

# THE APPLICANT



Prepared for the Lodges by  
THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND

## **FOREWORD**

This pamphlet comes into your hands because you have expressed an interest in Freemasonry. You may, indeed, have already been elected a member of a Lodge and be awaiting “initiation” into our ancient craft.

Read this pamphlet carefully so that should you decide to become a Freemason you may enter the Craft intelligently, fully aware of the duties you owe to God, to your neighbour and to yourself and to your family.

Before becoming a fully-fledged Freemason you will pass through certain ceremonies – ceremonies which have existed for hundreds of years and through which every Freemason throughout the world has passed. After each of these ceremonies you will be given another pamphlet to help you to a full understanding of those ceremonies. This pamphlet and those which you will receive call for and deserve your full attention.

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What is Freemasonry?

There have been a great number of definitions of Freemasonry. Perhaps the best, and certainly the simplest, is "Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols". The idea of teaching by allegories and symbols is not new. All great teachers have, more or less, followed this method.

The system of morality to which we have referred as Freemasonry is that which every Freemason is bound to profess and practise. If it includes principles with which he was familiar before his entrance into Freemasonry, he will nevertheless find these presented in new ways and in forms different from those with which he was previously familiar. If he finds in Masonic teachings nothing startlingly new, he must remember that, in some respects at least, there is "nothing new under the sun" and that the essence of morality is to be found in the utter simplicity (though not the ease) of its requirements.

The elementary principles of Freemasonry are exemplified in the three degrees worked in every regular masonic Lodge throughout the world. Nearly every community of any size in the British Isles has one or more Masonic Lodges in it. The same is true in many other parts of the world, notably in the English-speaking countries.

Each Lodge has its own Office-bearers, headed by a Master; its own Committees and, in some cases, its own property. On the other hand, each Lodge is subject to the authority of the Grand Lodge of the Country or State under which it holds its Charter. The three British Grand Lodges have also many Lodges in countries overseas

- particularly in countries of the Commonwealth, and many of the Commonwealth countries have Grand Lodges of their own. In becoming a member of a Lodge under the Scottish Constitution you become subject not only to the general customs and usages of the Craft, but also to the Laws and Regulations of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, as well as to the Bye-Laws of the particular Lodge which you join. However, Freemasonry will never require of you anything which might conflict with your duty to The Supreme Being, to your Country, to your neighbour or to your family.

In your progress through Freemasonry, which may well take many weeks or even months you will be "initiated" as an Entered Apprentice; "passed" as a Fellow Craft and "raised" as a Master Mason. There is a ritualistic ceremony of a most serious character appropriate to each stage in your progress. You will be asked, too, to give a most solemn and binding promise never to disclose the nature of these ceremonies under any circumstances. Bearing in mind what has been said in the previous paragraph you will not be asked to promise anything which will conflict with your religious, civil or other duties. Your first duty is to approach each ceremony calmly and solemnly, with mind and spirit attentive to the lessons which will be imparted.

### **WHAT FREEMASONRY IS NOT**

So that you may not have a mistaken idea of what Freemasonry is, it may be well to point out some of the things which Freemasonry is NOT, and which it has never claimed to be.

1. Freemasonry is NOT a religion nor a substitute for religion. It has a philosophy of its own which it believes

to be compatible with the teachings of the Church and other similar religious institutions. The teachings of Freemasonry transcend all denominational and sectarian divisions. In the field of human conduct it is complementary to religion but religious topics may not be discussed in any Lodge.

2. Contrary to the opinion held by many, Freemasonry is not a charitable institution, as such. It is true that one of the fundamental principles of Freemasonry is the practice of relief, and a Freemason will necessarily minister to the "widows and fatherless in their affliction". But these and other similar modes of conduct must proceed from that "purity of life and conduct" which is one of the great objectives of all Masonic teachings.

3. Freemasonry does not insure its members against the vicissitudes of old age; provides no sick benefits as such; issues no insurance policies on the lives of its members and pays no death benefits of any kind. Not that Freemasonry disbelieves in these and other means by which modern civilisation undertakes to reduce suffering and privation - quite the contrary. But it confines the matter of individual relief to those cases where such relief becomes necessary, in spite of all the efforts of a Brother or his family to maintain their economic independence. Your part in this work is far more likely to be that of a contributor than a beneficiary, except in the larger sense, in which every man benefits from the fact that "it is more blessed to give than to receive".

4. Freemasonry does not lend itself to the promoting of selfish or mercenary interests. Any underlying purpose of such a nature in your mind will eventually become apparent to your Brethren and you will inevitably suffer

the loss of their respect. A Freemason may support any good cause that he will, but he may not persuade or try to persuade his Lodge to lend their support to his chosen charitable work.

5. Freemasonry is not connected in any way with a political creed. A Freemason's political views are his own and a Lodge may well have members belonging to many different political parties. For that reason, no discussion of political matters is permitted in a Lodge. A Brother may not seek to persuade his Brethren in Lodge to adopt this or that view in matters of government - local, national or international.

### **WHO MAY BECOME A FREEMASON?**

Not every man can fulfil the requirements that Freemasonry asks of her aspirants. The primary requirement is, of course, moral character. One whose reputation in the Community is in any way questionable cannot expect to become a Freemason. But there are other requirements which the petitioner must have, such as: -

He must be a believer in The Supreme Being.

