", one who works as a Mason without having served a regular apprenticeship.

A whole debate can be had on the recommendations of candidates. Who really knows another? What goes on behind closed doors? When Master Craftsmen selected their apprentices they would go on word of mouth, recommendations and the reputation of the prospective candidate's family, but it is not until the apprentice works through the skill sets set by the Master Craftsman that a true indication of worth can be gained. What can be established is the character of the candidate by references from reputable sources and face to face time, both of which can be an act. His true character will be tested thoroughly during his apprenticeship.

The Revd. Neville Barker Cryer writes "imagine that person (the prospective candidate) standing where the recipient of this Charge would stand and ask the question, is he someone who will happily respond to this list of requirements or do they not fit his character?"

### **Ritual**

*Your obedience must be proved by a strict observance of our laws and regulations, by prompt attention to signs and summonses, by a 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 the Brethren and by perfect submission to the Master and his Wardens whilst acting in the discharge of their respective offices.*

You can only know our laws and regulations by reading the Constitution and By-laws. It doesn't have to be done in one chunk. Read little and often.

Make a habit of replying to summonses sent by the Secretary the same day. He has a lot of work to do putting a meeting together. Put the dates of Lodge meetings in your diary so that you can plan ahead.

Lodges are places of safety for many of our members. It must therefore be a place of conviviality and concord, not a place where a member may feel embarrassed or angry. There is enough of that in the world. It is a place where a man of any religious background, political persuasion or cultural difference may feel he is safe and among friends.



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In the "address to the brethren" we talk about the teachings of humility. It goes on to explain that our "association has been formed and perfected with unanimity and concord" that is by the will of the majority and in harmony.

### *Ritual*

*And as a last general recommendation, let me exhort you to dedicate yourself to such pursuits as to enable you to be respectable in life, useful to mankind, and an ornament to the society of which you have this day become a member; to study more especially such of the 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 masonic knowledge.*

It is here that the Charge makes an intrusion into your private life by asking you to make your hobbies and pastimes such that they do not bring you or our Institution into disrepute. It encourages you to continue your personal development and without detriment to yourself, your family and your work learn more about our Institution which in itself is a pathway of personal improvement.

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 print on your heart the sacred dictates of Truth, Honour, and of Virtue.

I hope you now realise that Freemasonry is a way of life and not just a social gathering.

**Stephen J. Goulding. ProvSGD, SLGCR.**

'The West Wing' Learning and Development Lead.



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## 'The West Wing' Learning and Development Team. Questions.

**1. According to the source material, what was the primary purpose of a medieval Craft Guild?**

A.

To act as a branch of the central government's tax office

B.

To provide a purely social club for local merchants

C.

To regulate standards of work, pay, and industry conditions

D.

To train soldiers for the Crusades

**2. Which requirement was necessary for a journeyman to transition to the rank of a Master Craftsman?**

A.

He had to recruit at least ten new apprentices

B.

He had to pay a significant fine to the local monarch

C.

He had to produce a 'masterpiece' to be judged by established Masters

D.

He had to serve a secondary five-year apprenticeship

**3. How does the Coat of Arms of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) differ from the 1472 Worshipful Company of Masons?**

A.

The 1472 version featured three castles, while the UGLE version features four

B.

The UGLE field is red (gule) while the original was black (sable)

C.

The UGLE version removed the compasses and replaced them with a sword

D.

The UGLE version added the motto 'God is our guide'



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**4. In the context of Masonic history, what does the term 'Speculative' refer to?**

- A.  
Members who invested money into cathedral building projects
- B.  
Members who joined for social or philosophical reasons rather than trade work
- C.  
Apprentices who failed their initial training period
- D.  
Architects who specialized in futuristic designs

**5. What is argued to be the true meaning of 'Antient' and 'immemorial' in the Charge after Initiation?**

- A.  
That the rituals have remained unchanged since the dawn of man
- B.  
That the institution's precepts can be traced back to the medieval Guilds
- C.  
That the organization is only open to people of noble birth
- D.  
That Freemasonry was founded in Ancient Egypt or Greece

**6. In modern Masonic practice, what object has replaced the trowel used in the historical initiation ceremony?**

- A.  
A poniard
- B.  
A square
- C.  
An apron
- D.  
A gavel



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**7. Which of the following is NOT one of the 'six common antient Landmarks' listed in the document?**

A.

