

The Regius Manuscript

"A Poem of Moral Duties"

The oldest known Masonic Document in Poetic Meter

Written about 1390

(In the original text)

Hic incipiunt constitutiones artis
gemetriae secundum Eucyldem.

Whose wol bothe wel rede and loke,
He may fynde wryte yn olde boke
Of grete lordys and eke ladysse,
That had mony chyldryn y-fere, y-wisse;
And hade no rentys to fynde hem wyth,
Nowther yn towne, ny felde, ny fryth:
A cownsel togeder they cowthe hem take;

To ordeyne for these chyldryn sake,
How they myzth best lede here lyfe
Withoute fret desese, care and stryge;
And most for the multytude that was
comynge

Of here chyldryn after here zyndynge.
(They) sende thenne after grete clerkys,
To techyn hem thenne gode werkys;

And pray we hem, for our Lordys sake,
To oure chyldryn sum werke to make,

That they myzth gete here Iyvngge therby,
Bothe wel and onestlyche, ful sycurly.
Yn that tyme, throzgh good gemetry,
Thys onest craft of good masonry
Wes ordeynt and made yn thys manere,
Y-cownterfetyd of thys clerkys y-ferre;
At these lordys prayers they cownter-
fetyd gemetry,

And zaf hyt the name of masonry,
For the moste oneste craft of alle.
These lordys chyldryn therto dede falle,
To lurne of hym the craft of gemetry,
The wheche he made ful curysly;

Throzgh fadrys prayers and modrys also,
Thys onest craft he putte hem to.
He that lerned best, and were of oneste,
And passud hys felows yn curyste;
Zef yn that craft he dede hym passe,
He schulde have more worschepe then the
lasse.

Thys frete clerkys name was clept Eucllyde,
Hys name hyt spradde ful wondur wyde.
Zet thys grete clerke more ordeynt he
To hym that was herre yn thys degre,
That he schulde teche the synplyst of (wytte)

Yn that onest craft to be parfytte;

And so uchon schulle techyn othur,
And love togeder as syster and brothur.

Forthermore zet that ordeynt he,
Mayster y-called so schulde he be;
So that he were most y-worschepede,
Thenne schulde he be so y-clepede:
But mason schulde never won other calle,

Withynne the craft amongus hem alle,
Ny soget, ny servant, my dere brother,
Thazht he be not so perfyt as ys another;
Uchon sculle calle other felows by cuthe,

For cause they come of ladyes burthe.
On thys maner, throz good wytte of
gometry,

Bygan furst the craft of masonry:
The clerk Eucllyde on thys wyse hyt fonde,

Thys craft of gometry yn Egypte londe.
Yn Egypte he tawzhte hyt ful wyde,
Yn dyvers londe on every syde;
Mony erys afterwarde, y understonde,
Zer that the craft com ynto thys londe,
Thys craft com ynto Englund, as y zow say,

Yn tyme of good kynge Adelstonus day;

He made tho bothe halle and eke bowre,
And hye templus of gret honowre,
To sportyn hym yn bothe day and nyzth,
Thys goode lorde loved thys craft ful wel,

And purposud to strenthyn hyt every del,
For dyvers defawtys that yn the craft he
fonde;

He sende about ynto the londe
After alle the masonus of the crafte,
To come to hym ful evene strazfte,
For to amende these defautys alle
By good consel, zef hyt mytzth falle.
A semble thenne he cowthe let make
Of dyvers lordis, yn here state,
Dukys, erlys, and barnes also,
Kynzthys, sqwyers, and mony mo,
And the grete burges of that syte,
They were ther alle yn here degre;
These were ther uchon algate,
To ordeyne for these masonus astate.
Ther they sowzton by here wytte,
How they myzthyn governe hytte:

Fyftene artyculus they ther sowzton
And fyftene poyntys they wrozton.

Hic incipit articulus primus.

The furste artycul of thys gemetry:--

**The mayster mason moste be ful securly
bothe stedefast, trusty, and trwe,
Hyt schal hum never thenne arewe:
And pay thy felows after the coste,
As vytaylys goth thenne, wel thou woste;
And pay them trwly, apon thy fay,
What that they mowe serve fore;
And spare, nowther for love ny drede,**

**Of nowther partys to take no mede;
Of lord ny fellow, whether he be,
Of hem thou take no maner of fe;
And as a jugge stonde upryzth,
And thenne thou dost to bothe good ryzth;**

**And trwly do thys whersever thou gost,
Thy worschep, thy profyt, hyt shcal be most.**

Articulus secundus.

**The secunde artycul of good masonry,
As ze mowe hyt here hyr specyaly,
That every mayster, that ys a mason,
Most ben at the generale congregacyon,
So that he hyt resonably z-tolde
Where that the semble schal be holde;**

And to that semble he most nede gon,
But he have a resenabul skwsacyon,
Or but he be unbuxom to that craft,
Or with falsshed ys over-raft,
Or ellus sekenes hath hym so stronge,
That he may not com hem amonge;
That ys a skwsacyon, good and abulle,
To that semble withoute fabulle.

Articulus tercius.

The thrydde artycul for sothe hyt uysse,
That the mayster take to no prentysse,
but he have good seuerans to dwelle
Seven zer with hym, as y zow telle,
Hys craft to lurne, that ys profytable;

Withynne lasse he may not be able
To lordys profyt, ny to his owne,
As ze mowe knowe by good resowne.

Articulus quartus.

The fowrhe artycul thys moste be
That the mayster hym wel be-se,
That he no bondemon prentys make,
Ny for no covetyse do hym take;
For the lord that he ys bonde to,

May fache the prentes whersever he go.
Zef yn the logge he were y-take,
Muche desese hyt myzth ther make,
And suche case hyt myzth befalle,
That hyt myzth greve summe or alle.

For alle the masonus tht ben there
Wol stonde togedur hol y-fere
Zef suche won yn that craft schulde swelle,

Of dyvers desesys ze myzth telle:
For more zese thenne, and of honeste,
Take a prentes of herre degre.
By olde tyme wryten y fynde
That the prenes schulde be of gentyll kynde;

And so symtyme grete lordys blod
Toke thys gemetry, that ys ful good.

Articulus quintus.

The fyfthe artycul ys swythe good,
So that the prentes be of lawful blod;
The mayster schal not, for no vantage,
Make no prentes that ys outrage;
Hyt ys to mene, as ze mowe here,
That he have hys lymes hole alle y-fere;
To the craft hyt were gret schame,
To make an halt mon and a lame,

For an unperfytt mon of suche blod
Schulde do the craft but lyttul good.
Thus ze mowe knowe everychon,
The craft wolde have a myzhty mon;
A maymed mon he hath no myzht,
Ze mowe hyt knowe long zer nyzht.

Articulus sextus.

The syzte artycul ze mowe not mysse,
That the mayster do the lord no pregedysse,
To take of the lord, for hyse prentyse,
Also muche as hys felows don, yn alle vyse.

For yn that craft they ben ful perfytt,
So ys not he, ze mowe sen hyt.
Also hyt were azeynus good reson,
To take hys, hure as hys felows don.

