

**The Old Constitutions
of the Mlasons**

1722

THE
Old Constitutions
Belonging to the
Ancient *and* Honourable
SOCIETY
OF
Free *and* Accepted
MASONS.

~~~~~  
Taken from a Manuscript wrote  
above Five Hundred Years since.  
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THE
PREFACE.

IF any Thing could have escaped the Censures of this litigious Age; if the most innocent inoffensive Set of Men in the World could be free from Satyr and Sarcasm, one would have thought the Ancient and Noble Society of Free-Masons should have been the Men. What have they not to recommend them to the World, and gain the Favour and Protection of wise and honest Men?

As their Art is the most Ancient, so their Profession of it is most Honourable. The Necessity the World was early in of the Profession of a Mason, proves their Usefulness; for I believe it will not be doubted, that Men had Houses before they had Cloaths, as they had Altars before they had Temples. Cain built a City, and Abel, no doubt, built an Altar, when he offered his Sacrifice to the LORD.

THUS useful, and thus ancient, it cannot be wondered if the World honour'd them with all the Tokens of Respect, which in those Days they were capable of, and perhaps more than we have yet an Account of.

THESE Honours, and this Respect, it cannot be doubted brought Men of Value among them, who thought it not below them to wear the Badge of the Society, and to acknowledge themselves to be Favourers of their Greatness, as they were Lovers of Art.

UNDER the Protection of such Persons of Honour and Interest, it is not to be express'd what mighty Fabricks they have erected, what glorious Buildings they have rais'd, from the Temple of Solomon to the magnificent Pile of St. Peter's at Rome.

HOW this Society has been preserv'd; How regularly they have acted; on what wholesome Laws they have been founded, and how carefully they have observ'd and regarded those Laws, as the just Cement of the Society, that is partly to be seen in this Tract, and it will speak for itself.

NOR is their Value lessen'd or abated at all by the Dust and Scandal rais'd by any Men against them, or by the Freedom they have taken to banter and rally them. The Dirt thrown at them flies back on those that cast it, and the Honour of the Society of Free-Masons remains entire. So that none of the Persons of Honour who have lately grac'd the Society with their Presence, have yet seen any Reason to be asham'd of them, or to withdraw their Protection from them.

MUCH more might be said to their Honour, but the following Piece of Antiquity is sufficient, and will give every Reader an Authentick Account of them. It has yet seen the World but in Fragments, but is now put together as a Thing of too much Significancy to pass our Observation, and which will effectually vindicate the Ancient Society of Free-Masons from all that has or can be said against them.





THE
HISTORY
OF
Free Masons, &c.

The Almighty Father of Heaven, with the Wisdom of the Glorious Son, thro' the Goodness of the Holy Ghost, Three Persons in one Godhead, be with our Beginning, and give us his Grace so to govern our Lives, that we may come to his Bliss, that never shall have end. Amen.

G O O D Brethren and Fellows, our Purpose is to tell you how, and in what manner the Craft of Masonry was begun, and afterwards how it was founded by worthy Kings and Princes, and other wise Men, hurtful to none, and also to them that be true, we will declare doth belong to every *Free Mason* to keep firm good Faith, if you take Heed thereunto it is well worthy to be kept, which is contain'd in the Seven Liberal Sciences as follows, *viz.*

Imprimis, It's *Grammar* that teaches a Man to speak truly, and write truly.

II. It's *Rhetorick* that teaches a Man to speak fair, and in subtle Terms.

III. It's *Logick* that teaches a Man to discern Truth from Falshood.

IV. It's *Arithmetick* that teaches a Man to Accompt, and reckon all manner of Numbers.

V. It's *Geometry* that teaches Mett and Measure of any Thing, and from thence cometh *Masonry*.

VI. It's *Musick* that teacheth Song and Voice.

VII. It's *Astronomy* which teacheth to know the Course of the Sun, Moon, and other Ornaments of Heaven.

Note, I pray you, That these Seven are contain'd under *Geometry*, for it teacheth Mett and Measure, Ponderation and Weight for every Thing in and upon the whole Earth for you to know; that every Craftsman works by Measure; He or She that buys or sells, is by Weight or Measure; Husbandmen, Navigators, Planters, and all of them, use *Geometry*; for neither *Grammar*, *Rhetorick*, *Logick*, nor any other of the said Sciences can subsist without *Geometry*, *ergo*, most worthy and honourable.