The Legend of the third degree

B.

Belief in a Supreme Being

C.

That a Mason be a man, freeborn, and of lawful age

D.

A strict requirement to belong to a specific political party

**8. The Charge instructs a Mason to regulate his actions toward his neighbour by 'acting with him on the square.' What does this primarily entail?**

A.

Ensuring all financial transactions are strictly for profit

B.

Acting with reverence, high morals, and relieving his necessities

C.

Competing against neighbours to improve the local economy

D.

Using physical squares to measure the property of neighbours

**9. What is the Masonic definition of a 'Cowen' according to the source?**

A.

A Master Craftsman who has retired from the trade

B.

One who works as a Mason without having served a regular apprenticeship

C.

An apprentice who has recently completed his first year

D.

A person who provides the stone for building projects



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### **10 Why does the Charge forbid the discussion of religion and politics within the Lodge?**

A.

Because Masons are required to be atheists and apolitical

B.

Because the Grand Master makes all religious and political decisions for members

C.

To prevent the Monarch from feeling threatened by secret meetings

D.

To ensure the Lodge remains a place of safety, conviviality, and concord

## Answers

1. C

2. C

3. B

4. B

5. B

6. A

7. D

8. B

9. B

10. D



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## Analysis.

Greetings, Brethren. It is a pleasure to take up this task. As we sit together in the figurative study of our Lodge, let us turn our attention to the excellent commentary provided by W. Bro. Stephen J. Goulding.

The text before us is a refreshing departure from the highly esoteric or purely spiritual interpretations of our Ritual. Instead, Bro. Goulding grounds the *Charge after Initiation* in the dusty, practical reality of the medieval stonemason's workshop.

Here is my analysis of the text, structured as requested, to bridge the gap between our Operative origins and our Speculative practice.

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### 1. The Operative Thesis: Reputation as Currency

#### Summarizing the Argument.

Goulding's central thesis is that the *Charge* is not merely a list of high-minded ideals, but a survival manual for the medieval Guild structure. He draws a direct line between the **14-year-old apprentice** and the **modern Initiate**.

In the Operative era, an apprentice lived in the Master's home. He was fed, clothed, and trained, but he was also a representative of that household. Goulding argues that the strict rules of behaviour found in the *Charge*—respect for the Master, courtesy to clients, and domestic discipline—were economic necessities. If an apprentice was rude, dirty, or lazy, the Master lost business.

#### Historical Validity

Goulding validates the phrase "Honour of the Institution" by equating it to the commercial reputation of a Guild. Historically, this is sound. Guilds (such as the Worshipful Company of Masons, cited by Goulding with its 1472 Coat of Arms) held their own courts. They regulated the behaviour of their members because one bad workman or one cheat could ruin the reputation of the entire trade in a city. When the *Charge* speaks of "honour," Goulding rightly interprets this as "trustworthiness." In a time before written contracts were standard for small jobs, a Mason's "Honour" was the only guarantee a client had.

### 2. Deconstruction of the Ritual

Goulding strips away the mystical to reveal the practical.



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- **"Ancient and Honourable"**: He links "Antient" not to the pyramids of Egypt, but specifically to the medieval Guilds and Livery Companies. He cites Rev. Neville Barker Cryer to support the idea that our "solid foundation" is the Guild system of mutual regulation.
- **"Unerring Standard of Truth"**: The analysis of the Volume of the Sacred Law (VSL) is particularly striking. Goulding views the Bible in the Lodge not just as a religious icon, but as the **Constitution of the Guild**. Just as a Guild has bylaws, the Mason has the VSL. It is the rulebook that "regulates actions." If one follows the rulebook, the work is "true" (structurally sound) and "just" (fairly priced).
- **"Acting on the Square"**: He moves this from a symbol of morality to a symbol of customer service and business ethics. "Acting on the Square" with a neighbour means dealing with them financially and emotionally in a way that creates stability—just as a squared stone provides structural stability.

