



Grand Lodge Bulletin

M.W. Bro. W. J. COLLETT, Editor

Christmas 1975

Christmas — that time of year when everywhere is heard the message: Peace on earth, good will towards men. Such perfection, if ever attained, would change the face of the earth. Men have preached the Golden Rule for centuries: DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU. We all acknowledge that we should practice this idea but we so seldom do. If only for a few weeks the entire world would seriously and earnestly try to follow this age old command we could do away with all war and strife. With the money now spent on armaments, diverted to peaceful pursuits, we could eliminate hunger from the entire world, not only in the Third World but in the First World. We could have sufficient food and clothing, and good housing. What a wonderful Christmas present that would be.

Christmas is a time of feast and fellowship. It ought to be a season of joy — a time for the complete satisfaction of our deepest needs, not an occasion of mere physical indulgence. Let our homes be centres of delight, our tables furnished well, but also let us remember those not so fortunate.

What does food do for us? What is its function? The first and simplest answer is that it satisfies our hunger. Hunger is the most intense of our instincts and food appeases it. Food brings enjoyment. Our appetites and pleasure in their gratification. Not only does food appease our hunger, it strengthens, supports and warms the body, it expands and develops the physical man.

The Golden Rule gives us spiritual strength, warms our personalities, enlarges our characters and aids us in the full discharge of all our obligations. At this Christmas time there will be eating and drinking, but our food will, or should, taste like ashes if, before we partake of our Christmas fare, we do not observe the Golden Rule, and set aside, and contribute, a portion of our wealth to feed the hungry in those parts of the world suffering from war or drought.

Perhaps the best Christmas is that where charitable hearts prepare a feast for those who otherwise would spend a cheerless day — in our charitable institutions, the lonely, the shut-ins; and further afield — Bangladesh and Africa. It would be a poor Christmas if we remembered only those we love and those who love us. The true Christmas is kept when we remember the forlorn and helpless and the stranger. If we really believe in the Golden Rule we must all care for the outcast and lonely. Only then can we sit down at our own family table sharing with our loved ones a festive board which represents the family feast we will one day share with the G.A.T.U.

BRO. REV. F. A. NOBLE (138)
The V. W. Grand Chaplain

THE ANCIENT CHARGES

II Of the Civil Magistrate,
Supreme and Subordinate

Constitution Page 112

by

R. W. Bro. Mr. Justice J. H. Laycraft (83)

This year, as it has for Centuries, Masonry will require of each of its new Worshipful Masters, his assent to a summary of the Ancient Charges in the words:

"You are to be a peaceful subject and cheerfully to conform to the laws of the country in which you reside."

From earliest times, only the Masons duty to God, and his obligation to obey the Moral Law has been stated in priority to his duty of good citizenship - for that is the obligation contained in the second charge. It enjoins no less than the highest ideal of citizenship with all the duties which that entails.

It is interesting to see in the early Masonic manuscripts, a statement of civic duty stated in the terms of the Society in which the author worked. In one of the variations of the Lansdowne Manuscript thought to date from 1583, the Second Charge is stated:

"You should be true liege men to the King of England without treason or falsehood and that you know no treason unless you amend it or warn the king or his counsel."

Over the centuries from that time to the modern day, the second Ancient Charge has evolved to the form now found in our Constitution. In the study of the present charge and of its earlier versions, we must, of course, be careful to see each version of the charge through the eyes of the Masons living at the time it was drafted. It is a common mistake of historical research to apply to the language of an earlier day, the meaning which a modern author would intend. At the time of the Lansdowne Manuscript, for example, "treason" had a much different meaning than in our century. In each age, the Second Ancient Charge has enjoined members of the Craft to be good citizens, but as we would expect, the prescribed duty has not, itself, remained constant. Each generation has perceived its duties differently than did its predecessors.