You ask me how this Science was invented; my Answer is this, That before the General Deluge, which is commonly called *Noah's Flood*, there was a Man called *Lamech*, as you may read in the Fourth Chapter of *Genesis*, who had two Wives, the one called *Ada*, the other *Zilla*; by *Ada* he begat two Sons, *Jabal* and *Jubal*; by *Zilla* he had one Son called *Tubal*, and a Daughter called *Naamah*. These four Children found the beginning of all Crafts in the World: *Jabal* found out *Geometry*, and he divided Flocks of Sheep, and Lands; he first built a House of Stone and Timber. *Jubal* found out *Musick*; *Tubal* found out the Smith's Trade or Craft, also of Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron and Steel; *Naamah* found out the Craft of Weaving. And these Children

knew that GOD would take Vengeance for Sins, either by Fire or Water, wherefore they did write there Sciences, that they had found, on two Pillars of Stone, that they might be found after that GOD had taken Vengeance; the one was *Marble*, that would not burn, the other was *Latress*¹, that would not drown in Water; so that the one would be preserved, and not consumed, if GOD would any People should live upon the Earth. It resteth now to tell you how these Stones were found, whereon the said Sciences were written, after the said Deluge: It so pleased God Almighty, that the Great *Hermarmes*², whose Son *Lunie* was, who was the Son of *Sem*, who was the Son of *Noah*. The said *Hermarmes* was afterwards called *Hermes*, the Father of *Lunie*, he found one of the two Pillars of Stone. He found these Sciences written thereon, and taught them to other Men. And at the Tower of *Babylon*, *Masonry* was much made on; for the King of *Babylon*, who was *Nemorth*³, was a *Mason*, and serv'd the Science; and when the City of *Ninevah*, and other Cities of the *East*, should be built, *Nemorth* sent thither Threescore Masons, at the Desire of the King of *Ninevah*; and when they went forth, he gave them a Charge after this manner, That they should be true one to another, and love one another, that he might have Worship by them in sending them to his Cozen the King. He also gave them Charge concerning their Science; and then it was the first time that any *Mason* had Charge of his Work. Also *Abraham*, and *Sarah* his Wife, went into *Egypt*, and taught the *Egyptians* the Seven Liberal Sciences; and he had an ingenious Schollar called *Euclides*, who perfectly learned the said Liberal Sciences.

It happen'd in his Days, the Lords and States of the Realm had so many Sons unlawfully begotten by other Men's Wives, that the Land was burthen'd with them, having small Means to maintain them withal; the King understanding thereof, caused a Parliament to be called or summoned for Redress, but being so Numberless that no Good could be done with them, he caused Proclamation to be made through the Realm, that if any Man could devise any Course how to maintain them, to inform the King, and he should be well rewarded; whereupon *Euclides* came to the King, and said thus, My noble Sovereign, if I may have the Order of Government of those Lords Sons, I will teach them the Seven Liberal Sciences, whereby they may live honestly like Gentlemen, provided that you will grant me Power over them by virtue of your Dominion; which was immediately effected, and there *Euclides* gave them those Admonitions following

- I. To be true to their King.
- II. To be true to the Master they serve.
- III. To be true, and love one another.
- IV. Not to miscall one another, &c.
- V. To do their Work so duly, that they may deserve their Wages at their Master's Hands.
- VI. To ordain the wisest of them Master of the rest of the Work.
- VII. To have such reasonable Wages, that the Workman may live honestly, and with Credit.
- VIII. To come and assemble together in the Year, to take Council in their Craft how they may work best to serve their Lord and Master, for his Profit, and their own Credit, and to correct such as have offended.

Note, That *Masonry* was heretofore term'd *Geometry*, and sithence the Children of *Israel* came to the Land of *Bethest*, which is now called *Emens*, in the Country of *Jerusalem*, where they began a Temple, which is now called the Temple of *Jerusalem*: And King *David* loved *Masons* well and cherish'd them, for he gave them good Payment, and gave them a Charge, as *Euclides* had given them before in *Egypt*, and further, as hereafter followeth; and after the Decease of King *David*, *Solomon* his Son finished the Temple that his Father had began; he sent for *Masons* of divers Nations, to the Number of Four and Twenty Thousand, of which Number Four Thousand were elected and created Masters and Governors of the Work. And there was a King of another Region or Country, called *Hiram*, who loved well King *Solomon*, and he gave him Timber for the Work; and he had a Son called *Amon*, and he was Master of

¹ Dans le *Ms Dumfries*, on trouve « *leath...* », où on a vu « *lathier* », et que beaucoup interprètent en « *latress* », briques.