### 3. The Three Great Duties (God, Neighbour, Self)

#### Reframing the Duty to Self

This is perhaps the most pragmatic section of Goulding's analysis. In many speculative interpretations, "Duty to Self" is viewed as a spiritual purification. Goulding, however, interprets it as **Resource Management**.

He argues that the instruction to avoid intemperance and excess is actually about maintaining one's **capacity to work**. He writes: *"At the time of the Guilds if you were not at your best mentally and physically you were not able to do the work... or be in a position to help others."*

This is a utilitarian view: You must protect your mental and physical health (your "corporeal and mental faculties") because if you are broken, you are useless to the Guild and cannot provide for your family. He explicitly links the Masonic practice of memory work to "mental wellbeing," framing the ritual itself as a gym for the mind.

### 4. The Masonic Virtues (Secrecy, Fidelity, Obedience)

#### Secrecy as Commercial Protection

Goulding completely demystifies "Secrecy." It is not about hiding the Holy Grail; it is about **Intellectual Property**. A Master Craftsman's unique method of cutting stone



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was his livelihood (his "trade secret"). To reveal this to a non-Guild member ("Cowen") was to destroy the Master's competitive advantage. Therefore, modern Masonic secrecy is a test of **integrity**—if you cannot keep a small secret, you cannot be trusted with a business secret.

### Fidelity and the "Cowen"

Goulding defines the "Cowen" as an unqualified worker—a "scab" labourer. Fidelity, therefore, is loyalty to the "Union."

He raises a fascinating point regarding the **recommendation of members**. He argues that recommending a candidate is a reputational risk. In the Guilds, if a Master took on a bad apprentice, it cost him money and status. Goulding suggests that Speculative Masons must exercise the same "Fidelity" by not bringing men into the Lodge who will damage its standing.

### Obedience

He strips the romance away from Obedience, reducing it to **administrative efficiency**. Obedience is proved by "prompt attention to signs and summonses." In the Guild, if you didn't show up when summoned, the work stopped. In the modern Lodge, it means replying to the Secretary so the meeting can be planned.

## 5. Modern Application: A 21st-Century Code of Conduct

Based on Goulding's Guild-centric commentary, we can synthesize the following "Code of Conduct" for the modern Freemason:

1. **Administrative Discipline:** Your first duty of obedience is to your diary. Reply to the Secretary immediately. A Guild cannot function if the workmen do not appear.
2. **Brand Ambassadorship:** Your "hobbies and pastimes" are public. If you act foolishly on social media or in public, you damage the "trade" (the Lodge). You must be an "ornament to the society" (the Guild) even when off the clock.
3. **Holistic Health:** You are required to maintain a daily routine of physical and mental health. This is not vanity; it is duty. You cannot perform "acts of kindness" if you are physically or mentally depleted.



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4. **The Test of Integrity:** Do not share the secrets—not because they are magic, but because keeping them proves you are a man who can be trusted with the sensitive affairs of others (your brothers' confidence).
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### In Conclusion

W. Bro. Goulding invites us to look at the *Charge* not through the eyes of a philosopher, but through the eyes of a Foreman. The *Charge* is a contract. The Initiate promises to maintain the standards of the "company" (the Lodge), and in return, he gains the protection, training, and brotherhood of the Guild. It is a reminder that before we can be spiritual beings, we must first be reliable men.



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## Student Copy

### Lesson 8

### The Charge After Initiation

#### Lesson Aim

Explain the Charge After Initiation

#### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson the student will be able to:

- Explain the origins of Freemasonry.
- Analyse and understand the meaning of the Charge after Initiation.
- Follow the writings of Rev. Neville Barker Cryer, "What do you know about the ritual?"

## Commentary on the Charge after Initiation.



In order for us to understand the Charge after Initiation I feel it is important to know a little of our Masonic origins. Let us therefore have a brief look at craft "Guilds"

A guild is "an association of craftsmen or merchants formed for mutual aid and protection and the furtherance of their

professional interests". (Britanica.com)

Guilds were at their height in Europe between the 11th and 16th centuries. Of the two types of Guilds, Merchant and Craft, we will be looking more specifically at the Craft Guilds. The Craft Guilds would consist of Master Craftsmen in a town or city coming together to regulate the standard of work, pay and conditions for that industry. Each industry would have their own Guild of artisans and craftsmen. For example, Guilds of weavers, dyers and fullers in the wool trade, and masons and architects in the building trade. Other Guilds included; blacksmiths, butchers, bakers etc. The Guilds became very influential in local government and in the local economy. They were also very heavily into helping their members, improving their community and philanthropy.