Thys same artycul, yn thys casse,
Juggythe the prentes to take lasse
Thenne hys felows, that ben ful perfytt.
Yn dyvers maters, conne qwyte hyt,
The mayster may his prentes so enforme,
That hys hure may crese ful zurne,
And, zer hys terme come to an ende,
Hys hure may ful wel amende.

Articulus septimus.

The seventhe artycul that ys now here,
Ful wel wol telle zow, alle y-fere,
That no mayster, for favour ny drede,
Schal no thef nowther clothe ny fede.
Theves he schal herberon never won,
Ny hym that hath y-quellude a mon,
Wy thylike that hath a febul name,
Lest hyt wolde turne the craft to schame.

Articulus octavus.

The eghte artycul schewt zow so,
That the mayster may hyt wel do,
Zef that he have any mon of crafte,
And be not also perfyt as he auzte,
He may hym change sone anon,
And take for hym a perfytur mon.
Suche a mon, throze rechelaschepe,
Myzth do the craft schert worschepe.

Articulus nonus.

The nynthe artycul schewet ful welle,
That the mayster be both wyse and felle;
That no werke he undurtake,
But he conne bothe hyt ende and make;
And that hyt be to the lordes profyt also,

And to hys craft, whersever he go;
And that the grond be wel y-take,
That hyt nowther fle ny grake.

Articulus decimus.

The then the artycul ys for to knowe,
Amonge the craft, to hye and lowe,
There schal no mayster supplante other,
But be togeder as systur and brother,
Yn thys curyus craft, alle and som,
That longuth to a maystur mason.
Ny thys curyus craft, alle and som,
That longuth to a maystur mason.
Ny he schal not supplante non other mon,

That hath y-take a werke hym uppon,
Yn peyne therof that ys so stronge,
That peyseth no lasse thenne ten ponge,
But zef that he be guilty y-fonde,
That toke furst the werke on honde;
For no mon yn masonry
Schal no supplante othur securly,
But zef that hyt be so y-wrozth,
That hyt turne the werke to nozth;
Thenne may a mason that werk crave,
To the lordes profzt hyt for to save;
Yn suche a case but hyt do falle,
Ther schal no mason medul withalle.

Forsothe he that begynnth the gronde,
And he be a mason goode and sonde,
For hath hyt sycurly yn hys mynde
To brynge the werke to ful good ende.

Articulus undecimus.

The eleventhe artycul y telle the,
That he ys bothe fayr and fre;
For he techyt, by hys myzth,
That no mason schulde worche be nyzth,
But zef hyt be yn practesyng of wytte,
Zef that y cowthe amende hytte.

Articulus duodecimus.

The twelfthe artycul ys of hye honeste
To zevery mason, whersever he be;
He schal not hys felows werk deprave,
Zef that he wol hys honeste save;
With honest wordes he hyt comende,
By the wytte that God the dede sende;
Buy hyt amende by al that thou may,
Bytwynne zow bothe withoute nay.

Articulus xiiijus.

The threttene artycul, so God me save,
Ys, zef that the mayster a prentes have,

Enterlyche thenne that he hym teche,
And meserable poyntes that he hym reche,

That he the craft abelyche may conne,
Whersever he go undur the sonne.

Articulus xiiijus.

The fowrtene artycul, by food reson,
Schewete the mayster how he schal don;
He schal no prentes to hym take,
Byt dyvers crys he have to make,
That he may, withynne hys terme,
Of hym dyvers poyntes may lurne.

Articulus quindecimus.

The fyftene artcul maketh an ende,
For to the maysterhe ys a frende;
To lere hym so, that for no mon,
No fals mantenans he take hym apon,
Ny maynteine hys felows yn here synne,
For no good that he myzth wyne;
Ny no fals sware sofre hem to make,
For drede of here sowles sake;
Lest hyt wolde turne the craft to schame,
And hymself to mechul blame.

Plures Constituciones.

At thys semble were poyntes y-ordeynt mo,

Of grete lordys and maystrys also,
That whose wol conne thys craft and com to
astate,

He most love wel God, and holy churche
algate,

And hys mayster also, that he ys wythe,
Whersever he go, yn fylde or frythe;
And thy felows thou love also,
For that they craft wol that thou do.

Secundus punctus.

The secunde poynt, as y zow say,
That the mason worche upon the werk day,

Also trwly, as he con or may,
To deserve hys huyre for the halyday,
And trwly to labrun on hys dede,
Wel deserve to have hys mede.

Tercius punctus.

The thrydde poynt most be severele,
With the prentes knowe hyt wele,
Hys mayster conwsel he kepe and close,

And hys felows by hys goode purpose;
The prevetyse of the chamber telle he no
man,

Ny yn the logge whatsoever they done;
Whatsoever thou heryst, or syste hem do,
Tells hyt no mon, whersever thou go;
The conwesel of halls, and zeke of bowre,

Kepe hyt wel to gret honowre,
Lest hyt wolde torne thysel to blame,
And brynge the craft ynto gret schame.

Quartus punctus.

The fowrthe poynt techyth us also,
That no mon to hys craft be false;
Errour he schal maynteine none
Azeynus the craft, but let hyt gone;
Ny no pregedysse he schal not do
To hys mayster, ny hys felows also;
And thatzth the prentes be under awe,
Zet he wolde have the same lawe.

Quintus punctus.

The fyfthe poynte ys, withoute nay,
That whenne the mason taketh hys pay
Of the mayster, y-ordent to hym,

Ful mekely y-take so most hyt byn;
Zet most the mayster, by good resone,
Warne hem lawfully byfore none,
Zef he nulle okepye hem no more,
As he hath y-done ther byfore;
Azeynus thys ordyr he may not stryve,
Zef he thenke wel for to thryve.

Sextus punctus.

The syxte poynt ys ful zef to knowe,
Bothe to hye and eke to lowe,
For such case hyt myzth befalle,
Am nge the masonus, summe or alle,
Throwghe envye, or dedly hate,
Ofte aryseth ful gret debate.
Thenne owyth the mason, zef that he may,

Putte hem bothe under a day;
But loveday zet schul they make none;
Tyl that the werke day be clene a-gone;
Apon the holyday ze mowe wel take
Leyser y-nowzgth loveday to make,
Lest that hyt wolde the werke day
Latte here werke for suche afray;
To suche ende thenne that hem drawe,
That they stonde wel yn Goddes lawe.

Septimus punctus.

The seventh poynt he may wel mene,
Of wel longe lyf that God us lene,
As hyt dyscryeth wel opunly,
Thou schal not by thy maysters wyf ly,
Ny by the felows, yn no maner wyse,
Lest the craft wolde the despyse;
Ny by the felows concubyne,
No more thou woldest he dede by thyne.
The peyne thereof let hyt be ser,
That he prentes ful seven zer,
Zef he forfeite yn eny of hem,
So y-chasted thenne most he ben;
Ful mekele care myzth ther begynne,
For suche a fowle dedely synne.

Octavus punctus.

The eghte poynt, he may be sure,
Zef thou hast y-taken any cure,
Under thy mayster thou be trwe,
For that pynt thou schalt never arewe;
Atrwe medyater thou most nede be
To thy mayster, and thy felows fre;
Do trwly al....that thou myzth,
To both partyes, and that ys good ryzth.

Nonus punctus.