² Déformation d'Hermès.

³ Déformation de Nemrod.

Geometry, and he was chief Master of all his *Masons* of Carving-Work, and of all other Work of *Masonry* that belong'd to the Temple, as appears by the Bible in *Lib. Regum Cap. 4*. And King *Solomon* confirmed all Things concerning *Masons* that *David* his Father had given in Charge; and then *Masons* did travel divers Countries, some to augment their Knowledge in the said Art, and to instruct others.

And it happen'd that a curious *Mason* named *Memongrecus*, that had been at the building of *Solomon's* Temple, came into *France*, and taught the Science of *Masonry* to the *Frenchmen*; and there was a King of *France* called *Carolus Martel*, who loved greatly *Masonry*, who sent for the said *Memongrecus*, and learned of him the said Sciences, and became one of the Fraternity; and thereupon began great Works, and liberally did pay his Workmen: He confirm'd unto them a large Charter, and was yearly present at their Assembly, which was a great Honour and Encouragement unto them; and thus came the Science into *France*.

The Knowledge of *Masonry* was unknown in *England* until *St. Alban* came thither, who instructed the King in the said Science of *Masonry*, and also in Divinity, who was a *Pagan*: He walled the Town now called *St. Alban*; he became in high Favour with the King, insomuch that he was Knighted, and made the King's Chief Steward, and the Realm was governed by him under the said King. He greatly cherished and loved *Masons*, and truly paid them their Wages Weekly, which was 3 s. 6 d. the Week. He also purchased for them a Charter from the King to hold a General Assembly and Council Yearly. He made many *Masons* and gave them such a Charge as is hereafter declared.

It happen'd presently after the Martyrdom of *St. Alban*, who is truly term'd *England's Proto-Martyr*, that a certain King invaded the Land, and destroy'd most of the natives by Fire and Sword, that the Science of *Masonry* was much decay'd, until the Reign of King *Athelston*, which some write *Adleston*, who brought the Land to Peace and Rest, from the insulting *Danes*. He began to build many Abbies, Monasteries, and other Religious Houses, as also Castles and divers Fortresses for Defence of his realm. He loved *Masons* more than his Father; he greatly studied *Geometry*, and sent into many Lands for Men expert in the Science. He gave them a very large Charter, to hold a Yearly Assembly, and Power to correct Offenders in the said Science; and the King himself caused a General Assembly of all *Masons* in his Realm, at *York*, and there made many *Masons*, and gave them a deep Charge for Observation of all such Articles as belonged unto *Masonry*, and delivered them the said Charter to keep: and when this Assembly was gathered together, he caused a Cry to be made, that if any of them had any Writing that did concern *Masonry*, or could inform the King of any Thing or Matter that was wanting in the said Charge already delivered, that they or he should shew them to the King, or recite them to him; and there were some in *French*, some in *Greek*, and some in *English*, and other Languages, whereupon the King caused a Book to be made, which declared how the Science was first invented, and the Utility thereof, which Book he commanded to be read, and plainly declared, when any Man was to be made a *Mason* that he might fully understand what Articles, Rules and Orders he was obliged to observe; and from that time unto this Day *Masonry* hath been much respected and preserved, and divers new Articles have been added to the said Charge, by good Advice and Consent of the Masters and Fellows.



Tunc Unus ex Senioribus veniat librum illi qui Injurandum reddat & ponat Manum in libro vel supra librum dum Articulus & Precepta sibi legentur.



Saying thus by way of Exhortation,

MY loving and respected Friends and Brethren, I humbly beseech you, as you love your Soul's eternal Welfare, your Credit, and your Country's Good, to be very Careful in Observation of these Articles that I am about to read to this Deponent; for ye are obliged to perform them as well as he, so hoping of your Care herein, I will, by God's Grace, begin the Charge.

