

THE
"CONSTITUTIONS"
OF THE
FREE-MASONS.

CONTAINING THE
History, Charges, Regulations, &c.
of that most Ancient und Right
Worshipful FRATERNITY.

For the Use of the LODGES.

LONDON:

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and John Hooke at the *Flower-de-luce* over-against *St. Dunstan's*
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In the Year of Masonry - 5723
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DEDICATION.

TO
His GRACE the DUKE of
MONTAGU:

My Lord,

By Order of his *Grace* the DUKE of WHARTON, the present Right Worshipful GRAND-MASTER of the *Free-Masons*; and, as his *Deputy*, I humbly dedicate this Book of the *Constitutions* of our ancient *Fraternity* to your *Grace*, in Testimony of your honourable, prudent, and vigilant Discharge of the Office of our GRAND-MASTER last Year.

I need not tell your GRACE what Pains our learned AUTHOR has taken in compiling and digesting this Book from the old *Records*, and how accurately he has compar'd and made every thing agreeable to *History* and *Chronology*, so as to render these NEW CONSTITUTIONS a just and exact Account of *Masonry* from the Beginning of the World to your *Grace's* MASTERSHIP, still preserving all that was truly ancient and authentick in the old ones: For every Brother will be pleas'd with the Performance, that knows it had your GRACE'S Perusal and Approbation, and that it is now printed for the Use of the *Lodges*, after it was approv'd by the GRAND-LODGE, when your GRACE was GRAND-MASTER. All the *Brotherhood* will remember the Honour your GRACE has done them, and your Care for their Peace, Harmony, and lasting Friendship: Which none is more duly sensible of than,

My LORD, Your GRACE'S

Most oblig'd, and

Most obedient Servant,

And Faithful Brother,

J. T. DESAGULIERS

Deputy Grand-Master.

THE
Charges
OF A
FREE-MASON;
EXTRACTED FROM
The ancient Records of LODGES
beyond Sea, and of those in *England, Scotland*
and *Ireland*, for the Use of the *Lodges* in LONDON:
TO BE READ
At the making of NEW BRETHREN, or when the
MASTER shall order it.

The General Heads, viz.

- I. Of GOD and RELIGION.
 - II. Of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE Supreme and subordinat.
 - III. Of LODGES.
 - IV. Of MASTERS, *Wardens, Fellows, and Apprentices.*
 - V. Of the Management of the *Craft* in working.
 - VI. Of BEHAVIOUR, *viz.*
 - 1. In the Lodge while *constituted.*
 - 2. After the Lodge is over and the *Brethren* not gone.
 - 3. When Brethren meet without *Strangers*, but not in a *Lodge.*
 - 4. In Presence of *Strangers not Masons.*
 - 5. At *Home*, and in the *Neighbourhood.*
 - 6. Towards a *strange Brother.*
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I. *Concerning GOD and RELIGION.*

A *Mason* is oblig'd, by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid **Atheist**, nor an irreligious **Libertine**. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be *good Men and true*, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd; whereby Masonry becomes the *Center of Union*, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance.

II. *Of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE supreme and subordinate.*

A *Mason* is a peaceable Subject to the Civil Powers, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concern'd in Plots and Conspiracies against the Peace and Welfare of the Nation, nor to behave himself undutifully to inferior Magistrates; for as Masonry hath been always injured by War, Bloodshed, and Confusion, so ancient Kings and Princes have been much dispos'd to encourage the Craftsmen, because of their Peaceableness and *Loyalty*, whereby they practically answer'd the Cavils of their Adversaries, and promoted the Honour of the Eraternity, who ever flourish'd in Times of Peace. So that if a Brother should be Rebel against the State, he is not to be countenanc'd in his Rebellion, however he may be pitied as an unhappy Man; and, if convicted of no other Crime, though the loyal Brotherhood must and ought to disown his Rebellion, and give no Umbrage or Ground of political Jealousy to the Government for the time being; they cannot expel him from the *Lodge*, and his Relation to it remains indefeasible.

III. *Of LODGES.*

A Lodge is a Place where *Masons* assemble and work: Hence that Assembly, or duly organiz'd Society of Masons, is call'd a Lodge, and every Brother ought to belong to one, and to be subject to its *By-Laws* and The GENERAL REGULATIONS. It is either *particular or general*, and will be best understood by attending it, and by the Regulations of the *General or Grand Lodge* hereunto annex'd. In ancient Times, no *Master* or *Fellow* could be absent from it, especially when warn'd to appear at it, without incurring a severe Censure, until it appear'd to the *Master* and *Wardens*, that pure Necessity hinder'd him.

The Persons admitted Members of a *Lodge* must be good and true Men, free-born, and of mature and discreet Age, no bondmen, no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report.