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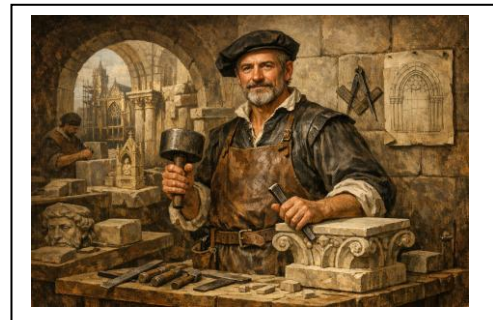
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A Master Craftsman would have apprentices who would learn the secrets of their trade. The apprentices would be in early adolescence, about 14 years of age, and would complete an apprenticeship of between five and nine years. They received no pay but were given food and lodgings. In fact some families paid the Master Craftsman for their son to serve an apprenticeship with them.

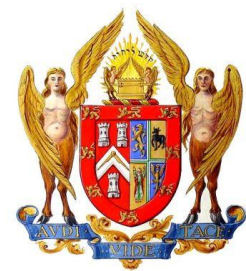
Maintaining a good reputation as a man as well as a Master Craftsman meant there was work. Living with the Master Craftsman the apprentice was taught to respect the Master's wife, his daughter and his maid. He would be dressed appropriately at the meal table and be prompt. He would treat all the Master's clients courteously for that would bring in the work. If he did not keep to this professional and personal standard he was sent back to his own family, unqualified.

After completing their apprenticeship the qualified craftsman would then become a journeyman, travelling from job to job, Master to Master, following the work and honing his skills. To become a Master himself he must produce a "masterpiece" which would be judged by established Masters in the Guild. If successful he could then open up a workshop of his own with his own apprentices working to the high standard set by the Guild not only in the work produced but also as a citizen, ensuring that they did not bring the Guild into disrepute. The Guilds held their own professional courts to investigate complaints in order to maintain their high standing in the community.



Worshipful Company of  
Masons

It is at the heyday of the Guilds (or in London the Livery Companies) that Freemasonry has been alleged to originate. If we look at the Coat of Arms of the United Grand Lodge of England you will see, on the left as you look at it, three castles a chevron and compasses. This was also that of the



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"Moderns" and the Coat of Arms of the Worshipful Company of Masons registered with the College of Arms in 1472, but with a sable (black) field and not gule (red) field as in that of the UGLE Coat of Arms, which itself was registered in 1919.

At the time the Guilds were developing in Europe, Europe was going through religious turmoil. It was a time of pilgrimages and the Crusades of the Middle Ages. The English monarchs from Henry VIII to William III were changing between Catholicism and Protestantism. A period known as the Reformation which began in 1517 and culminating in the Act of Settlement in 1701 stating that the Monarch had to be a Protestant. England during this period was very religious to the point that employers, members of the Guild's, insisted their employees attended church.

The reputation of the Guilds (or in London the Livery Companies) became such that honourable and established Freemen of the town or city wanted to be associated with them and so these honourable men were accepted as social or 'speculative' members, hence the phrase "Free and Accepted or Speculative".

Now let us compare the Charge after initiation with what we have learned from the above information.

### Ritual

*Bro. AB, as you have passed through the ceremony of your initiation, let me congratulate you on being admitted a member of our antient and honourable institution.*

*Ancient no doubt it is having subsisted from time immemorial, and honourable it must be*

*acknowledged to be, as by a natural tendency it conduces 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*





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*thought it derogatory to their dignity to exchange the sceptre for the trowel, have patronised our mysteries and joined in our assemblies.*

The fact that there is a 'ceremony' of admittance indicates that you are entering something which is quite special and not a job. It is special because the people in the Institution make it so. They have a code of moral conduct which they put into practice that makes them deserving of respect - being 'honourable'. "Words have to become deeds" (Rev. Neville Barker Cryer: What do you know about Ritual?) The Rev. Neville Barker Cryer argues that 'Antient' refers to the fact that it is old and its precepts can be traced back to the Guilds.