The Ancient Charges compiled in England by Dr. James Anderson in 1722, form the basis of the second charge and provide virtually all the language in it. These charges governed Lodges in the Thirteen American Colonies throughout the American Revolution when the existing forms of government were violently destroyed. Yet many of the founders of the new republic, including General George Washington, were Masons. Masonic writers assert that the "Boston Tea Party" has its origin in the Lodge of Free Masons. As their new nation was born in the turmoil of war, these Masons thought of themselves as patriots and did not consider themselves to be in breach of fundamental Masonic law. On the contrary, under the influence of such political philosophers as

Thomas Paine and William Paley they believed that good citizenship prescribed a positive duty to rid themselves of an alien and tyrannical government which no longer had the right to speak for them. When the Rule of Law is itself overthrown, said these philosophers, then and only then, there is a positive duty to re-establish it even by resort to violence.

In a modern democratic society in which the Rule of Law is both a tradition and a cornerstone of the legal system, the duty of peaceful observance of the law is fundamental. When the machinery of government enables peaceful change, there can be no justification for resort to any other means.

The second Ancient Charge expresses this duty as the fundamental obligation of good citizenship. The Mason's duty is measured by "the interest of the community". He is bound to "conform to every lawful authority" and to be dutiful to those whom the community appoints to enforce its rules. Where, however, the Mason of 1583 was required to report "treason" the modern citizen must become aware that on every occasion on which he consciously or carelessly breaks the law, he has played some part, however small, in the destruction of the community in which he lives.

A writer in a recent legal journal observed that breach of some tax laws is so widespread that the wrong doer is no longer held in contempt by most of his fellow citizens. If that is so, it is a symptom of a grave, and even fatal, illness in our society. Bad laws can be abolished, poor laws can be improved but all laws must be obeyed while they exist.

To say that Craftsmen are peaceable and loyal, that they promote peace and cultivate harmony must mean in the last quarter of the twentieth century that they obey the laws enacted by those whom they have elected. No one may claim the protections and services provided by the community in which he lives and simultaneously seek to destroy the foundation on which that community rests. In the noble language of our Craft, there is no right without a parallel duty and no liberty without the supremacy of the law.

It is also a requirement of the Second Ancient Charge that Masons be active and vigilant citizens. Good citizenship is more than servile acquaintance to rules or passive obedience to authority; it means active participation in the affairs of the community. A Mason is commanded in this charge "to uphold on every occasion the interest of the community and zealously promote the prosperity of his own country." In the sense used, "prosperity" has a far wider meaning than the mere economic welfare of the nation. The word embraces, as well, the health, moral and civic, of all its institutions and of all its people.

The Second Ancient Charge contains an important aspect of Masonry. In no small part the universal appeal of the Craft through the centuries has been due to its injunction to its lodges and their members to be good citizens. Masons are leaders; they promote the institutions of the Society in which they live and so "promote peace, cultivate harmony and live in concord and brotherly love.

THE EDITOR'S MAILBAG

We have been most gratified with comments, complimentary and critical, that have been received during the past month. Most of the remarks have been on the reproduction of a section of the Regius Manuscript on the first page of the October Issue and the article on page two. One brother writing on behalf of his Lodge noted that it was entirely unnecessary, and of very little interest and above the heads of most Masons. Another brother writes that it interested him so much that he translated it into modern English and discovered that it was a part of the first Ancient Charge on God and Religion.

A question has been raised as to whether this was actually the Regius Manuscript or the Cooke Manuscript which was written in the early Fifteenth Century. The correspondent suggests that the Regius Manuscript was likely written in Latin and asserts that the name Regius indicates this to be the case. Both the Regius Manuscript and the Cooke Manuscript are now in the British Museum.

It is true that the Cooke Manuscript was written about 1415 but the Regius Manuscript was much earlier having been written about 1390. Both Manuscripts were written in English and in the English of that day. There are some slight variations in the English of the 14th Century and the 15th Century.

The Regius Manuscript is also known as the Halliwell Manuscript for it was first published by J. O. Halliwell (not a mason) in 1840 when he issued a book called the "Early History of Freemasonry". The language of the Regius Manuscript is very much similar to the English used in the Wycliffe Translation of the Holy Bible although it is nearly a century older than the Wycliffe translation.

As our brother points out the name is confusing and does indicate some Latin influence. However it is called "Regius", which means regal or royal, because it once formed a part of the Royal Library which was founded by King Henry VII of England. It was later donated to the British Museum by King George II.