The nynthe poynt we schul hym calle,
That he be stwarde of oure halle,
Zef that ze ben yn chambur y-fere,
Uchon serve other, with mylde chere;
Jentul felows, ze moste hyt knowe,
For to be stwardus alle o rowe,
Weke after weke withoute dowte,
Stwardus to ben so alle abowte,
Lovelyche to serven uchon othur,
As thawgh they were syster and brother;
Ther schal never won on other costage
Fre hymself to no vantage,
But every mon schal be lyche fre
Yn that costage, so moste hyt be;
Loke that thou pay wele every mon algate,

That thou hsat y-bowzht any vytayles ate,

That no cravyng be y-mad to the,
Ny to thy felows, yn no degre,
To mon or to wommon, whether he be,
Pay hem weland trwly, for that wol we;
Therof on thy felow trwe record thou take,

For that good pay as thou dost make,
Lest hyt wolde thy felowe schame,
Any bryng thyself ynto gret blame.
Zet good acowntes he most make
Of suche godes as he hath y-take,

Of thy felows goodes that thou hast spende,

**Wher, and how, and to what ende;
Suche acowntes thou most come to,
Whenne thy felows wollen that thou do.**

Decimus punctus.

The tenthe poynt presentyeth wel god lyf,

**To lyven withoute care and stryf;
For and the mason lyve amysse,
And yn hys werk be false, y-wysse,
And thorwz suche a false skewysasyon
May sclawndren hys felows oute reson,
Throwz false sclawnder of suche fame
May make the craft kachone blame.
Zef he do the craft suche vylany,
Do hym no favour thenne securly.
Ny maynteine not hym yn wyked lyf,
Lest hyt wolde turne to care and stryf;
But zet hym ze schul not delayme,
But that ze schullen hym constrayne,
For to apere whersevor ze wylle,
Whar that ze wolen, lowde, or styll;
To the nexte semble ze schul hym calle,
To apere byfore hys felows alle,
And but zef he wyl byfore hem pere,
The crafte he moste nede forswere;**

He schal thenne be chasted after the lawe

That was y-fownded by olde dawe.

Punctus undecimus.

The eleventhe poynt ys of good
dyscrecyoun,

As ze mowe knowe by good resoun;
A mason, and he thys craft wel con,
That syzth hys felow hewen on a ston,
Amende hyt sone, zef that thou con,
And teche hym thenne hyt to amende,
That the lordys werke be not y-schende,
And teche hym esely hyt to amende,
With fayre wordes, that God the hath lende;
For hys sake that sytte above,
With swete wordes noresche hym love.
Punctus duodecimus.

The twelthe poynt of gret ryolte,
Ther as the semble y-hole schal be,
Ther schul be maystrys and felows also,
And other grete lordes mony mo;
There schal be the scheref of that contre,
And also the meyr of that syte,
Knyztes and ther schul be,
And other aldermen, as ze schul se;

Suche ordynance as they maken there,
They schul maynte hyt hol y-fere
Azeynus that mon, whatsoever he be,
That longuth to the craft bothe fayr and free.

Zef he any stryf azeynus hem make,
Ynto here warde he schal be take.

Xiiijus punctus.

The threnteth poynt ys to us ful luf.
He schal swere never to be no thef,
Ny soker hym yn hys fals craft,
For no good that he hath byraft,
And thou mowe hyt knowe or syn,
Nowther for hys good, ny for hys kyn.

Xiiijus punctus.

The fowrtethe poynt ys ful good lawe
To hym that wold ben under awe;
A good trwe othe he most ther swere
To hys mayster and hys felows that ben
there;

He most be stedefast and trwe also
To alle thys ordynance, whersever he go,
And to hys lyge lord the kynge,
To be trwe to hym, over alle thyng.

And alle these poyntes hyr before
To hem thou most nede by y-swore,
And alle schul swere the same oghth
Of the masonus, be they luf, ben they loght,

To alle these poyntes hyr byfore,
That hath ben ordeynt by ful good lore.
And they schul enquere every mon
On his party, as wyl as he con,
Zef any mon mowe be y-fownde gulty
Yn any of these poyntes spesyaly;
And whad he be, let hym be sowzht,
And to the semble let hym be browzht.

Quindecimus punctus.

The fifethe poynt ys of ful good lore,
For hem that schul ben ther y-swore,
Suche ordynance at the semble wes layd
Of grete lordes and maystres byforesayd;
For thelke that be unbuxom, y-wysse,
Azeynus the ordynance that ther ysse
Of these artyculus, that were y-meved there,

Of grete lordes and masonus al y-fere.
And zef they ben y-preved opunly
Byfore that semble, by an by,
And for here gultes no mendys wol make,

Thenne most they nede the craft they schul
refuse,

And swere hyt never more for to use.
But zef that they wol mendys make,
Azayn to the craft they schul never take;

And zef that they nul not do so,
The scheref schal come hem sone to,
And putte here dodyes yn duppe prison,
For the trespasse that they hav y-don,
And take here goodes and here cattelle
Ynto the kynges hond, everyt delle,
And lete hem dwelle ther full styllle,
Tyl hyt be oure lege kynges wyllle.
Alia ordinacio artis gematriaie.

They ordent ther a semble to be y-holde
Every zer, whersever they wolde,
To amende the defautes, zef any where
fonde

Amonge the craft withynne the londe;
Uche zer or thrydde zer hyt schuld be holde,

Yn every place whersever they wolde;
Tyme and place most be ordeynt also,
Yn what place they schul semble to.
Alle the men of craft thr they most ben,

And other grete lordes, as ze mowe sen,
To mende the fautes that both ther y-spoke,

Zef that eny of hem ben thenne y-broke.
Ther they schullen ben alle y-swore,
That longuth to thys craftes lore,
To kepe these statutes everychon,
That ben y-ordeynt by kynge Adelston;
These statutes that y have hyr y-fonde
Y chulle they ben holde throzh my londe,

For the worsche of my rygolte,
That y have by my dygnyte.
Also at every semble that ze holde,
That ze come to zowre lyge kyng bolde,
Bysechyngge hym of hys hye grace,
To stone with zow yn every place,
To conferme the statutes of kynge Adelston,

That he ordeydnt to thys craft by good
reson,
Ars quatuor coronatorum.

Pray we now to God almyzht,
And to hys moder Mary bryzht,
That we mowe kepe these artyculus here,

And these poynts wel al y-fere,
As dede these holy martyres fowre,

That yn thys craft were of gret honoure;
They were as gode masonus as on erthe
schul go,

Gravers and ymage-makers they were also.

For they were werkemen of the beste,
The emperour hade to hem gret luste;
He wylned of hem a ymage to make,
That mowzh be worsched for his sake;
Susch mawmetys he hade yn hys dawe,
To turne the pepul from Crystus lawe.
But they were stedefast yn Crystes lay,
And to here craft, withouten nay;
They loved wel God and alle hys lore,
And weren yn hys serves ever more.
Trwe men they were yn that dawe,
And lyved wel y Goddus lawe;
They thozght no mawmetys for to make,
For no good that they myzth take,
To levyn on that mawmetys for here God,

They nolde do so thawz he were wod;
For they nolde not forsake here trw fay,
An beyleve on hys falsse lay.
The emperour let take hem sone anone,
And putte hem ynto a dep presone;
The sarre he penest hem yn that plase,
The more yoye wes to hem of Cristus grace.