The word 'immemorial' means "originating in the distant past" again, he argues, referring back to the Guilds and not to the Egyptians or the Greeks. In the original make up of a Freemasons Lodge the newest member would be given an apron and trowel and act as the Inner Guard. He would prick the chest of the



Initiate with the trowel to test one of the five senses on the Initiate's entrance to the Lodge. The Initiate would then become the newest member and take on that role. We now use a poniard in place of the trowel. Monarchs have "exchanged the sceptre for the trowel" referring to the likes of Edward VII (as Prince of Wales) and George IV (as the Prince of Wales and Prince Regent) taking the

humblest of positions, the Inner Guard, as the newest Lodge member.

### **Ritual**

*As a Freemason, let me recommend to your most serious contemplation the VSL, charging you to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice and to regulate your actions by the divine precepts it contains. Therein you will be taught 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 you lawful*



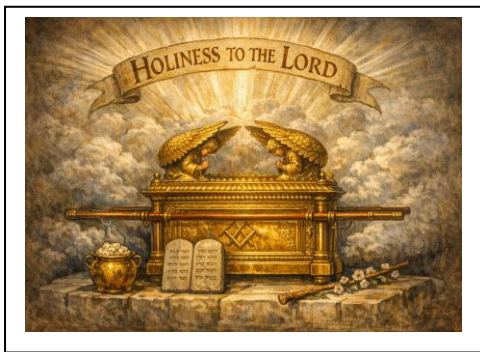
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*undertakings, and by looking up to Him in every emergency for comfort and support.*

It is in the VSL, which in English Lodges must be the whole Bible and must be open in order to make the Lodge 'regular', that we find the precepts that "regulate our actions". Books of other faiths may lay upon or alongside the Bible in English Lodges if it is requested of the candidate but not replace it. It signifies the unity of faiths. The Bible is not just a gesture to religion it is the "unerring guide" to our actions and so it must be present and open to enable it to be read by the Master when he "employs and instructs the Brethren in Freemasonry".



In the ceremony of Initiation you are asked "In all cases of difficulty and danger in whom do you place your trust?" A question that must be answered truthfully to fulfil a requirement of entry into our Institution. Above the Ark of the Covenant on the Coat of Arms of United Grand Lodge of England is written in Hebrew "Holiness to the Lord" and on the Coat

of Arms for the Worshipful Company of Masons is written the motto "God is our guide"

### *Ritual*

*To your neighbour , by acting with him on the square, by rendering him every kind office which justice or mercy may require, by relieving his necessities and soothing his afflictions, and by doing unto him as in similar cases you would wish he would do to you.*

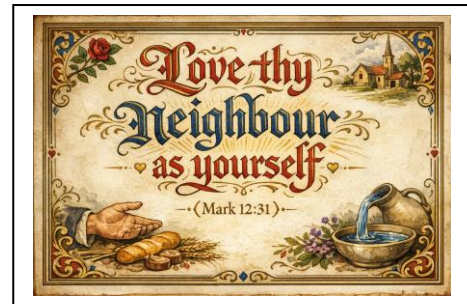


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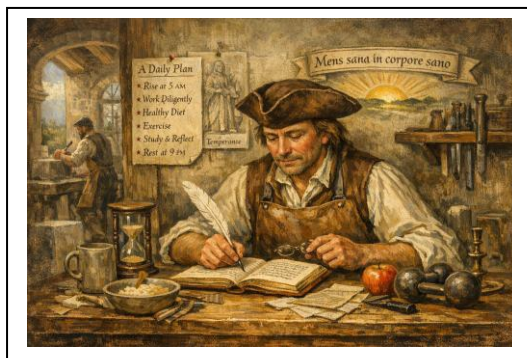
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By "acting with him on the square" that is to say by acting with reverence and high morals both practically and emotionally, as well as financially to help your fellow man. Bible quote: "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31)



### Ritual

*And to yourself, by such a prudent and well-regulated course of discipline as may best conduce to the preservation of your corporeal and mental faculties in their fullest energy, thereby enabling you to exert those talents wherewith God has blessed you, as well to His glory as the welfare of your fellow creatures.*



To set yourself "a course of discipline", a daily routine, which looks after your mental as well as physical health. At the time of the Guilds if you were not at your best mentally and physically you were not able to do the work that will enable you to provide for your family or be in a position to help others. There are not many

Institutions that encourage the use of memory to express knowledge. A great benefit to mental wellbeing.

