

St. James Lodge No. 47 F. & A.M.

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Stated Communications: 1st & 3rd Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

Monthly News letter for October – November 2005



FROM THE EAST

PLEASE Invite Guests for our upcoming open meetings and meals! If they say they can't make one meeting, invite them to another.

REMAINING OPEN MEETING, this year:

Lets make this last one the best of the year! Dec. 1th

I enjoyed reading the following, I hope you do too.

The Saga of William Preston

The son of an attorney, William Preston was born in 1742 in Scotland. He was afforded an excellent education. Early on, he enjoyed a very stable career in the employ of Thomas Ruddiman, a linguist (and for a time, William Ruddiman, a printer). In 1760, after the death of his employer, Preston moved to London, where until his own death, he was employed by William Strahan, Printer to His Majesty the King. In this station, he encountered many of the intellectual elite of English society, such as Edward Gibbon (author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*), David Hume, and others.

In aggregate, Preston enjoyed a stellar career as a Freemason. He was a very serious student of the Craft. He sought out the company of those most knowledgeable among Masons on both sides of The Channel and did all that was within his power to inform himself in every aspect of Masonry, especially the Ritual.

He made it a point to attend various Lodges and study their diverse Rituals. He, as well, had friends go on his behalf to various Lodges for the same purpose, they reporting to him on every detail of the variations on the Ritual.

Twice per week, he assembled friends in his home. There, he delivered prepared lectures on aspects of Masonic Ritual. The purpose of the meetings was to have his friends critique his lectures and thus help him to improve them.

Finally, in the early 1770s, he offered a series of courses on the Work of all three degrees. He was invited to deliver lectures to various and sundry Masonic groups in England and on the Continent.

Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia states on page 484, "The improvements made by Preston in the ritual created renewed interest and raised the reputation of the Fraternity, so that Preston was invited to attend schools of instruction and other meetings to lecture and talk about Masonry. Even the subscriptions to the Charity Fund became greater and the most eminent men were attracted to the Society.... Upon attending Lodge of Antiquity No. 1 on June 15, 1774, he was admitted a member and, at the same meeting or the next, elected Master, which station he held for several years...." Preston was made a member of the "Hall Committee" of the Grand Lodge and served as a very valuable assistant to the Secretary.

Few men can be said to have done as much as Preston to advance the cause of Masonry.

Jealousy, then, was inevitable.

The trouble began on St. John's The Evangelist Day, December 27, 1777. The members of Antiquity Lodge decided to go together across the street to St. Dunstan's Church to attend Divine Service. For reasons that are not known, some members protested. With nine other members, Preston proceeded to the church. They assumed their Masonic clothing once they were in the vestry, sat through the services, and returned to the Lodge's meeting place without removing their Masonic garb.

John Noorthbouch and John Bottomley were among the protesting members of Antiquity. Either they were troubled by the events of St. John the Baptist day or they realized that they had found a way of trimming the sails of Bro. Preston, or both. At any rate, they sought a reprimand from the Grand Lodge of England against Preston and his nine accomplices in crime. The act of wearing gloves and aprons while crossing the street to church had, it seems, violated the Grand Lodge's 1741 prohibition against public procession without authorizing dispensation.

(continued at the top of the next column)

It is believed that had Preston simply remained silent, the issue would have come to naught. However, Preston was not one to remain silent. In fact, this issue provided him with an opportunity to bring up a point that he had for some time been waiting to make.

This pertained to the standing of the four original Lodges that had formed the Grand Lodge of England, on St. John the Baptist Day, June 24, 1717, at The Goose and Gridiron Ale House. Preston, it seems, believed that those four Lodges - having existed before the Grand Lodge and having created it - were not subject to its rule but rather superseded it in all matters. (Those four, after all, were not operating under a "warrant" (or "charter") from the Grand Lodge.) Of course, Preston's position had the effect of placing those four Lodges outside the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge, which august body proceeded to demand a retraction, forthwith. Upon Preston's refusal to be forthcoming with the demanded retraction, the Grand Lodge of England, to quote Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, "...exceeded Preston's bad judgment." Rather than simply reprimanding Preston, they expelled from the Craft this one who had done more to promote the Craft than any but perhaps a very few among them.

The matter seemed to be headed for a peaceful resolution when, after only a short while, Preston did, in fact, issue a retraction. He was promptly reinstated.

Alas, however, it was not to be, for meanwhile back at Antiquity, the majority voted to expel the true troublemakers, Noorthbouch and Bottomley, whereupon the Grand Lodge took umbrage, fingered Preston as the fomentor of discord, and again condemned him to that fate which has been described as "Masonic Death".

This time, he remained in expulsion for ten years - from 1779 to 1789. In that interval, he was not entirely inactive. The majorities from Antiquity withdrew from the Grand Lodge of England rather than comply with the demand of that body that they reinstate Noorthbouch and Bottomley and, with Preston, formed the Grand Lodge of England South of the River Trent. This body enjoyed less than stellar success. They had two Lodges, neither of which thrived. The competition between the Grand Lodge of England and the Ancient Grand Lodge of England left, it would seem, little room for a third Grand Lodge.

Despite his trials and tribulations, Preston contributed more than any other individual to the development of the degree rituals as we now know them. His work was adapted for use in the United States by Thomas Smith-Webb.

As a Masonic historian, Preston may not have been quite so successful. Coil's states, "As an historian, Preston was no improvement over Dr. Anderson. His work was quite imaginary and irresponsible."

Ken Streater, W.M.

RECENT EVENTS

Oct. 6 **Past Masters' Night (Open/meal 6:30)**

The hall resonated with entertaining tones.

