



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

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

*Happy 1976*

New Year's Day is a day of retrospect, a day of looking backward to learn from the past. We accept our heritage from the past with gratitude and thanksgiving; we acknowledge our mistakes; we confess our sins. It is also a day of new beginnings; we look forward to the future. Ahead of us is a New Year, an uncharted sea, an undiscovered country; the golden gate of opportunity opens before us. In it, growth and guidance are linked together; we grow in the New Year, but we need the guidance of God, that the new opportunities and responsibilities may be used for His glory and service.

The retrospect of a ruined humanity, and the anticipation of a redeemed humanity.

Expect the best! It lies not in the past.  
God ever keeps the good wine till the last;  
Beyond are nobler work and sweeter rest.  
Expect the best!

Dear Master, as the old year dieth soon, take Thou my harp,  
And prove if any string be out of tune, or flat or sharp.  
Correct Thou, Lord, for me what ringeth sharp to Thee,  
That heart and life may sing, the New Year long,  
Thy perfect song.

**THE FOURTH CHARGE . . .  
OF MASTERS, WARDENS, FELLOWS  
AND APPRENTICES**

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(Book of Constitution Page 113)**

I'm amazed, and now intrigued, at the amount of knowledge, documents and memories left to us by our ancient brethren of approximately 600 years ago. Just a little reading on my part has given me a great new awareness of life and what our fraternity is all about. Before I go further, I must make it very clear — a scholar I am not, well-read Masonically I am not, but due to this article you can be sure that I will improve in the near future and hopefully from these articles, you will too.

The fourth of the Ancient Charges, as all of the Ancient Charges, was said to be formulated around 1370. It was not, however, until 1723, soon after the revival of the Government of Speculative Masons, that these Charges were extracted from the ancient records and adopted by Grand Lodge. These Charges are the backbone of our fraternity and reason for its longevity.

In reading and digesting this Charge entitled "Of Masters, Wardens, Fellows and Apprentices" you will find meat and much interpretation involved. It must be made clear, however, these Charges were extracted from ancient writings that were written for operative Masonry; therefore the application may be somewhat different than first appears, but it's surprising how little change there is.

The Charge begins with "All preferment among Masons is grounded upon real worth and personal merit only". It was thus then, and is today. It means **YOU.**, not what you have nor your station in society, but you, on your own merit.

It goes on to say, in part, that moving up in a Lodge is only accomplished by learning and progressing through the various stations; there is no other way. You cannot start at the top, as happens in so many of our organizations today.

A further statement says "no master should take an apprentice unless he has sufficient employment for himself". In ancient time, for operative Masons, the meaning of this is obvious but today it would mean that if a Lodge became so big in membership that sufficient work is not available to its members that candidates should not be accepted and thus the reason for keeping membership of a Lodge to a certain level and the reason for several Lodges in some areas.

The next quote is controversial. A candidate must be a "perfect youth, having no maim or defect in body" which would exclude many a good and capable man, but let's not stop there "that may render him incapable of learning the art, etc". Our ancient craft required a perfect youth because of the heavy labor required of them in that day, but today does a missing finger, for example, make a candidate incapable of learning the mystic art of speculative Masonry. In

actual fact, this portion of the Charge was more or less removed when the Charges were re-written for speculative Masonry but somehow when the American Grand Lodge Constitution was re-written about 1740 it was apparently re-introduced without authority. It remains today in many constitutions, left to interpretation. It is my thought and I think that of those who originally extracted these Charges from the ancient writings, if a man is capable of performing the requirements of the three degrees he should and would be eligible for acceptance into the craft and still be in accordance with this section of the Charge.

My next point leaves me in bewilderment so I throw it to the readership for their thought. It says "after going through the ranks and serving time required, a brother may then come to the honor of being Warden, then Master and on to Grand Lodge, if he descends of honest parents". Does this mean one can belong to a Lodge but if he moves to an office he then must be born of honest parents? I ask this question because, as I said, I am in bewilderment.

Although I have gotten much from writing this article I could get more, if I could receive comments on my question.