I. I am to admonish you to honour God in his holy Church; that, you use no Heresy, Schism and Error in your Understandings, or discredit Men's Teachings.

II. To be true to our Sovereign Lord the King, his Heirs and lawful Successors; committing no Treason, Misprision of Treason, or Felony; and if any Man shall commit Treason that you know of, you shall forthwith give Notice thereof to his Majesty, his Privy Counsellors, or some other Person that hath Commission to enquire thereof.

III. You shall be true to your Fellows and Brethren of the Science of *Masonry*, and do unto them as you would be done unto.

IV. You shall keep Secret the obscure and intricate Parts of the Science, not disclosing them to any but such as study and use the same.

V. You shall do your Work truly and faithfully, endeavouring the Profit and Advantage of him that is Owner of the said Work.

VI. You shall call *Masons* your Fellows and Brethren, without Addition of Knaves, or other bad Language.

VII. You shall not take your Neighbour's Wife Willinously, nor his Daughter, nor his Maid or his Servant, to use ungodly.

VIII. You shall not carnally lye with any Woman that is belonging to the House where you are at Table.

IX. You shall truly pay for your Meat and Drink, where you are at Table.

X. You shall not undertake any Man's Work, knowing yourself unable or unexpert to perform and effect the same, that no Discredit or Aspersion may be imputed to the Science, or the Lord or Owner of the said Work be any wise prejudic'd.

XI. You shall not take any Work to do at excessive or unreasonable Rates, to deceive the Owner thereof, but so as he may be truly and faithfully serv'd with his own Goods.

XII. You shall so take your Work, that thereby you may live honestly, and pay your Fellows the Wages as the Science doth require.

XIII. You shall not supplant any of your Fellows of their Work, (that is to say) if he or any of them hath or have taken any Work upon him or them, or he or they stand Master or Masters of any Lord or Owner's Work, that you shall not put him or them out from the said Work, altho' you perceive him or them unable to finish the same.

XIV. You shall not take any Apprentice to serve you in the said Science of *Masonry*, under the Term of Seven Years; nor any but such as are descended of good and honest Parentage, that no Scandal may be imputed to the said Science of *Masonry*

XV. You shall not take upon you to make any one *Mason* without the Privy or Consent of six, or five at least of your Fellows, and not but such as is Freeborn, and whose Parents live in good Fame and Name, and that hath his right and perfect Limbs, and able of Body to attend the said Science.

XVI. You shall not pay any of your Fellows more Money than he or they have deserv'd, that you be not deceiv'd by slight or false Working, and the Owner thereof much wrong'd.

XVII. You shall not slander any of your Fellows behind their Backs, to impair their Temporal Estate or good Name.

XVIII. You shall not, without very urgent Cause, answer your Fellow doggedly or ungodly, but as becomes a loving Brother in the said Science.

XIX. You shall duly reverence your Fellows, that the Bond of Charity and mutual Love may continue steadfast and stable amongst you.

XX. You shall not (except in *Christmas* time) use any lawless Games, as Dice, Cards, or such like.

XXI. You shall not frequent any Houses of Bawdery, or be a Pander to any of your Fellows or others, which will be a great Scandal to the Science.

XXII. You shall not go out to drink by Night, or if Occasion happen that you must go, you shall not stay past Eight of the Clock, having some of your Fellows, or one at the least, to bear you Witness of the honest Place you were in, and your good Behaviour, to avoid Scandal.

XXIII. You shall come to the Yearly Assembly, if you know where it is kept, being within Ten Miles of the Place of your Abode, submitting your self to the Censure of your Fellows, wherein you have⁴ to make satisfaction, or else to defend by Order of the King's Laws.

XXIV. You shall not make any Mould, Square, or Rule to mould Stones withal, but such as are allowed by the Fraternity.

XXV. You shall set Strangers at Work, having Employment for them, at least a Fortnight, and pay them their Wages truly, and if you want Work for them, then you shall relieve them with Money to defray their reasonable Charges to the next Lodge.

XXVI. You shall truly attend your Work, and truly end the same, whether it be Task or Journey-Work, if you may have the Payment and Wages according to your Agreement made with the Master or Owner thereof.