### Ritual

*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 that may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society, by paying attention 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, by never losing sight of the allegiance due to the Sovereign of your native land, ever remembering that nature has implanted in your breast a sacred and indissoluble attachment towards that country whence you derived your birth and infant nurture.*



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Early Guilds existed by a Warrant or Charter signed by the Monarch and so the allegiance of Guild members was to the Crown. Within our ranks over the years we have had future kings and our present Grand Master, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, is of Royal blood and the cousin of Queen Elizabeth II. The civil wars of the 17th century brought disorder through the land but the Guilds pledged to the monarch to be peaceful and law abiding and so it is today



### Ritual

*As an individual, let me recommend 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 in their fullest splendour those truly Masonic ornaments, which have already been amply illustrated - Benevolence and Charity.*



What you do in both your public and private lives will have an effect on your reputation and consequently on that of the Institution. Operative Masters in the past had to look after their apprentices, aged between 14 and 21, so they demanded respectful, polite and virtuous behaviour, to be a good man and uphold a good reputation so that the

Master Craftsman's business continued to prosper.

To follow the dictates of **Prudence**, **Temperance**, **Fortitude** and **Justice** to be a credit to yourself and of benefit to your trade or calling.



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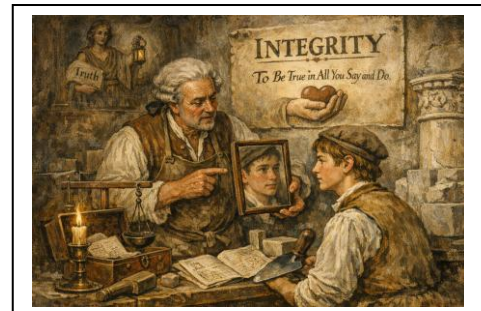
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### *Ritual*

*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 of 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 avoid all occasions which may inadvertently lead you so to do.*

The Master Craftsman would convey a way of producing an item that is unique to his trade to his apprentices, a trade secret. He would not want that secret to be conveyed to people outside of his craft for that would have a very strong effect on his business, his livelihood and his reputation. The only secrets we

have in Freemasonry are the manner in which we recognize each other. In conveying those secrets to people outside of the "Craft" would endanger the reputation of our members. A reputation that has been built up over three centuries. It is a test of your integrity.



### *Ritual*

*Your Fidelity must be exemplified by a strict observance of the Constitution of the fraternity, by adhering to the ancient Landmarks of the Order, by never attempting to extort or otherwise obtain the secrets of a 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 on your choice.*

Fidelity means "faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support." It is, therefore, important that you take time to



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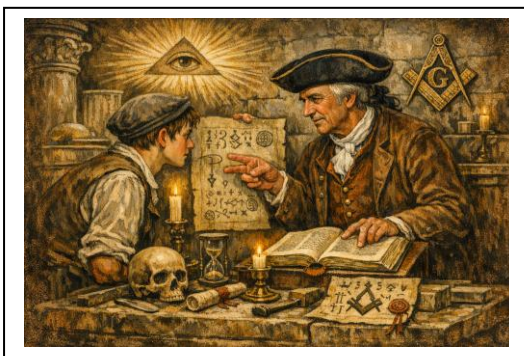
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read our Constitution for therein you will be "instructed in the duties you owe to the Craft in general" and from our By-laws "the duties you owe to this Lodge in particular"

With regard to the "antient Landmarks of the Order" it must be noted that Freemasonry does not have a controlling authority over individual Grand Lodges so the "antient Landmarks" may vary around the world. However these are six of the most common:

1. Belief in a Supreme Being or monotheism
2. Belief in the immortality of the soul
3. A book or volume of the sacred law as an indispensable part of the "furniture" of the Lodge.
4. The Legend of the third degree
5. The secrets of Freemasonry. The modes of recognition and the symbolic ritual of the Lodge
6. That a Mason be a man, freeborn, and of lawful age.