The latter part of the Charge requires that a Grand Master must have all requirements of a Master as well as being nobly born or a gentleman of the best fashion or an ancient scholar, etc. Although we don't have nobility here, to go to this high office, one of all of the aforementioned appointments are necessary, I doubt one could make it there without. I wondered about this when I first read it, but if one looks at those who have, and those about to achieve this high office, it becomes obvious these requirements are and must be met. This section further states that a Grand Master must possess singularly great merit in the opinion of the Lodges. Meaning he must possess all requirements mentioned plus be held in high esteem by all Lodges. Can you imagine the work, the visiting, the time required of these gentlemen to become known to all Lodges, never mind being held in high esteem. It makes a person wonder how these fellows find time to visit so many so often when you find so many members too busy to even attend their own Lodge regularly.

The Charge ends by stating that these rules are to be obeyed with all humility, reverence, love and alacrity. The meaning is obvious save that of the last word, alacrity, which means readiness, liveliness of spirit or manner. I suggest this may be the problem with many of our Lodges and members today.

Gentlemen, these Ancient Charges have seen our fraternity through 600 years of smooth sailing and rough seas and even though we may be down a little at this time, the fraternity will endure and again flourish because of the excellent rules and useful maxims set down, such as these Ancient Charges.

I highly recommend to all Masons, not only new and uninformed brothers, to take a look at the history available to us in our Lodge libraries. I'm sure you will be just as rewarded as I have been.

## IS MASONRY RELEVANT IN A MODERN WORLD?

R.W. Bro. R. W. Collier

Address given at District No. 9 Meeting November 12th, 1975.

I ask you, do we really need Masonry today?

We live in a society that has an abundance of entertainment, more than we really have time for. Communication and transportation are such that we are thrown into very close contact with our fellow man every day of our lives.

So perhaps Masonry and brotherhood are not really as necessary as they once were.

If you use the automobile exclusively for transportation in your town, then it is certainly not necessary to have hitching posts in front of the stores and business places.

Has Masonry reached the level of the hitching post? If we no longer need it why bother with it?

We have sophisticated bars with expensive carpeting and furnishings with nightly entertainment. We have blue movies, topless dancers to titillate our fancies. We have drugs that can put us in an artificial utopia so we can do our own thing. We have boats, racing cars, snowmobiles, aeroplanes, hang gliders, you name, it, we have it, and if we don't have it there is plenty of money around, and many eager firms who are more than willing to extend to us the credit to buy that which we think we can't live without.

If you don't as yet have a burning desire for some piece of material ecstasy, then there are hundreds of advertising firms spending millions of dollars to create within you a supposed need or want, and to impress upon you that possessions are a symbol of your success as a human being.

To put happiness in the heart of a man his union has to come up with a shorter work week, a 71% increase in wages, create an extra statutory holiday, plus some fringe benefits not named. To put happiness in the hearts of business men sales must go up and profits must sky rocket, and so on, and so on. Am I being ridiculous, and not painting a fair picture, or is the situation ridiculous.

I don't pretend to know much about history but my understanding is that the Roman Empire was built by vigorous pioneer people whose muscle and guts helped them to become rich. But wealth did to them what wealth has done to a score of nations — It brought the people to the point where there was nothing more important than buying luxuries.

The Roman Empire had big cities, rural depopulation and unemployment, and too much soft living. The decline of the Roman Empire was more spectacular than its rise and this is a lesson we can't afford to ignore.

Do you know that less than one quarter of the population of this planet controls and consumes three quarters of the available world's resources? It's not much wonder that we have many Masons telling us

we must modernize our Masonry if we are to survive, and wouldn't we really have a field day making Masonry compatible with our affluent times.

There is so much possibility, we could abolish the free will and accord, we could let everyone in. We could advertise. You know as well as I do we could fill these lodge halls to overflowing if we were to use the expertise that the business world uses in promotion, plus we could make all kinds of money. Is that positive and progressive thinking? Is this what you would want?

Surely you wouldn't want the formidable task of changing the people to suit Masonry, or would you? I for one believe, and have always believed, that Masonry does not need to be changed. That great book adorning the altar in the centre of every lodge hall does not need to be changed. To me the morals and precepts and rules set down in that book are just as valid today as they were from the beginning of time and probably more needed now than during any other time.

Probably never in the history of this planet has a people lived in the midst of such wealth, and probably never has there been a people as unhappy, bored and unsettled as we have here today on this North American continent.

We live in an amazing age where we have the wealth and expertise to build almost anything that we need. Still it appears that we as a society do not have the expertise of making people glow from within showing a vibrant happiness, and true and sincere love and concern for his fellow man.