IV. *Of MASTERS, Wardens, Fellows, and Apprentices.*

All Preferment among *Masons* is grounded upon real Worth and personal Merit only; that so the *Lords* may be well served, the Brethren not put to Shame, nor the *Royal Craft* despis'd: Therefore no *Master* or *Warden* is chosen by Seniority, but for his Merit. It is impossible to describe these things in writing, and every Brother must attend in his Place, and learn them in a way peculiar to *this Fraternity*: Only Candidates may know, that no *Master* should take an *Apprentice*, unless he has sufficient Employment for him, and unless he be a perfect Youth, having no Maim or Defect in his Body, that may render him incapable of learning the Art, of serving his *Master's Lord*, and of being made a *Brother*, and then a *Fellow-Craft* in due time, even after he has served such a Term of Years as the Custom of the Country directs; and that he should be descended of honest Parents; that so, when otherwise qualify'd, he may arrive to the Honour of being the WARDEN, and then the *Master* of the *Lodge*, the *Grand Warden*, and at length the GRAND-MASTER of all the *Lodges*, according to his Merit.

No Brother can be a Warden until he has pass'd the part of a *Fellow-Craft*; nor a MASTER until he has acted as a *Warden*, nor GRAND-WARDEN until he has been *Master of a Lodge*, nor **Grand-Master** unless he has been a *Fellow-Craft* before his Election, who is also to be nobly born, or a *Gentleman* of the best Fashion, or some eminent *Scholar*, or some curious *Architect*, or other *Artist*, descended of honest Parents, and who is singular great Merit in the Opinion of the *Lodges*. And for the better, and easier, and more honourable Discharge of his Office, the *Grand-Master* has a Power to chuse his own DEPUTY GRAND-MASTER, who must be then, or must *have been formerly, the Master of a particular Lodge, and has the Privilege of acting whatever the GRAND-MASTER, his Principal, should act, unless the said Principal be present, or interpose his Authority by a Letter.*

These Rulers and Governors, *supreme* and *subordinate*, of the ancient *Lodge*, are to be obey'd in their respective Stations by all the Brethren, according to the *old Charges* and Regulations, with all Humility, Reverence, Love, and Alacrity.

V. *Of the Management of the CRAFT in working.*

All *Masons* shall work honestly on working Days, that they may live creditably on *holy Days*; and the time appointed by the Law of the Land, or confirm'd by Custom, shall be observ'd.

The most expert of *Fellow-Craftsmen* shall be chosen or appointed the *Master*, or Overseer of the *Lord's Work*; who is to be call'd MASTER by those that work under him. The *Craftsmen* are to avoid all ill Language, and to call each other by no disoblising Name, but *Brother* or *Fellow*; and to behave themselves courteously within and without the *Lodge*.

The *Master*, knowing himself to be able of Cunning, shall undertake the *Lord's Work* as reasonably as possible, and truly dispend his Goods as if they were his own; nor to give mor Wages to any Brother or *Apprentice* than he really may deserve.

Both the **Master** and the *Masons* receiving their Wages justly, shall be faithful to the *Lord*, and honestly finish their Work, whether *Task* or *Journey*; nor put the Work to *Task* that hath been accustom'd to *Journey*.

None shall discover Envy at the Prosperity of a Brother, nor supplant him, or put him out of his Work, if he be capable to finish the fame; for no Man can finish another's Work so much to the *Lord's* Profit, unless he be thoroughly acquainted with the Designs and Draughts of him that began it.

When a *Fellow-Craftsman* is chosen *Warden* of the Work under the *Master*, he shall be true both to *Master* and *Fellows*, shall carefully oversee the Work in the *Master's* Absence to the *Lord's* Profit; and his Brethren shall obey him.

All *Masons* employ'd, shall meekly receive their Wages without Murmuring or Mutiny, and not desert the *Master* till the Work is finish'd.

A younger Brother shall be instructed in working, to prevent spoiling the Materials for want of Judgment, and for encreasing and continuing of Brotherly Love.

All the Tools used in working shall be approved by the Grand Lodge.

No *Labourer* shall be employ'd in the proper Work of *Masonry*; nor shall **Free Masons** work with those that are *not free*, without an urgent Necessity; nor shall they teach *Labourers* and *unaccepted* Masons, as they should teach a *Brother* or *Fellow*.

VI. Of BEHAVIOUR, viz.

1. In the Lodge while constituted.

You are not to hold private Committees, or separate Conversation, without Leave from the *Master*, nor to talk of any thing impertinent or unseemly, nor interrupt the *Master* or *Wardens*, or any Brother speaking to the *Master*: Nor behave yourself ludicrously or jestingly while the *Lodge* is engaged in what is serious and solemn; nor use any unbecoming Language upon any Pretence whatsoever; but to pay due Reverence to your *Master*, *Wardens*, and *Fellows*, and put them to worship.

