

Institution of Free Masons - ca. 1725

http://www.rgle.org.uk/RGLE_1725.htm

Transcribed by R.'W.'. Gary L. Heinmiller
Archivist, OMDHS

The early history of this catechism, which is a manuscript version of The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover'd (q.v.), is unknown. It was purchased c. 1905 from a dealer by Bro. A. F. Calvert of London. It consists of two leaves, 3 3/5" X 5 9/10", cut out of an old vellum-bound notebook, in which there were other writings which did not interest Bro. Calvert. It was purchased from him in 1941 by Bro. Douglas Knoop. The catechism is written on three sides and about a quarter of the fourth, the rest of the page being filled with some lines in a different hand headed "The Character of a Mason". Dr. Schofield of the British Museum MSS. Department is of opinion that it was written in the first half of the eighteenth century. It was reproduced photographically in the Authors' Lodge Transactions, iii (1919), following p. 408.

INSTITUTION OF FREE MASONS

Question. Peace be here.

A. I hope there is.

What a Clock is it?

A. This going to 12 or 'tis going to 6

Are you very busy?

A. No.

Will you give or take?

A. Both or which you please.

How go Squares?

A. Straight

Are you rich or poor?

A. Neither

Change me that [unprintable character]?

I will

In the name of God, Amen, Are you a Mason?

A Mason

What is a Mason?

A man begot of a man, born of a woman & Brother to a King.

What is a fellow? A Companion to a Prince

How shall I know if you are a Right Mason?

A. By Signs, Tokens & Points of my Entry

Which is the 1st Point of your Entry?

A. To hide & conceal under the Penalty of having my Throat cut, or my Tongue cut out of my Head.

Where were you made a Mason?

In a just & perfect Lodge.

How many makes a Lodge?

A. God & the Square, wt 7 or 5 right & perfect Masons on the highest mountain or the lowest valley in the world.

Why do odd Numbers make a lodge?

A. Because all Odds are Men's advantages.

What lodge are you of?

The Lodge of St John 5.

How doth that Lodge stand?

Perfect East & West as all holy Temples do.

Where's the Masters Post?

A. At the East window waiting the rising of the Sun to set his men at work.

Where's the Warden's Post?

A. At the West window waiting the Setting of the Sun, to dismiss the entered Apprentice.

Who rules & governs the Lodge & is Master of it?

A. Jehovah the right Pillar.

How is it governed?

Of Square, Plumb & Rule [unprintable characters]

Have you a Key of the Lodge?

Yes I have

What is its Virtue?

To open & Shut & to Shut & open

Where do you keep it?

A. In an Ivory Box betwixt my Tongue & Teeth, or within my heart, where all my Secrets are kept.

Have you a Chain to the Key?

Yes I have

How Long is it?

It is as long as from my Tongue to my Heart.

How many precious jewels?

A. Three a Square where a Diadem & a Square [unprintable characters]

How many Lights?

Three a Right East, South & West.

What do they represent?

A. The three Persons of the holy Trinity Father S. & H.Gt

How many Pillars?

Two I . . hin & Boaz.

What do they represent?

A. Strength & Stability to the Church in all Ages.

How many Angles are in St John's Lodge? [unprintable characters]

A. Four boarding on Squares.

How is the Meridian found out?

A. When the Sun leaves the South, & breaks in at the West End of the Lodge.

In what part of the Temple was the Lodge kept?

A. In Solomon's Porch at the west End of the Temple, where the Two Pillars were set up.

How many Steps belong to a Right Mason?

Three.

Give me the Salutation?

A. I will. The right Worshipful Master & Worshipful fellows of the Right Worshipfull Lodge from whence I came greet you well, as I do. God's greeting be at this our Meeting & with the R. W Masters & W. Fellows of the R. W. Lodge whence you came, & you also.

Give me the Jerusalem Words?

G.....G.....

Give me the Universal Words?

.....

Right, Brother of ours, Give me your Name?

M or N

Welcome Brother M or N to our Society. How many Principal Points pertain to a right Mason?

A. Three. Fraternity, Fidelity, Taciturnity.

What do they represent?

A. Brotherly Love, Relief & Truth, amongst all right & perfect Masons, for wc Masons were ordained at the Building of the Tower of Babel & the Temple of Jerusalem.

How many proper Points?

Five, foot to foot, Knee to Knee Hand to Hand, Heart to Heart & Ear to Ear

Whence is an Arch derived?

From Architecture.

What doth it resemble?

The Rainbow

How many orders in Architecture?

A. Five, Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Composite

What do they answer to?

They answer to Base Perpendicular Diameter Circumference & Square

Which is the right Word or Point of a right Mason?

A. Adieu

THE OATH Novr 24th

You must Serve God according to the best of your Knowledge & Institution, & be a true Liege man to the King, & to help & assist any Brother of the antient & Noble Science, as far as your Ability will allow you. So by the Contents of this Sacred write you'll perform this Oath. So help you God

THE HEALTH

Here's a Health to our Society & to every faithful Brother that keeps Oath of Secrecy as we are sworn to love each other, the world no order knows like this of our ancient & noble fraternity. Let them wonder what the Mystery is. Here Fellow I drink to thee.

HOW TO KNOW A FREE MASON

1. To put off the with two fingers & a Thumb
2. To strick wt the Right Hand on the of the 5 times as if hewing.
3. By making a Square, namely, by setting the Heels together & the Toes of both Feet spread out at a distance, or by any other way of Triangle.
4. To take Hand in Hand wt Left & Right Thumbs closs, touching the 5 times hard wt the forefinger on each place
5. You must whisper Saying thrice, the Mr, Fellows of the Right Worshipful Company whence I came greet you well Then the other will answer. God greet well, the Mr, Fellows of the Worshipful Lodge or Company from whence you came-and then- How do you do Brother? & drink to each other & ask. In what Lodge were you made a free Mason?
6. The greatest is to Stroak two of your fore-fingers over the