I'm convinced that Masonry has the answers, but they are based on simple truths that we are all aware of and choose to ignore at best.

I have a little calculator in my pocket. I'm not sure how many of you have used one, but it's an amazing contrivance that works accurately and rapidly to compute answers. If I were to attempt to explain to you how it functions I would have your immediate attention. If I were to go into the theory of transistors and light emitting diodes you would take up the challenge that it presents to your mind and in a very short time be aware of how it works. The apparent complexity of its design immediately challenges our minds and we will not rest until we know how it works.

Isn't it a pity that the simple truths of Masonry do not present the same challenge and intrigue. Masonry and its results are sometimes nebulous and hard to measure.

A phrase that I have often heard in Masonry, and am sure that you have heard many times, and one that I particularly like is — That Masonry takes a good man by the hand and makes him better. But there is more to it than that, the man must have a desire to learn the landmarks, and live dilligently by Masonic standards.

If the desire is there Masonry is a very real force and really does work. You and I both know of men

whose stature and conduct, and their concern for their fellow man is a direct influence of their affiliation with the Masonic fraternity.

We have seen it work wonders in men. We know of communities where Masonry is strong, where the lodge plays an important part in the lives of its members. We see the impact of the lodge in that community, it permeates the atmosphere and actions of the whole community.

I submit we don't need to modernize, we don't need anything artificial in our lodge, we don't need large masses or numbers of people. We need only men who come of their own free will and accord with a desire to serve Masonry, which places our organization head and shoulders above all others, and gives it inherent strength.

Freemasonry erects its temples within the hearts of men. The Masonic institution, which is sometimes looked upon with scorn because it does not operate in the conventional manner, is prepared to bear witness to the fact that the conventional way of our age leaves much to be desired and tells us quite firmly and implicitly that the way to change human systems is to change human lives.

We demand security today. Unions give us an artificial form of security. If I belong to a union I get paid a certain rate because I belong not because of the amount of work I do.

When the Great Architect calls us from our earthly role we will be asked to establish our worth, that we might be paid our just dues, and having belonged to a Masonic Lodge I do not believe will count for much unless we have given our very best to live and serve Masonry.

Masonry does work but only if you give it your very best. Then and only then will it do great things for you and you will do great things for Masonry. This will restore the respect, the interest, the loyalty and prestige that once was ours. My firm belief is that this won't come through any 20th century modernization but rather by returning to the basics of Freemasonry.

The first few words of the opening charge say it better than I could. Listen to these beautiful words and thoughts and be affected by them.

"The ways of virtue are beautiful.

Knowledge is attained by degrees.

Wisdom dwells in contemplation; there we must seek her."

Let us therefore apply ourselves with becoming zeal to the practise of the excellent principles inculcated in our order.

Let us ever remember that great objects of our association are the restraint of improper desires and passion. The cultivation of an active benevolence, and the promotion of a correct knowledge of the duties we owe to God, our neighbor and ourselves.

Let's unite to practise with assiduity the sacred tenets of our order Beautiful thoughts and words.

Masonry will not fail, an organization based on such sound principles will survive all corruption.

It is our duty as Masons to see that these high principles are upheld.

Masonry will not fail but continue to do great things in the lives of concerned men.



Gleichen Lodge No. 36, A.F. & A.M.G.R.A.—W. Bro. O.D. Christensen (centre) with sons, W. Bro. O. Christensen and W. Bro. D. Christensen upon occasion of being presented with his 50 year jewel in Masonry, November 4th, 1975 in open Lodge.



Gleichen Lodge No. 36, A.F. & A.M. G.R.A. — W. Bro. Jack Ward presenting his father Bro. M. H. Ward with his 50 year jewel in Masonry, June 30th, 1975 in open Lodge.

We usually attempt to fill the fourth page of the Bulletin with news of the events in the Lodges in this Jurisdiction. Because of the mail strike our sources of news have been practically eliminated. You will pardon the scarcity of news we hope. On the other hand we hope that, when the mail resumes, you will make up for the lack of information on this page. At one time we had considered reducing the number of Bulletins issued. However the Grand Secretary has promised to use all of his ingenuity to get the Bulletin to the Lodges. Therefore we will continue to publish in the hope that somehow the issues will get distributed.