If any Complaint be brought, the Brother found guilty shall stand to the Award and Determination of the *Lodge*, who are the proper and competent Judges of all such Controversies, (unless you carry it by *Appeal* to the GRAND LODGE) and to whom they ought to be refer'd, unless a *Lord's* Work be hinder'd the mean while, in which Case a particular Reference may be made; but you must never go to Law about what concerneth *Masonry*, without an absolute Necessity apparent to the *Lodge*.

2. Behaviour after the LODGE is over and the Brethren not gone.

You may enjoy yourselves with innocent Mirth, treating one another according to Ability, but avoiding all Excess, or forcing any Brother to eat or drink beyond his Inclination, or hindering him from going when his Occasions call him, or doing or saying any thing offensive, or that may forbid an *easy and free* Conversation; for that would blast our Harmony, and defeat our laudable Purposes. Therefore no private Piques or Quarrels must be brought within the Door of the *Lodge*, far less any Quarrels about *Religion*, or *Nations*, or *State Policy*, we being only, as *Masons*, of the *Catholic Religion* above-mention'd; we are also of all *Nations*, *Tongues*, *Kindreds*, and *Languages*, and are resolv'd against **all Politicks**, as what never yet conduc'd to the Welfare of the *Lodge*, nor ever will. This *Charge* has been always strictly enjoin'd and observ'd; but especially ever since the *Reformation* in BRITAIN, or the Dissent and Secession of these Nations from the *Communion* of ROME.

3. Behaviour when Brethren meet without Strangers, but not in a Lodge Iorn'v.

You are to salute one another in a courteous manner, as you will be instructed, calling each other *Brother*, freely giving mutual Instruction as shall be thought expedient, without being overseen or overheard, and without encroaching upon each other, or derogating from that Respect which is due to any Brother, were he not a Mason: For though all *Masons* are as *Brethren* upon the same *Level*, yet *Masonry* takes no Honour from a Man that he had before; nay rather it adds to his Honour, especially if he has deserv'd well of the Brotherhood, who must give Honour to whom it is due, and avoid *ill Manners*.

4. Behaviour in Presence of STRANGERS not Masons.

You shall be cautious in your Words and Carriage, that the most penetrating Stranger shall not be able to discover or find out what is not proper to be intimated; and sometimes you shall divert a Discourse, and manage it prudently for the Honour of the *worshipful Fraternity*.

5. Behaviour at HOME, and in your Neighbourhood.

You are to act as becomes a moral and wise Man; particularly, not to let your Family, Friends, and Neighbours know the *Concerns* of the *Lodge*, &c. but wisely to consult your own Honour, and that of the *ancient Brotherhood*, for Reasons not to be mention'd here. You must also consult your Health, by not continuing together too late, or too long from home, after Lodge Hours are past; and by avoiding of Gluttony or Drunkenness, that your Families be not neglected or injured, nor you disabled from working.

6. Behaviour towards a strange Brother.

You are cautiously to examine him, in such a Method as Prudence shall direct you, that you may not be impos'd upon by an ignorant false *Pretender*, whom you are to reject with Contempt and Derision, and beware of giving him any Hints of Knowledge.

But if you discover him to be a true and genuine *Brother*, you are to respect him accordingly; and if he is in want, you must relieve him if you can, or else direct him how he may be reliev'd: You must employ him some Days, or else recommend him to be employ'd. But you are not

charged to do beyond your Ability, only to prefer a poor *Brother*, that is a *good Man* and *true*, before any other poor People in the same Circumstances.

FINALLY, All these **Charges** you are to observe, and also those that shall be communicated to you in *another way*; cultivating BROTHERLY-LOVE, the Foundation and Cape-stone, the *Cement* and *Glory* of this ancient Fraternity, avoiding all Wrangling and Quarrelling, all Slander and Backbiting, nor permitting others to slander any honest Brother, but desending his Character, and doing him all good Offices, as far as is consistent with your *Honour* and *Safety*, and no farther. And if any of them do you Injury, you must apply to your own or his *Lodge*; and from thence you may appeal to the GRAND LODGE at the *Quarterly Communication*, and from thence to *annual* GRAND LODGE, as has been the ancient laudable Conduct of our Fore-fathers in every Nation; never taking a *legal Course* but when the Case cannot be otherwise decided, and patiently listening to the honest and friendly Advice of *Master* and *Fellows*, when they would prevent your going to Law with *Strangers*, or would excite you to put a speedy Period to all *Law-Suits*, that so you may mind the *Affair* of MASONRY with the more Alacrity and Success; but with respect to *Brothers* or *Fellows* at Law, the *Master* and Brethren should kindly offer their Mediation, which ought to be thankfully submitted to by the contending Brethren; and if that Submission is impracticable, they must however carry on their *Process*, or *Law-Suit*, without Wrath and Rancor (not in the common way) saying or doing nothing which may hinder *Brotherly Love*, and good Offices to be renew'd and continu'd; that all may see the *benign Influence* of MASONRY, as all true *Masons* have done from the Beginning of the *World*, and will do to the end of *Time*.

Amen so mote it be.