Some brethren have asked where they might find out more about the Regius Manuscript and some of the other ancient writings. Almost any good History of Freemasonry will give this information. Mackay's History and Gould's History are good references. The Grand Lodge Library has a little book called "The Regius Manuscript" and it may be borrowed from the Library by writing the Grand Secretary. In fact some of the brethren who have attended the Masonic Spring Workshop may have a copy since a number of them have been sold at the Workshop.

Actually the Regius Manuscript is very brief. It is in rhymed verses and consists of 794 lines. We are certain that the brethren from High Prairie who took the trouble to translate the extract into modern English had a lot of fun and we recommend the exercise very highly.

We received also a letter from M.W. Bro. Eugene V. Frankel, editor of the Craftsman, a publication of the Grand Lodge of Mexico, who notes that the next

issue of the Craftsman will have an article on the Regius Manuscript. The Craftsman can be found in the Grand Lodge Library. We thank our brother for his kind comments about the Bulletin.



QUARRY LODGE NO. 70

A Fifty Year Jewel was presented to R.W. Bro. J. R. W. Cann, the Secretary of Quarry Lodge No. 70 at the Lodge's meeting in September. The presentation was made by V.W. Bro. E. T. Cooke. The D.D.G.M.W. Bro. George Strain was present. Bro. Cann had been Secretary of Quarry Lodge for 42 years. He sent along a bookmark as a memento of the occasion for which we thank him.

THE REID FAMILY

An interesting and historic event took place in Temple Lodge No. 167 on September 12th, 1975 when Robert D. Reid, 21 years of age was initiated into Masonry. His father, Worshipful Master of Temple Lodge, W. Bro. Robert J. Reid, conferred the Entered Apprentice Degree upon him, while his grandfather, W. Bro. John Reid, also a member of Temple Lodge, watched proudly from the side lines.

Three generations of one family — all members of Temple Lodge.



Bro. Robert David Reid (centre) with his father, Wor. Bro. Robert John (left) and his grandfather, Wor. Bro. John Reid (right).

TEMPLE LODGE NO. 167

On September 12th, 1975 the Brethren of Temple Lodge No. 167 presented an Honorary Life Membership Certificate and dues card to a long and faithful member of the Craft.

Bro. William M. Smith, 85 years old, was initiated into Masonry in Strathcona Lodge No. 77 in 1916 — 59 years ago. Later, when his railroad employment took him to Edson, Alberta, he took his demit from his Mother Lodge and affiliated with Edson Lodge No. 68 in 1927. Here he served the Craft for many years, rising to the office of Senior Warden before his work, further up the Coal Branch Line forced him to drop out as an active officer in the lodge, although he did continue his attendance and interest when possible. In 1958, on returning to Edmonton to live, he joined Temple Lodge and has remained a keen member ever since.

By such sincere and dedicated brethren does Masonry continue to grow, spreading wider and wider over the Earth. We unite in saluting Brother Bill Smith.



W. Bro. W. L. Gutierrez (right) presenting Bro. William M. Smith (left) with his Honorary Life Membership Certificate, in Temple Lodge No. 167.

EXEMPLAR LODGE NO. 175 AN EXAMPLE

Bro. Niels Haavaldsen, Senior Steward of Exemplar Lodge No. 175 always pays his dues "In Advance" on the first regular meeting in September. However this year he went one better and paid two years in advance and is now a paid up member for 1977. A Secretary needs more like him.

THE BANFF CONFERENCE

The Annual Interprovincial Conference of the Officers of the Four Western Jurisdictions was held in the Rimrock Hotel in Banff in September. There were eight Grand Masters in attendance, four from Western Canada and four from the United States. The first picture shows the Grand Masters of Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. The second picture shows the Grand Masters of Montana, North Dakota, Colorado and Minnesota. The value of the Conference is demonstrated by the attendance of Grand Officers from such a wide international area.



The Grand Master, N.W. Bro. W. A. Milligan and the Junior Grand Warden, R.W. Bro. R. L. Costigan visited the home of Bro. John Kerr in Calgary recently to present him with his Fifty Year Jewel. Bro. Kerr was delighted to be so honored and was permitted by the Grand Master to put on his Master Mason's Apron and to be photographed with the Grand Master. Below is pictured the result of a memorable event.