Thenne when he sye no nother won,
To dethe he lette hem thenne gon;
By the bok he may kyt schowe,
In the legent of scanctorum,
The name of quatour coronatorum.
Here fest wol be, withoute nay,
After Alle Halwen the eyght day.
Ze mow here as y do rede,
That mony zeres after, for gret drede
That Noees flod wes alle y-ronne,
The tower of Babyloyne was begonne,
Also playne werke of lyme and ston,
As any mon schulde loke uppon;
So long and brod hyt was begonne,
Seven myle the hezghte schadweth the
sonne.

King Nabogodonosor let hyt make,
To gret strenthe for monus sake,
Thazgh suche a flod azayne schulde come,

Over the werke hyt schulde not nome;
For they hadde so hy pride, with stronge
bost,

Alle that werke therfore was y-lost;
An angele smot hem so with dyveres speche,

That never won wyste what other schuld
reche.

Mony eres after, the goode clerk Eucllyde

Tazghte the craft of gemetre wonder wyde,

So he ded that tyme other also,
Of dyvers craftes mony mo.
Throzgh hys grace of Crist yn heven,
He commensed yn the syens seven;

Gramatica ys the furste syens y-wysse,
Dialectica the secunde, so have y blysse,
Rethorica the thrydde, withoute nay,
Musica ys the fowrth, as y zow say,
Astromia ys the V, by my snowte,
Arsmetica the Vi, withoute dowte
Gemetria the seventhe maketh an ende,
For he ys bothe make and hende,
Gramer forsothe ys the rote,
Whose wyl lurne on the boke;
But art passeth yn hys degre,
As the fryte doth the rote of the tre;
Rethoryk metryth with orne speche amonge,

And musyke hyt ys a swete song;
Astronomy nombreth, my dere brother,
Arsmetyk scheweth won thyng that ys

another,

Gemetre the seventh syens hyt ysse,
That con deperte falshed from trewth the y-
wys.

These bene the syens seven,
Whose useth hem wel, he may han heven.

Now dere chyldren, by zowre wytte,
Pride and covetyse that ze leven, hytte,
And taketh hede to goode dyscrecyon,
And to good norter, whersever ze com.

Now y pray zow take good hede,
For thys ze most kenne nede,
But much more ze moste wyten,
Thenne ze fynden hyr y-wryten.

Zef the fayle therto wytte,
Pray to God to send the hytte;
For Crist hymself, he techet ous
That holy church ys Goddes hous,
That ys y-mad for nothyng ellus
but for to pray yn, as the bok tellus;
Ther the pepul schal gedur ynne,
To pray and wepe for here synne.
Loke thou come not to church late,
For to speke harlotrey by the gate;
Thenne to church when thou dost fare,
Have yn thy mynde ever mare

To worschepe thy lord God bothe day and
nyzth,

With all thy wyttes, and eke thy myzth.
To the churche dore when thou dost come,

Of that holy water ther sum thow nome,
For every drope thou felust ther
Qwenchet a venyal synne, be thou ser.
But furst thou most do down thy hode,
For hyse love that dyed on the rode.
Into the churche when thou dost gon,
Pulle uppe thy herte to Crist, anon;
Uppon the rode thou loke uppe then,
And knele down fayre on bothe thy knen;

Then pray to hym so hyr to worche,
After the lawe of holy churche,
For to kepe the comandementes ten,
That God zaf to alle men;
And pray to hym with mylde steven
To kepe the from the synnes seven,
That thou hyr mowe, yn thy lyve,
Kepe the wel from care and stryve,
Forthermore he grante the grace,
In heven blysse to hav a place.
In holy churche lef nyse wordes
Of lewed speche, and fowle bordes,
And putte away alle vanyte,
And say thy pater noster and thyn ave;

Loke also thou make no bere,
But ay to be yn thy prayere;
Zef thou wolt not thyselfe pray,
Latte non other mon by no way.
In that place nowther sytte ny stonde,
But knele fayre down on the gronde,
And, when the Gospel me rede schal,
Fayre thou stonde up fro the wal,
And blesse the fayre, zef that thou conne,

When gloria tibi is begonne;
And when the gospel ys y-done,
Azayn thou myzth knele adown;
On bothe thy knen down thou falle,
For hyse love that bowzht us alle;
And when thou herest the belle ryng
To that holy sakerynge,
Knele ze most, bothe zynge and olde,
And bothe zor hondes fayr upholde,
And say thenne yn thys manere,
Fayr and softe, withoute bere;
"Jhesu Lord, welcom thou be,
Yn forme of bred, as y the se.
Now Jhesu, for thyn holy name,
Schulde me from synne and schame,
Schryff and hosel thou grant me bo,
Zer that y schal hennus go,
And vey contrycyon of my synne,
Tath y never, Lord, dye thereynne;

And, as thou were of a mayde y-bore,
Sofre me never to be y-lore;
But when y schal hennus wende,
Grante me the blysse withoute ende;
Amen! amen! so mot hyt be!
Now, swete lady, pray for me."
Thus thou myzht say, or sum other thyng,

When thou knelust at the sakerynge.
For covetyse after good, spare thou nought
To worschepe hym that alle hath wrought;

For glad may a mon that day ben,
That onus yn the day may hym sen;
Hyt ys so muche worthe, withoute nay,
The vertu therof no mon telle may;
But so meche good doth that syht,
As seynt Austyn telluth ful ryht,
That day thou syst Goddus body,
Thou schalt have these, ful securly;-
Mete and drynke at thy nede,
Non that day schal the gnede;
Ydul othes, an wordes bo,
God forzeveth the also;
Soden deth, that ylke day,
The dar not drede by no way;
Also that day, y the plyht,
Thou schalt not lese thy eye syht;

And uche fote that thou gost then,
That holy syht for to sen,
They schul be told to stonde yn stede,
When thou hast therto gret nede;
That messongere, the angele Gabryelle,
Wol kepe hem to the ful welle.
From thys mater now y may passe,
To telle mo medys of the masse:
To churche come zet, zef thou may,
And here thy masse uche day;
Zef thou mowe not come to churche,
Wher that ever thou doste worche,
When thou herest to masse knylle,
Pray to God with herte styllle,
To zeve the part of that servyse,
That yn churche ther don yse.
Forthermore zet, y wol zow preche
To zowre felows, hyt for to teche,
When thou comest byfore a lorde,
Yn halle, yn bowre, or at the borde,
Hod or cappe that thou of do,
Zer thou come hym allynge to;
Twyes or thryes, without dowte,
To that lord thou moste lowte;
With thy ryzth kne let hyt be do,
Thynowne worschepe tou save so.
Holde of thy cappe, and hod also,
Tyl thou have leve hyt on to do.
Al the whyle thou spekest with hym,

Fayre and lovelyche bere up thy chyn;
So, after the norter of the boke,
Yn hys face lovely thou loke.
Fot and hond, thou kepe ful styll
From clawyng and trypyng, ys sckylle;
From spytyng and snyftyng kepe the
also,

By privy avoydans let hyt go.
And zef that thou be wyse and felle,
Thou hast gret nede to governe the welle.