It is easy enough, nowadays, to find the secrets of a superior degree but why would you want to? It would take away the mystery and drama of the ceremonies and make them less of a learning experience. It would also bring into question your own integrity, for being pressed further you would soon fall and identify yourself as

someone not entitled to the rank, a "cowan", one who works as a Mason without having served a regular apprenticeship.

A whole debate can be had on the recommendations of candidates. Who really knows another? What goes on behind closed doors? When Master Craftsmen selected their apprentices they would go on word of mouth, recommendations



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and the reputation of the prospective candidate's family, but it is not until the apprentice works through the skill sets set by the Master Craftsman that a true indication of worth can be gained. What can be established is the character of the candidate by references from reputable sources and face to face time, both of which can be an act. His true character will be tested thoroughly during his apprenticeship.

The Revd. Neville Barker Cryer writes "imagine that person (the prospective candidate) standing where the recipient of this Charge would stand and ask the question, is he someone who will happily respond to this list of requirements or do they not fit his character?"

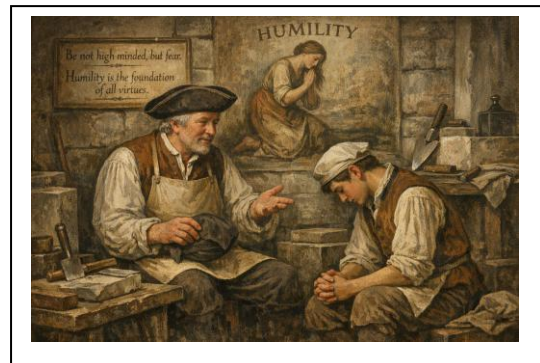
### *Ritual*

*Your obedience must be proved by a strict observance of our laws and regulations, by prompt attention to signs and summonses, by a 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 the Brethren and by perfect submission to the Master and his Wardens whilst acting in the discharge of their respective offices.*

You can only know our laws and regulations by reading the Constitution and By-laws. It doesn't have to be done in one chunk. Read little and often.

Make a habit of replying to summonses sent by the Secretary the same day. He has a lot of work to do putting a meeting together. Put the dates of Lodge meetings in your diary so that you can plan ahead.

Lodges are places of safety for many of our members. It must therefore be a place of conviviality and concord, not a place where a member may feel embarrassed or angry. There is enough of that in the world. It is a place where a man of any religious background, political persuasion or cultural difference may feel he is safe and among friends.





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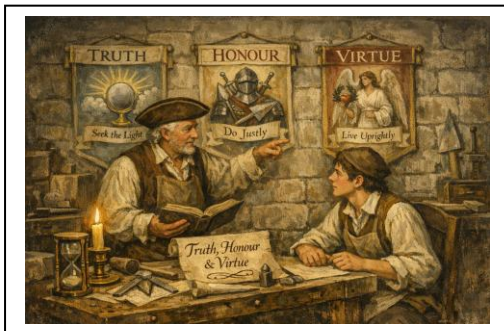
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In the "address to the brethren" we talk about the teachings of humility. It goes on to explain that our "association has been formed and perfected with unanimity and concord" that is by the will of the majority and in harmony.

### Ritual

*And as a last general recommendation, let me exhort you to dedicate yourself to such pursuits as to enable you to be respectable in life, useful to mankind, and an ornament to the society of which you have this day become a member; to study more especially such of the 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 masonic knowledge.*

It is here that the Charge makes an intrusion into your private life by asking you to make your hobbies and pastimes such that they do not bring you or our Institution into disrepute. It encourages you to continue your personal development and without detriment to yourself, your family and your work learn more about our Institution which in itself is a pathway of personal improvement.



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 print on your heart the sacred dictates of **Truth, Honour, and of Virtue.**

I hope you now realise that Freemasonry is a way of life and not just a social gathering.

Stephen J. Goulding. ProvSGD, SLGCR.

'The West Wing' Learning and Development Lead.