All these Articles and Charge, which I have now read unto you, you shall well and truly observe, perform and keep to the best of your Power, and Knowledge, So help you God, and the true and holy Contents of this Book.

And moreover I A. B. do here in the Presence of God Almighty and of my Fellows and Brethren here present, promise and declare, That I will not at any Time hereafter by any Act or Circumstance whatsoever, directly or indirectly, publish, discover, reveal or make known any of these Secrets, Privities or Councils of the Fraternity or Fellowship of Free-Masons, which at this time, or at any time hereafter shall be made known unto me. So help me God, and the true and holy Contents of this Book.



⁴ Le mot qui manque serait « *erred* ».

This Charge belongeth to Apprentices.

Imprimis. Y O U shall truly honour God, and his holy Church, the King, your Master, and Dame; you shall not absent yourself, but with the Licence of one or both of them, from their Service, by Day or Night.

II. You shall not Purloyn or Steal, or be Privy or accessory to the Purloyning or Stealing to the Value of Six-pence from them or either of them.

III. You shall not commit Adultery or Fornication in the House of your Master, with his Wife, Daughter or Maid.

IV. You shall not disclose your Master's or Dame's Secrets or Councils, which they have reported unto you, or what is to be concealed, spoken or done within the Privities of their House, by them, or either of them, or by any *Free-Mason*.

V. You shall not maintain any disobedient Argument with your Master, Dame, or any *Free-Mason*.

VI. You shall reverently behave your self towards all *Free-Masons*, using neither Cards, Dice, or any other unlawful Games, *Christmas* Time excepted.

VII. You shall not haunt, or frequent any Taverns or Ale-houses , or so much as go into any of them, except it be upon your Master or your Dame, their or any of their Affairs, or with their or the one of their Consents.

VIII. You shall not commit Adultery or Fornication in any Man's House, where you shall be at Table or at Work.

IX. You shall not marry, or contract yourself to any Woman during your Apprenticeship.

X. You shall not steal any Man's Goods, but especially your Master's, or any of his Fellow *Masons*, nor suffer any to steal their Goods, but shall hinder the Felon, if you can; and if you cannot, then you shall acquaint the said Master and his Fellows presently.



Additional Orders and Constitutions made and agreed upon at a General Assembly held at -----, on the Eighth Day of December, 1663.

I. THAT no Person, of what Degree soever, be accepted a *Free-Mason*, unless he shall have a Lodge of five *Free-Masons* at the least, whereof one to be a Master or Warden of that Limit or Division where such Lodge shall be kept, and another to be a Workman of the Trade of *Free-Masonry*.

II. That no Person hereafter shall be accepted a *Free-Mason*, but such as are of able Body, honest Parentage, good Reputation, and Observers of the Laws of the Land.

III. That no Person hereafter, which shall be accepted a *Free-Mason*, shall he admitted into any Lodge, or Assembly, until he hath brought a Certificate of the Time and Place of his Acception, from the Lodge that accepted him, unto the Master of that Limit and Division, where such Lodge was kept, which said Master shall enroll the same on Parchment in a Roll to be kept for that Purpose, and give an Account of all such Acceptions, at every General Assembly.

IV. That every Person, who is now a *Free-Mason*, shall bring to the Master a Note of the Time of his Acception, to the end the same may be enrolled in such Priority of Place, as the Person deserves, and to the end the whole Company and Fellows may the better know each other.

V. That for the future the said Society, Company and Fraternity of *Free-Masons*, shall be regulated and governed by one Master, and as many Wardens as the said Company shall think fit to chuse at every Yearly General Assembly.

VI. That no Person shall be accepted a *Free-Mason*, unless he be One and Twenty Years Old, or more.

VII. That no person hereafter be accepted a *Free-Mason*, or know the Secrets of the said Society, until he shall have first taken the Oath of Secrecy here following, *viz.*

I A. B. do here in the Presence of God Almighty, and of my Fellows and Bretheren here present, promise and declare, That I will not at any Time hereafter by any or Circumstance whatsoever directly or indirectly, publish, discover, reveal or make known any of these Secrets, Privities or Councils of the Fraternity or Fellowship of Free Masons, which at this time, or at any time hereafter shall be made known unto me. So help me God, and the true and holy Contents of this Book.

FINIS.