Ynto the halle when thou dost wende,
Amonges the genteles, good and hende,
Presume not to hye for nothyng,
For thyn hye blod, ny thy connyng,
Nowther to sytte, ny to lene,
That ys norther good and clene.
Let not thy cowntenans therfore abate,
Forsothe, good norter wol save thy state.
Fader and moder, whatsoever they be,
Wel ys the chyld that wel may the ,
Yn halle, yn chamber, wher thou dost gon;

Gode maners maken a mon.
To the nexte degre loke wysly,
To do hem reverans by and by;
Do hem zet no reverans al o-rowe,
But zef that thou do hem know.

To the mete when thou art y-sette,
Fayre and onestelyche thou ete hytte;
Fyrst loke that thyn honden be clene,
And that thy knyf be scharpe and kene;
And kette thy bed al at thy mete,
Ryzth as hyt may be ther y-ete.
Zef thou sytte by a worththyur mon.
Then thy selven thou art won,
Sofre hym fyrst to toyche the mete,
Zer thyself to hyt reche.

To the fayrest mossel thou myzht not strike,

Thaght that thou do hyt wel lyke;
Kepe thyn hondes, fayr and wel,
From fowle smogyng of thy towel;
Theron thou schalt not thy nese snyte,
Ny at the mete thy tothe thou pyke;
To depe yn the coppe thou myzght not
synke,

Thagh thou have good wyl to drynke,
Lest thyn enyn wolde wattryn therby-
Then were hyt no curtesy
Loke yn thy mowth ther be no mete,
When thou begynnyst to drynke or speke.

When thou syst any mon drynkiyng,
That taketh hed to thy carpyng,
Sone anon thou sese thy tale,

Whether he drynke wyn other ale.
Loke also thou scorne no mon,
Yn what degre thou syst hym gon;
Ny thou schalt no mon deprave,
Zef thou wolt thy worschepe save;
For suche worde myzht ther outberste,
That myzht make the sytte yn evel reste,
Close thy honde yn thy fyste,
And kepe the wel from "had-y-wyste."
Yn chamber amonge the ladyes bryght,
Holde thy tonge and spende thy syght;
Lawze thou not with no gret cry,
Ny make no ragynge with rybody.
Play thou not buyt with thy peres,
Ny tel thou not al that thou heres;
Dyskever thou not thyn owne dede,
For no merthe, ny for no mede;

With fayr spech thou myght have thy
wylle,
With hyt thou myght thy selven spylle.
When thou metyst a worthy mon,
Cappe and hod thou holle no on;
Yn churche, yn chepyns, or yn gate,
Do hym reverans after hys state.

Zef thou gost with a worthyor mon,
Then thyselven thou art won,
Let thy forther schulder sewe backe,

For that ys norter withoute lacke;
When he doth speke, holte the styll,
When he hath don, sey for thy wylle,
Yn thy speche that thou be felle,
And what thou sayst avyse the welle;
But byref thou no hym hys tale,
Nowther at the wyn, ny at the ale.

Cryst then of hys hye grace,
Zeve zow bothe wytte and space,
Wel thys boke to conne and rede,
Heven to have for zowre mede.

Amen! amen! so mot hyt be!
Say we so alle per charyte.

The Regius Manuscript

"A Poem of Moral Duties"

The oldest known Masonic Document in Poetic Meter

Written about 1390

(Translated to modern text)

**Here begin the constitutions of the art
of Geometry according to Euclid.**

**Whoever will both well read and look
He may find written in old book
Of great lords and also ladies,
That had many children together, certainly;
And had no income to keep them with,
Neither in town nor field nor enclosed wood;
A council together they could them take,
To ordain for these children's sake,
How they might best lead their life
Without great disease, care and strife;
And most for the multitude that was coming
Of their children after great clerks,
To teach them then good works;**

**And pray we them, for our Lord's sake.
To our children some work to make,**

That they might get their living thereby,
Both well and honestly full securely.
In that time, through good geometry,
This honest craft of good masonry
Was ordained and made in this manner,
Counterfeited of these clerks together;
At these lord's prayers they counter-
feited geometry,
And gave it the name of masonry,
For the most honest craft of all.
These lords' children thereto did fall,
To learn of him the craft of geometry,
The which he made full curiously;

Through fathers' prayers and mothers' also,
This honest craft he put them to.
He learned best, and was of honesty,
And passed his fellows in curiosity,
If in that craft he did him pass,
He should have more worship than the less,
This great clerk's name was Euclid,
His name it spread full wonder wide.
Yet this great clerk ordained he
To him that was higher in this degree,
That he should teach the simplest of wit
In that honest craft to be perfect;
And so each one shall teach the other,
And love together as sister and brother.

Futhermore yet that ordained he,

Master called so should he be;
So that he were most worshipped,
Then should he be so called;
But masons should never one another call,
Within the craft amongst them all,
Neither subject nor servant, my dear brother,
Though he be not so perfect as is another;
Each shall call other fellows by friendship,
Because they come of ladies' birth.
On this manner, through good wit of geometry,
Began first the craft of masonry;
The clerk Euclid on this wise it found,
This craft of geometry in Egypt land.

In Egypt he taught it full wide,
In divers lands on every side;
Many years afterwards, I understand,
Ere that the craft came into this land.
This craft came into England, as I you say,
In time of good King Athelstane's day;
He made then both hall and even bower,
And high temples of great honour,
To disport him in both day and night,
And to worship his God with all his might.
This good lord loved this craft full well,
And purposed to strengthen it every part,
For divers faults that in the craft he found;
He sent about into the land

After all the masons of the craft,

To come to him full even straight,
For to amend these defaults all
By good counsel, if it might fall.
An assembly then could let make
Of divers lords in their state,
Dukes, earls, and barons also,
Knights, squires and many more,
And the great burgesses of that city,
They were there all in their degree;
There were there each one always,
To ordain for these masons' estate,
There they sought by their wit,
How they might govern it;

Fifteen articles they there sought,
And fifteen points there they wrought,

Here begins the first article.

The first article of this geometry;-
The master mason must be full securely
Both steadfast, trusty and true,
It shall him never then rue;
And pay thy fellows after the cost,
As victuals goeth then, well thou knowest;
And pay them truly, upon thy faith,
What they may deserve;
And to their hire take no more,
But what that they may serve for;
And spare neither for love nor dread,

**Of neither parties to take no bribe;
Of lord nor fellow, whoever he be,
Of them thou take no manner of fee;
And as a judge stand upright,
And then thou dost to both good right;
And truly do this wheresoever thou goest,
Thy worship, thy profit, it shall be most.**

Second article.

**The second article of good masonry,
As you must it here hear specially,
That every master, that is a mason,
Must be at the general congregation,
So that he it reasonably be told
Where that the assembly shall be held;**

**And to that assembly he must needs go,
Unless he have a reasonable excuse,
Or unless he be disobedient to that craft
Or with falsehood is overtaken,
Or else sickness hath him so strong,
That he may not come them among;
That is an excuse good and able,
To that assembly without fable.**

Third article.

**The third article forsooth it is,
That the master takes to no 'prentice,**

Unless he have good assurance to dwell
Seven years with him, as I you tell,
His craft to learn, that is profitable;

Within less he may no be able
To lords' profit, nor to his own
As you may know by good reason.