He must be a loyal citizen, willing to discharge his duties to God, to his neighbour and to himself.

He must be at least twenty-one years of age (unless his father is or was a Freemason or, if an adoption order is in force, an adopted son of a Master Mason then the age of admission may be reduced, at the discretion of the Lodge, to eighteen).

He must be in such financial circumstances that he can maintain himself as a Member of his Lodge, meeting the monetary obligations imposed by being a member, without detriment to his family or himself.

You, as a potential Freemason, and like Masons in all

ages before you, must come of your own accord to knock at the door of the Craft. Two Brethren must recommend you; indeed they must do more - they will have to vouch for your character and the sincerity of your motives. In a very real sense they are your Masonic sponsors. You, for your part, have the responsibility of seeing that they and others who have accepted their assurances will not be disappointed.

### **WHAT FREEMASONRY EXPECTS OF YOU**

The privileges of Freemasonry are no greater than the responsibilities of its members. Your obligations will not conflict with those you have already assumed by virtue of your membership in modern society. On the contrary, Freemasonry reiterates, reinforces and re-emphasises them.

Thus, in asking Freemasonry to share with you its past, its present and its future and all the privileges of its Brotherhood, you must bear in mind the fact that the relationship is a reciprocal one and that certain things are expected of you. Remember always: -

The calling of a Freemason is a high one and you should never suffer yourself to depart from it.

Loyalty to home, to country and to the Craft is expected of you at all times.

Patriotism is a bounden duty and you must not countenance disloyalty or rebellion.

That Freemasonry recognises that all men, whether Masons or not, are Brothers by birth, endowed with the same nature, and sharing the same hopes.

That Freemasonry champions the cause of the widow, the fatherless, the weak, and the distressed.

That the time-honoured virtues cherished by our

forefathers are still to be observed among Freemasons and that humility, patience, charity and gentleness are among the hallmarks of purity and integrity of character.

### **THE LODGE**

The Lodge to which you have applied for admittance is one of the working units which form the Grand Lodge of Scotland and also of the Craft as a world-wide institution.

It dispenses charity, encourages and contributes, through its members, to the moral and spiritual uplift of the community in which it is located. Thus your Lodge deserves your loyal co-operation in all its activities. There is always work for the new member and his punctual and regular attendance at its meetings is one of his first duties. Through these means, as well as through a study of Masonic literature, conversing with well-informed Brethren, and otherwise, the young Mason obtains that store of information which enables him to become an efficient and useful member.

While each Lodge is, as has already been said, an integral part of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, it is important to remember that it is nevertheless a separate entity and has its own Office-bearers and Bye-Laws. The presiding Officer, the Master, when speaking directly to him is addressed as the Right Worshipful Master. He is assisted by Wardens, Deacons and Stewards. There is also a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Chaplain and other Office-bearers.

In your Masonic career you should take advantage of opportunities of rendering such service as you can, though never in a forward, aggressive or unseemly manner. Visit other Lodges whenever possible, always



being ready and prepared to prove your identity as a Freemason in whatever degree you may have reached. In these ways not only will you enable Freemasonry to mean much to you but you will broaden your Masonic experience and fit yourself to make a real contribution to the Craft, of which you should form a vital part.

## **THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND**

The Grand Lodge of Scotland was formed in the year 1736 by some thirty-three Lodges then working in Scotland. Some of these thirty-three Lodges were old at that time - at least three of them were at work in 1598. There are now nearly one thousand Lodges on the Roll of the Grand Lodge of Scotland and nearly as many which used to be under the Grand Lodge of Scotland now form part of other Grand Lodges all over the world.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland is composed of the Grand Master Mason, its Office-bearers and the Master and Wardens of every Lodge under its authority. It is the Supreme Masonic Authority, Legislative, Executive and Judicial within Scotland and has exclusive jurisdiction over the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft (including the Mark) and Master Mason.

The presiding Officer in our Grand Lodge is the Grand Master Mason. He is assisted by Grand Wardens and other Grand Office-bearers. Like every Lodge, Grand Lodge has its Committees and Benevolent Funds. The day-to-day administration of Grand Lodge is carried out by the Grand Secretary and his staff. The headquarters of Grand Lodge are in Edinburgh, and Three Meetings (called Regular Communications) are held every year. While only members of Grand Lodge can speak or vote at a meeting, visitors are always welcome and once you

have been admitted to the degree of Master Mason you will be free to attend Grand Lodge as a Visitor.

### **PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT GRAND LODGES**

Grand Lodge delegates certain powers to Provincial and District Grand Lodges. Fuller details will be found in the Grand Lodge Year Book which you will receive on becoming a Master Mason.

### **CONCLUSION**

As you progress in your Lodge you will find that there are many more things for you to learn; these will all be explained to you at the proper time. In addition, there will be much knowledge for you to acquire through your own efforts. You will have abundant opportunity to talk with well-informed Brethren, to read masonic books and publications and to meditate upon the truths derived from all these sources. In the meantime, keep well in mind the contents of this pamphlet and the solemn obligations and covenants into which you will engage yourself.

