

Charge first, ask questions always.

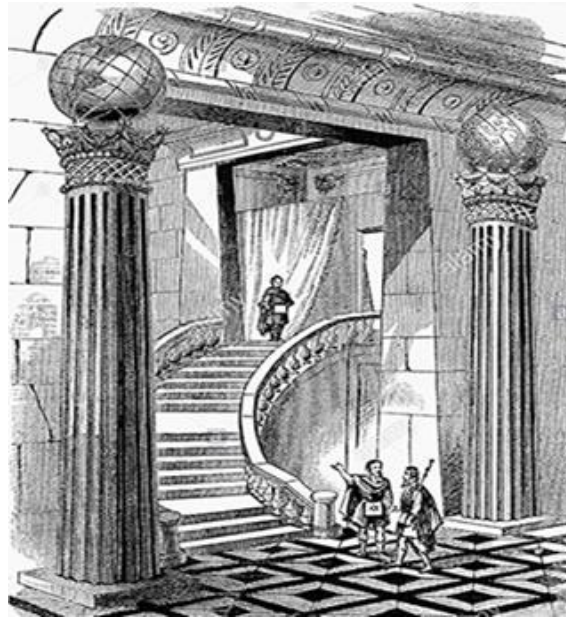
Brethren, this evening I am going to continue in my series of exploring the various charges placed upon us as Masons. I already covered the Charge at closing and extolled the importance of the one that we hear most often. Now it's time to work our way through the charges we hear less frequently and usually only once directed at us personally.

The Charge at initiation is probably the one we least were able to comprehend as it was being said. So much had already happened by that point and our mind was so full with so many concepts that we barely heard the Secretary or designee reading this charge to us. After that, unless we are doing our parts and supporting our lodge in conferring the degrees, we may not have heard it many times after that. Let's review the important elements of this charge and see what we may be missing.

1. Initially we are reminded of the virtues of the fraternity and that we are in good company with the greatest and best men in all ages and like them, adhere to certain precepts and the shared rules and maxims heard in the various lectures. What this really means is that we have joined a true group of men that are all equal once we enter that door. Exterior titles and roles drop away and we can all just be brothers for a time.
2. Next, we are informed of our three great duties as we begin our journey and this takes us back to a part in our initiation right before we were placed in due form since these duties are to God or our faith, our neighbor which alludes to our country and community, and to ourselves. The duty to our God is to pay that expected reverence and awe to the power that created us. Seek its aid in our laudable undertakings and maintain the inherent good of our faith. To our neighbor we are charged to act upon the square and follow that golden rule of doing unto others as we would have them do unto us. This is always the sign of a good man. And finally, to ourselves, we should avoid irregularity or intemperance that may impair our faculties or judgement and may us appear undignified. And just to clarify, my puns do not count as being impaired.
3. The next portion admonishes us to be a quiet and peaceful citizen and true to our chosen government and country. Also follow the laws, do not support or encourage disloyalty or rebellion and submit to legal authority appropriately. We are told to moderate our outward demeanor in all interactions and more especially not to let our support for Masonry lead us into arguments with others who may not comprehend or understand our tenets and may ignorantly ridicule it just for spite, or as I like to say to "poke the bear with a stick", to get a reaction. This doesn't mean we cannot speak to others about Masonry, just that we should not lower ourselves to base insults or raised voices if dealing with those that do not see things our way. However, if we find someone that is interested and we consider a viable candidate to join our fraternity we should only offer encouragement if we deem, they will conform to our rules. Then you can direct him to those that can recommend him to the lodge and start the process.

Part of the charge is also that in any of these discussions we should keep sacred and inviolable the mysteries of our order and are a distinction that marks us out from the community. Also, since this charge is to those newly initiated, we are encouraged to learn from others and ask many questions of well-informed brethren. Many of these well-informed brethren can be found at our Thursday classes (Hint Hint)

As you can see, there are many valuable bits of information in that charge that we so rarely fully comprehend. In compiling this lecture as I reviewed the charge, even I realized that there were parts that appeared to fade from memory almost as I heard them the night I first knocked on the door and met with resistance. I encourage you all to join me and take a role or just come sit and observe your lodge officers as they confer all the degrees. Every time I see degree work, I learn a new tidbit or another facet of knowledge clicks into place. Besides, it really helps to have a number of brethren present to support our newly initiated brethren. Come to our classes, come to our ritual work and degree conferrals, don't just make masonry about one stated a month with a meal. Active masons are happy masons.



‘The Winding Staircase - A path to improving yourself in Masonry’

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