Fourth article.

The fourth article this must be,
That the master him well besee,
That he no bondman 'prentice make,
Nor for no covetousness do him take;
For the lord that he is bound to,
May fetch the 'prentice wheresoever he go.
If in the lodge he were taken,
Much disease it might there make,
And such case it might befall,
That it might grieve some or all.

For all the masons that be there
Will stand together all together.
If such one in that craft should dwell,
Of divers disease you might tell;
For more ease then, and of honesty,
Take a 'prentice of higher degree.
By old time written I find
That the 'prentice should be of gentle kind;
And so sometime, great lords' blood

Took this geometry that is full good.

Fifth article.

**The fifth article is very good,
So that the 'prentice be of lawful blood;
The master shall not, for no advantage,**

**Make no 'prentice that is deformed;
It is mean, as you may hear
That he have all his limbs whole all together;
To the craft it were great shame,
To make a halt man and a lame,
For an imperfect man of such blood
Should do the craft but little good.
Thus you may know every one,
The craft would have a mighty man;
A maimed man he hath no might,
You must it know long ere night.**

Sixth article.

**The sixth article you must not miss
That the master do the lord no prejudice,
To take the lord for his 'prentice,
As much as his fellows do, in all wise.
For in that craft they be full perfect,
So is not he, you must see it.
Also it were against good reason,**

To take his hire as his fellows do.

**This same article in this case,
Judgeth his prentice to take less
Than his fellows, that be full perfect.
In divers matters, know requite it,
The master may his 'prentice so inform,
That his hire may increase full soon,
And ere his term come to an end,
His hire may full well amend.**

Seventh article.

**The seventh article that is now here,
Full well will tell you all together,
That no master for favour nor dread,
Shall no thief neither clothe nor feed.
Thieves he shall harbour never one,
Nor him that hath killed a man,
Nor the same that hath a feeble name,
Lest it would turn the craft to shame.**

Eighth article.

**The eighth article sheweth you so,
That the master may it well do.
If that he have any man of craft,
And he be not so perfect as he ought,
He may him change soon anon,
And take for him a more perfect man.**

**Such a man through recklessness,
Might do the craft scant worship.**

Ninth article.

**The ninth article sheweth full well,
That the master be both wise and strong;
That he no work undertake,
Unless he can both it end and make;
And that it be to the lords' profit also,
And to his craft, wheresoever he go;
And that the ground be well taken,
That it neither flaw nor crack.**

Tenth article.

**The tenth article is for to know,
Among the craft, to high and low,
There shall no master supplant another,
But be together as sister and brother,
In this curious craft, all and some,
That belongeth to a master mason.
Nor shall he supplant no other man,
That hath taken a work him upon,
In pain thereof that is so strong,

That weigheth no less than ten pounds,
but if that he be guilty found,
That took first the work on hand;
For no man in masonry**

Shall not supplant other securely,
But if that it be so wrought,
That in turn the work to nought;
Then may a mason that work crave,
To the lords' profit for it to save
In such a case if it do fall,
There shall no mason meddle withal.
Forsooth he that beginneth the ground,
If he be a mason good and sound,
He hath it securely in his mind
To bring the work to full good end.

Eleventh article.

The eleventh article I tell thee,
That he is both fair and free;
For he teacheth, by his might,
That no mason should work by night,
But if be in practising of wit,
If that I could amend it.

Twelfth article.

The twelfth article is of high honesty
To every mason wheresoever he be,
He shall not his fellows' work deprave,
If that he will his honesty save;
With honest words he it commend,

**By the wit God did thee send;
But it amend by all that thou may,
Between you both without doubt.**

Thirteenth article.

**The thirteenth article, so God me save,
Is if that the master a 'prentice have,
Entirely then that he him tell,
That he the craft ably may know,
Wheresoever he go under the sun.**

Fourteenth article.

**The fourteenth article by good reason,
Sheweth the master how he shall do;
He shall no 'prentice to him take,
Unless diver cares he have to make,
That he may within his term,
Of him divers points may learn.**

Fifteenth article.

**The fifteenth article maketh an end,
For to the master he is a friend;
To teach him so, that for no man,
No false maintenance he take him upon,
Nor maintain his fellows in their sin,
For no good that he might win;
Nor no false oath suffer him to make,**

**For dread of their souls' sake,
Lest it would turn the craft to shame,
And himself to very much blame.**

Plural constitutions.

**At this assembly were points ordained more,
Of great lords and masters also.
That who will know this craft and come to
estate,
He must love well God and holy church always,
And his master also that he is with,
Whersoever he go in field or enclosed wood,
And thy fellows thou love also,
For that thy craft will that thou do.**

Second Point.

**The second point as I you say,
That the mason work upon the work day,
As truly as he can or may,**

**To deserve his hire for the holy-day,
And truly to labour on his deed,
Well deserve to have his reward.**

Third point.

**The third point must be severely,
With the 'prentice know it well,**

**His master's counsel he keep and close,
And his fellows by his good purpose;
The privities of the chamber tell he no man,
Nor in the lodge whatsoever they do;
Whatsoever thou hearest or seest them do,
Tell it no man wheresoever you go;
The counsel of hall, and even of bower,**

**Keep it well to great honour,
Lest it would turn thyself to blame,
And bring the craft into great shame.**

Fourth point.

**The fourth point teacheth us also,
That no man to his craft be false;
Error he shall maintain none
Against the craft, but let it go;
Nor no prejudice he shall no do
To his master, nor his fellow also;
And though the 'prentice be under awe,
Yet he would have the same law.**

Fifth point.

**The fifth point is without doubt,
That when the mason taketh his pay
Of the master, ordained to him,
Full meekly taken so must it be;
Yet must the master by good reason,**

**Warn him lawfully before noon,
If he will not occupy him no more,
As he hath done there before;
Against this order he may no strive,
If he think well for to thrive.**

Sixth point.

**The sixth point is full given to know,
Both to high and even low,**

**For such case it might befall;
Among the masons some or all,
Through envy or deadly hate,
Oft ariseth full great debate.
Then ought the mason if that he may,
Put them both under a day;
But loveday yet shall they make none,
Till that the work-day you must well take
Leisure enough loveday to make,
Hinder their work for such a fray;
To such end then that you them draw.**

That they stand well in God's law.

Seventh point.

**The seventh point he may well mean,
Of well long life that God us lend,
As it descrieth well openly,**

**Thou shalt not by thy master's wife lie,
Nor by thy fellows', in no manner wise,
Lest the craft would thee despise;
Nor by thy fellows' concubine,
No more thou wouldst he did by thine.
The pain thereof let it be sure,
That he be 'prentice full seven year,
If he forfeit in any of them
So chastised then must he be;
Full much care might there begin,
For such a foul deadly sin.**

Eighth point.

**The eighth point, he may be sure,
If thou hast taken any cure,
Under thy master thou be true,
For that point thous shalt never rue;
A true mediator thou must needs be
To thy master, and thy fellows free;
Do truly all that thou might,
To both parties, and that is good right.**

Ninth point.

