

The second of those three ancient documents is a set of questions and answers, explaining the object and design of the society, and corresponding with its general laws.

These questions, as the eminent philosopher, John Locke, supposed, were given by Henry VI., and answered by some one of the brotherhood of Masons. This ancient document was first published in the "Gentleman's Magazine," 1753, page 417, *et. seq.*: and since 1756 in all editions of the new English Book of Constitution. They are also to be found in Preston's Illustrations of Freemasonry, in Hutchinson's Spirit of Freemasonry, in Sebass' Magazine of Freemasonry, and in various other Masonic works.

The third of those documents is the old act of admitting Masons, as it is still exercised as the oldest ritual by all the Masons of the ancient English system. In its commencement, this document is as old as the York constitution; it contains customs of the Roman building corporations, and of the oldest Christian ascetics and monks, and expresses the fundamental doctrines and constitutions of the fraternity in harmony with the ancient duties.

The liturgy contained in this document, at the same time, gives a model by which the ritual of each Grand Lodge, in respect to its historical genuineness and its pure spirit of Masonry as received by tradition, may be judged.

From the second period, being after the institution of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717, Freemasonry assumed a bolder and a more independent aspect; it rapidly not only gained its ancient dominion, but it also spread itself over the continent of Europe and the European colonies.

It exercised a new and most powerful influence on the whole moral and intellectual life of Europe. It first gave the world the true import of the words, *Fraternity, Liberty, Equality*.

In 1729 it was introduced into the East Indies. In 1730 the Grand Lodge of Ireland was instituted. Between 1730 and 1754 Lodges were erected in different parts of America, Germany, Holland, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, at the Cape, and in Geneva. Charity Schools, for the education of the children of Freemasons whose poverty debarred them from this advantage, were erected by the Lodges in Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, and subsequently also in Great Britain and in America.

In Scotland, the foundation stone of the new Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh was laid in 1738.

PERSECUTION OF FREEMASONRY.

The Masonic Society aiming to establish political and social equality and freedom, it constantly presented to the initiated the picture of a new social Order nowhere found on earth,—the ideal of a society; a society opposed to, and at the same time far more perfect than any existing civil organization.

It consequently became odious to tyrants; it was anathematized at Rome by Clement VII, pursued in Spain by inquisition, persecuted at Naples, and the members of the fraternity were declared worthy of eternal punishment by the Lorbbonne in France. And yet, thanks to the skilful mechanism of the institution, Freemasonry found protectors among princes and nobles, many of whom disdained not to take the trowel, and to gird themselves with the apron.

The public persecutions of the Freemasons had their rise in Holland, in the year 1735. The State General was alarmed at the rapid increase of Freemasonry, and as they could not believe that architecture and brotherly love were their only object, they resolved to discountenance their proceedings; in consequence of which an edict was issued by Government, stating that though they had discovered nothing in the practices of the fraternity either injurious to the interest of the people or contrary to the character of good citizens, yet, in order to prevent any bad consequences which might ensue from such associations, they deemed it prudent to abolish the assemblies of Freemasons. A number of members of the Lodges were arrested and brought to the Courts of Justice. Before these tribunals they boldly defended themselves; they declared upon their oaths that they were loyal subjects, faithful to their religion and zealous for the interest of their country; that Freemasonry was an institute venerable in itself and useful to society, and though they could not reveal the secrets and ceremonies of their Order, they would assure them that they were neither contrary to the laws of God, nor to those of man, and that they would willingly admit into their society any individual in whom the magistrates could confide, and from whom they might receive such information as would satisfy a reasonable mind. In consequence of this declaration, the brethren were dismissed, and the Town Secretary was requested to become a member of the fraternity. After initiation, he returned to the Court of Justice, and gave such a favorable account of the principles and practice of the society that all the magistrates became brethren of the Order, and zealous patrons of Freemasonry.

After Freemasonry had thus honorably triumphed over the persecutors in Holland, she had to contend in France with prejudices equally inveterate, though less impregnable. Their assemblies were abolished in 1737, but the prohibition was soon forgotten, and the fraternity recovered their former prosperity and splendor.

In Germany, too, the tranquility of the Order was disturbed by the malice of some ignorant women, who prevailed upon Maria Theresia, the Empress Queen, to issue a similar edict against the fraternity in Vienna; but fortunately, Joseph II, Emperor, and the son of Maria Theresia, who, being himself a Mason, intervened and frustrated that plan.

In Italy, in 1738, a formidable bull was thundered from the conclave, not only against Freemasons themselves, but against all those who promoted or favored their cause; notwithstanding this bull, no particular charge is brought against a single individual of the Order. This bull was followed by an edict dated 14th January, 1739, containing sentiments equally bigoted, and enactments equally severe. In consequence of these enactments, the Catholic clergy of Holland attempted, in the year 1740, to enforce obedience to the commands of their superiors. Masons were expelled forever from the communion tables, till finally the States General interfered, and prohibited the clergy from asking questions of persons applying for the certificates to receive the holy sacrament other than such questions as were connected with the religious character of the individual.

The Council of Berne in Switzerland, in 1745, issued an edict against the Masonic fraternity, which edict