Oct. 20 St. John the Evangelist, Masonic Education Program

FUTURE EVENTS

Nov. 3 Election of Officers for 2006

Nov. 10 special: FC degree

Nov. 17 Master Mason's degree

Dec. 1 **Installation of 2006 Officers(Open/meal 6:30)**

Dec. 15 A Night dedicated to our deceased brothers

Other Masonic Events –

Nov. 9 Lodge of 9 Muses: **Open Table Lodge**

At the Camelot Club, Brother Robert Davis, 33°, Grand Cross, Executive Secretary of the Valley of Guthrie, will be the keynote speaker.

See any member for tickets, there may be a few places left.

Downtown York Rite Bodies meet regularly on the 1st Saturday of each month at 8:00 a.m. with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Scottish Rite Baton Rouge Valley meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Acacia Shrine Temple meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m.

The Lodge of The Nine Muses, U.D., F.&A.M., meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the Red Room of St James Lodge. If you are interested in visiting, contact one of the members to find time, dress code and other details. Ernest Easterly, W.M., Ricks Bowles, S.W., Adib Shala, J.W., Sam Roberts, Treasurer, Larry Moore, Secretary, William Mollere, Chaplain, Naresh Sharma, Sr. Deacon, Danny Smith, Master of Ceremonies, Gerard Ruth, Sr. Steward, Robert Zinn, Jr Steward, Kristopher Easterly, Tyler, Tim Atkins, Jim Pecoraro

The Old Charges - A common version as posted by Steve VanSlyck
<s.vanslyck@spamcop.net> Wed, 22 Oct 2003
THE CHARGES OF A FREE MASON

EXTRACTED FROM The Ancient Records of Lodges beyond [the] 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

I. CONCERNING GOD AND RELIGION

A Mason is obliged 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 charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, whatever it was, yet it is 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 honor and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the center of union, and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must have remained 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 concerned 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 disposed to encourage the Craft, because of their peaceableness and loyalty, whereby they practically answered the cavils of their adversaries, and promoted the honor of the Fraternity, who ever flourished in time of peace. So that if a Brother should be a rebel against the state, he is not to be countenanced 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 members assemble and work. Hence, that assembly, or duly organized society of Masons, is called 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 annexed. In ancient times, no Master or Fellow could be absent from it, especially when warned to appear at it, without incurring a severe censure, until it appeared to the Master and Wardens that pure necessity hindered 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 despised: 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 the 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 qualified, he may arrive to the honor 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 passed 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 gentle man of the best fashion, or some eminent scholar, or some curious architect, or other artist, descended of honest parents, and who is of singular great merit in the opinion of the Lodges. And for the better and easier and more honorable discharge of his office, the Grand Master has a power to choose his Deputy Grand Master, who must be then, or must have been formerly, the Master of a particular Lodge, and has the privilege of acting whenever the Grand Master, his Principal, should act, unless 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 obeyed 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 confirmed by custom, shall be observed.

The most expert of the Fellow Craftsmen shall be chosen or appointed the Master or Overseer of the Lord's work; who is to be called Master by those that work under him. The Craftsmen are to avoid all ill language, and to call each other by no disobliging 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 dispense his goods as if they were his own; nor to give more 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 accustomed 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 same; 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 employed shall meekly receive their wages without murmuring or mutiny, and not desert the Master till the work is finished.

A younger Brother shall be instructed in working, to prevent spoiling the materials for want of judgment, and for increasing and continuing of brotherly love.

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

No laborer shall be employed 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 laborers and unaccepted Masons, as they should teach a Brother or Fellow.

VI. BEHAVIOR, viz.: 1. In the Lodge while constituted

You are not to hold private Committees, or separate conversation, without leave from the Master, not to talk of anything 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 presence 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 referred unless a Lord's work be hindered the meanwhile, in which ease a particular reference may be made; but you must never go to law about what concerns Masonry, without an absolute necessity apparent to the Lodge.

2. Behavior 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 anything 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-mentioned; we are also of all nations, tongues, kindreds and languages, and are resolved against all politics, as what never yet conducted to the welfare of the Lodge, nor ever will. This charge has been always strictly enjoined and observed, but especially ever since the reformation in Britain, or the dissent and secession of these nations from the communion of Rome.

. Behavior when Brethren meet without Strangers, but not in a Lodge formed

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 honor, especially if he has deserved well of the Brotherhood, who must give honor to whom it is due, and avoid ill manners.

. Behavior 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 honor of the worshipful Fraternity.

. Behavior at Home, and in your Neighborhood

You are to act as becomes a moral and wise man; particularly not to let your family, friends and neighbors know the concerns of the Lodge, etc., but wisely to consult your own honor, and that of the ancient Brotherhood, for reasons not to be mentioned 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.

. Behavior toward a strange Brother

You are cautiously to examine him, in such a method as prudence shall direct you, that you may not be imposed 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 relieved. You must employ him some days, or else recommend him to be employed. 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 capstone, the cement and glory of this ancient Fraternity, avoiding all wrangling and quarreling, all slander and backbiting, nor permitting others to slander any honest Brother, but defending his character, and doing him all good offices, as far as is consistent with your honor 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 the annual Grand Lodge; as has been the ancient laudable conduct of our forefathers 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 you going to law with strangers, or would excite you to put a speedy period to all lawsuits, 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 lawsuit, without wrath and rancor (not in the common way), saying or doing nothing which may hinder Brotherly Love, and good offices to be renewed and continued; 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.

Send newsletter submissions to Bob Zinn,
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