**The ninth point we shall him call,
That he be steward of our hall,
If that you be in chamber together,
Each one serve other with mild cheer;
Gentle fellows, you must it know,**

**For to be stewards all in turn,
Week after week without doubt,
Stewards to be so all in turn about,
Amiably to serve each one other,
As though they were sister and brother;
There shall never one another cost
Free himself to no advantage,
But every man shall be equally free**

**In that cost, so must it be;
Look that thou pay well every man always,
That thou hast bought any victuals eaten,
That no craving be made to thee,
Nor to thy fellows in no degree,
To man or to woman, whoever he be,
Pay them well and truly, for that will we;
Therof on thy fellow true record thou take,
For that good pay as thou dost make,
Lest it would thy fellow shame,
And bring thyself into great blame.
Yet good accounts he must make
Of such goods as he hath taken,**

**Of thy fellows' goods that thou hast spent,
Where and how and to what end;
Such accounts thou must come to,
When thy fellows wish that thou do.**

Tenth point.

**The tenth point presenteth well good life,
To live without care and strife;
For if the mason live amiss,
And in his work be false I know,**

**And through such a false excuse
May slander his fellows without reason,
Through false slander of such fame**

**May make the craft acquire blame.
If he do the craft such villainy,
Do him no favour then securely,
Nor maintain not him in wicked life,
Lest it would turn to care and strife;
But yet him you shall not delay,
Unless that you shall him constrain,
For to appear wheresoever you will,
Where that you will, loud, or still;
To the next assembly you him call,
To appear before his fellows all,
And unless he will before them appear,**

**The craft he must need forswear;
He shall then be punished after the law
That was founded by old day.**

Eleventh point.

**The eleventh point is of good discretion,
As you must know by good reason;**

**A mason, if he this craft well know,
That seeth his fellow hew on a stone,
And is in point to spoil that stone,
Amend it soon if that thou can,
And teach him then it to amend,
That the lords' work be not spoiled,
And teach him easily it to amend,**

**With fair words, that God thee hath lent;
For his sake that sit above,
With sweet words nourish his love.**

Twelfth point.

**The twelfth point is of great royalty,
There as the assembly held shall be,
There shall be masters and fellows also,
And other great lords many more;
There shall be the sheriff of that country,
And also the mayor of that city,
Knights and squires there shall be,**

**And also aldermen, as you shall see;
Such ordinance as thy make there,**

**They shall maintain it all together
Against that man, whatsoever he be,
That belongeth to the craft both fair and
free.**

If he any strife against them make,

Into their custody he shall be taken.

Thirteenth point.

**The thirteenth point is to us full lief,
He shall swear never to be no thief,
Nor succour him in his false craft,
For no good that he hath bereft,
And thou must it know or sin,
Neither for his good, nor for his kin.**

Fourteenth point.

**The fourteenth point is full good law
To him that would be under awe;
A good true oath he must there swear
To his master and his fellows that be there;
He must be steadfast be and true also
To all this ordinance, wheresoever he go,
And to his liege lord the king,
To be true to him over all thing.
And all these points here before
To them thou must need be sworn,
And all shall swear the same oath
Of the masons, be they lief be they loath.
To all these points here before,**

**That hath been ordained by full good lore.
And they shall enquire every man
Of his party, as well as he can,**

**If any man may be found guilty
In any of these points specially;
And who he be, let him be sought,
And to the assembly let him be brought.**

Fifteen point.

**The fifteenth point is full good lore,
For them that shall be there sworn,
Such ordinance at the assembly was laid
Of great lords and masters before said;
For the same that be disobedient, I know,**

**Against the ordinance that there is,
Of these articles that were moved there,
Of great lords and masons all together,
And if they be proved openly
Before that assembly, by and by,
And for their guilt's no amends will make,
Then must they need the craft forsake;
And no masons craft they shall refuse,
And swear it never more to use.**

**But if that they will amends make,
Again to the craft they shall never take;
And if that they will no do so,
The sheriff shall come them soon to,**

**And put their bodies in deep prison,
For the trespass that they have done,
And take their goods and their cattle**

**Into the king's hand, every part,
And let them dwell there full still,
Till it be our liege king's will.**

Another ordinance of the art of geometry.

**They ordained there an assembly to be hold,
Every year, wheresoever they would,
To amend the defaults, if any were found
Among the craft within the land;
Each year or third year it should be held,**

**In every place wheresoever they would;
Time and place must be ordained also,
In what place they should assemble to,
All the men of craft there they must be,
And other great lords, as you must see,
To mend the faults the he there spoken,
If that any of them be then broken.**

**There they shall be all sworn,
That belongeth to this craft's lore,
To keep their statutes every one
That were ordained by King Althelstane;
These statutes that I have here found**

**I ordain they be held through my land,
For the worship of my royalty,
That I have by my dignity.**

**Also at every assembly that you hold,
That you come to your liege king bold,**

**Beseeching him of his grace,
To stand with you in every place,
To confirm the statutes of King Athelstane,
That he ordained to this craft by good reason.**

The art of the four crowned ones.

**Pray we now to God almighty,
And to his mother Mary bright,**

**That we may keep these articles here,
And these points well all together,
As did these holy martyrs four,
That in this craft were of great honour;
They were as good masons as on earth shall go,
Gravers and image-makers they were also.**

**For they were workmen of the best,
The emperor had to them great liking;
He willed of them an image to make
That might be worshipped for his sake;
Such monuments he had in his day,
To turn the people from Christ's law.**

**But they were steadfast in Christ's law,
And to their craft without doubt;
They loved well God and all his lore,
And were in his service ever more.
True men they were in that day,
And lived well in God's law;
They thought no monuments for to make,**

**For no good that they might take,
To believe on that monument for their God,
They would not do so, though he was furious;
For they would not forsake their true faith,**

**And believe on his false law,
The emperor let take them soon anon,
And put them in a deep prison;
The more sorely he punished them in that place,
The more joy was to them of Christ's grace,
Then when he saw no other one,
To death he let them then go;
By the book he might it show
In legend of holy ones,
The names of the four-crowned ones.**

**Their feast will be without doubt,
After Hallow-e'en eighth day.
You may hear as I do read,
That many years after, for great dread
That Noah's flood was all run,
The tower of Babylon was begun,
As plain work of lime and stone,
As any man should look upon;
So long and broad it was begun,
Seven miles the height shadoweth the sun.
King Nebuchadnezzar let it make
To great strength for man's sake,
Though such a flood again should come,
Over the work it should not take;**

**For they had so high pride, with strong
boast**

**All that work therefore was lost;
An angel smote them so with divers speech,
That never one knew what the other should
tell.**

**Many years after, the good clerk Euclid
Taught the craft of geometry full wonder wide,
So he did that other time also,
Of divers crafts many more.
Through high grace of Christ in heaven,
He commenced in the sciences seven;**

**Grammar is the first science I know,
Dialect the second, so I have I bliss,
Rhetoric the third without doubt,
Music is the fourth, as I you say,**

**Astronomy is the fifth, by my snout,
Arithmetic the sixth, without doubt,
Geometry the seventh maketh an end,
For he is both meek and courteous,
Grammar forsooth is the root,
Whoever will learn on the book;
But art passeth in his degree,
As the fruit doth the root of the tree;**

**Rhetoric measureth with ornate speech among,
And music it is a sweet song;
Astronomy numbereth, my dear brother,**

**Arithmetic sheweth one thing that is another,
Geometry the seventh science it is,
That can separate falsehood from truth, I know
These be the sciences seven,
Who useth them well he may have heaven.
Now dear children by your wit
Pride and covetousness that you leave it,
And taketh heed to good discretion,
And to good nurture, wheresoever you come.
Now I pray you take good heed,**

**For this you must know needs,
But much more you must know,
Than you find here written.
If thee fail therto wit,
Pray to God to send thee it;
For Christ himself, he teacheth us
That holy church is God's house,
That is made for nothing else
But for to pray in, as the book tells us;
There the people shall gather in,
To pray and weep for their sin.
Look thou come not to church late,
For to speak harlotry by the gate;**

**Then to church when thou dost fare,
Have in thy mind ever more
To worship thy lord God both day and night,
With all thy wits and even thy might.
To the church door when thou dost come**

**Of that holy water there some thou take,
For every drop thou feelest there
Quencheth a venial sin, be thou sure.
But first thou must do down thy hood,
For his love that died on the rood.
Into the church when thou dost go,
Pull up thy heart to Christ, anon;**

**Upon the rood thou look up then,
And kneel down fair upon thy knees,
Then pray to him so here to work,
After the law of holy church,**

**For to keep the commandments ten,
That God gave to all men;
And pray to him with mild voice
To keep thee from the sins seven,
That thou here may, in this life,
Keep thee well from care and strife;
Furthermore he grant thee grace,
In heaven's bliss to have a place.**

**In holy church leave trifling words
Of lewd speech and foul jests,
And put away all vanity,
And say thy pater noster and thine ave;
Look also that thou make no noise,
But always to be in thy prayer;
If thou wilt not thyself pray,
Hinder no other man by no way.**

**In that place neither sit nor stand,
But kneel fair down on the ground,
And when the Gospel me read shall,**

**Fairly thou stand up from the wall,
And bless the fare if that thou can,
When gloria tibi is begun;
And when the gospel is done,
Again thou might kneel down,
On both knees down thou fall,
For his love that bought us all;
And when thou hearest the bell ring
To that holy sacrament,
Kneel you must both young and old,
And both your hands fair uphold,
And say then in this manner,**

**Fair and soft without noise;
"Jesu Lord welcome thou be,
In form of bread as I thee see,
Now Jesu for thine holy name,
Shield me from sin and shame;
Shrift and Eucharist thou grand me both,
Ere that I shall hence go,
And very contrition for my sin,
That I never, Lord, die therein;
And as thou were of maid born,
Suffer me never to be lost;
But when I shall hence wend,**

Grant me the bliss without end;
Amen! Amen! so mote it be!
Now sweet lady pray for me."
Thus thou might say, or some other thing,
When thou kneelest at the sacrament.
For covetousness after good, spare thou not
To worship him that all hath wrought;

For glad may a man that day be,
That once in the day may him see;
It is so much worth, without doubt,
The virtue thereof no man tell may;
But so much good doth that sight,

That Saint Austin telleth full right,
That day thou seest God's body,
Thou shalt have these full securely:-
Meet and drink at thy need,
None that day shalt thou lack;
Idle oaths and words both,
God forgiveth thee also;
Sudden death that same day
Thee dare not dread by no way;
Also that day, I thee plight,
Thou shalt not lose thy eye sight;
And each foot that thou goest then,

That holy sight for to see,
They shall be told to stand instead,
When thou hast thereto great need;

**That messenger the angel Gabriel,
Will keep them to thee full well.
From this matter now I may pass,
To tell more benefits of the mass:
To church come yet, if thou may,
And hear the mass each day;
If thou may not come to church,
Where that ever thou dost work,
When thou hearest the mass toll,**

**Pray to God with heart still,
To give thy part of that service,
That in church there done is.
Furthermore yet, I will you preach
To your fellows, it for to teach,
When thou comest before a lord,
In hall, in bower, or at the board,
Hood or cap that thou off do,
Ere thou come him entirely to;
Twice or thrice, without doubt,
To that lord thou must bow;
With thy right knee let it be done,**

**Thine own worship thou save so.
Hold off thy cap and hood also,
Till thou have leave it on to put.
All the time thou speakest with him,
Fair and amiably hold up thy chin;
So after the nurture of the book,
In his face kindly thou look.**

Foot and hand thou keep full still,
For clawing and tripping, is skill;
From spitting and sniffing keep thee also,
By private expulsion let it go,
And if that thou be wise and discrete,

Thou has great need to govern thee well.
Into the hall when thou dost wend,
Amongst the gentles, good and courteous,
Presume not too high for nothing,
For thine high blood, nor thy cunning,
Neither to sit nor to lean,
That is nurture good and clean.
Let not thy countenance therefor abate,
Forsooth good nurture will save thy state.
Father and mother, whatsoever they be,
Well is the child that well may thee,
In hall, in chamber, where thou dost go;

Good manners make a man.
To the next degree look wisely,
To do them reverence by and by;
Do them yet no reverence all in turn,
Unless that thou do them know.
To the meat when thou art set,
Fair and honestly thou eat it;
First look that thine hands be clean,
And that thy knife be sharp and keen,
And cut thy bread all at thy meat,
Right as it may be there eaten,

If thou sit by a worthier man,

**Then thy self thou art one,
Suffer him first to touch the meat,
Ere thyself to it reach.**

**To the fairest morsel thou might not strike,
Though that thou do it well like;
Keep thine hands fair and well,
From foul smudging of thy towel;
Thereon thou shalt not thy nose blow,
Nor at the meat thy tooth thou pick;
Too deep in cup thou might not sink,
Though thou have good will to drink,
Lest thine eyes would water thereby-**

**Then were it no courtesy.
Look in thy mouth there be no meat,
When thou begins to drink or speak.
When thou seest any man drinking,
That taketh heed to thy speech,
Soon anaon thou cease thy tale,
Whether he drink wine or ale,
Look also thou scorn no man,
In what degree thou seest him gone;
Nor thou shalt no man deprave,
If thou wilt thy worship save;
For such word might there outburst.**

**That might make thee sit in evil rest.
Close thy hand in thy fist,**

**And keep thee well from "had I known."
Hold thy tongue and spend thy sight;
Laugh thou not with no great cry,
Nor make no lewd sport and ribaldry.
Play thou not but with thy peers,
Nor tell thou not all that thou hears;
Discover thou not thine own deed,
For no mirth, nor for no reward;
With fair speech thou might have thy will,
With it thou might thy self spoil.**

**When thou meetest a worthy man,
Cap and hood thou hold not on;
In church, in market, or in the gate,
Do him reverence after his state.
If thou goest with a worthier man
Then thyself thou art one,
Let thy foremost shoulder follow his back,
For that is nurture without lack;**

**When he doth speak, hold thee still,
When he hath done, say for thy will,
In thy speech that thou be discreet,
And what thou sayest consider thee well;
But deprive thou not him his tale,
Neither at the wine nor at the ale.
Christ then of his high grace,
Save you both wit and space,
Well this book to know and read,
Heaven to have for your reward.**

Amen! Amen! so mote it be!
So say we all for charity.