



# Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: A. M. Mitchell, P.G.M.

## "COMMENT"

SOME months have elapsed since we were privileged to address you in an "editorial" and much water has gone under the bridge since then.

More and more of our younger men are on active service and more and more frequently do we observe Masonic activity in catering to their comfort. The Grand Master's Fund grows slowly, but steadily, in spite of the many and pressing calls upon our purses and our time, and this is all very much as it should be.

The Annual Communication of Grand Lodge is upon us and besides the annual accounting of Boards and Committees, we venture to believe there will be some accounting of the spirit. How are the Lodges standing up to the strain? Are we thinking of the future and planning for the days ahead? These things are of paramount importance to Freemasons and Freemasonry.

Needless to say our first duty is to the Nation in this awful hour of need but, since our battle is for freedom and the democratic way of life, surely we can spare a modicum of our time and energy for the Craft whose life-long thought and task has been the quiet promotion of these same high ideals. Give then a thought to the building of the Temple now and for the future. It is not too much to say that the world looks to the Americas for leadership in the next upward step of the race. We are of the Americas, let us not forget that.

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It is with genuine regret that we note the passing of Bro. Thomas G. Winning, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. So recently an honored guest in our Jurisdiction, he made many friends by

his quiet and unassuming dignity of manner. His loss will be severe to the Brethren of the Scottish Craft.

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With this issue comes to an end the sixth "volume" of the Grand Lodge *Bulletin*. The growing circulation among the individual membership of the Lodges and the comment received from Brethren continues to suggest that the modest little sheet is appreciated. Space limitations cramp many an ambitious article and we wonder if the time is ripe for consideration of a more ambitious *Bulletin*. Cost, as always, must be a major factor, but the arrival of the current edition before Grand Lodge convenes may induce some of our Brethren to give the matter a moment's consideration. After all, the adoption of a report without debate, no matter how graciously done, gives small direction to officers and committees.

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We have an enquiry from a Masonic student who is seeking to build a Masonic Library. Any Brother who has books for sale may communicate with the Grand Secretary or the Editor of the *Bulletin*, stating the title of the book, the author, condition and lowest cash price acceptable. Mackey's seven-volume history, rituals, so-called exposures and similar books are not wanted.

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To all who have contributed to Volume Six of the *Bulletin*, the Editor extends his cordial and sincere thanks.

A.M.M.

## PROGRESSIVE MASONRY

### 6. ON IMMORTALITY

By R. W. Bro. A. E. OTTWELL, P.G.R.

(The Last of a Series of Six Papers)

*Editor's Note.*—Opinions expressed and speculations advanced in articles of this kind are the writer's own. Official approval of Grand Lodge is neither expressed nor implied.

MASONIC teaching may be said to rest upon one great basic belief, that is, the existence of a Supreme Being with certain attributes such as omniscience, omnipotence, love and justice. From this belief spring such conceptions as communal brotherhood expressed in moral truth and law, the need to understand our environment by a study of the truths of nature and science and finally the belief in the sanctions of morality, that is reward for good and punishment for evil doing.

From this last came a belief in a future life or immortality. It is quite clear that within our observation and experience justice is frequently incompletely done. True we see the rewards of certain conduct and the punishment of other behavior take place, but there still remain instances where this does not happen. A man who obeys the laws of health will, other things being equal, have a more enjoyable life than one who abuses his body. Again a man who by industry and application makes himself a master of his craft or business will be likely to enjoy economic rewards.

However, there are cases where the evil doers seem to prosper and the righteous suffer. And our minds, trained to regard justice as a necessary part of the scheme of things, rebel against accepting the results we see as final. And again there is the frustration when promising lives are cut off by death before maturity or old age and possible valuable services terminated. So it would seem that sanity and justice require some plan for balancing up these seeming inequities. Immortality provides the scope for such a plan.

The argument is based upon an analogy drawn from science. We have there a law which is called that of the conservation of matter and energy. It is stated somewhat as follows: neither matter nor energy is created or annihilated but may undergo changes of form. Wood or coal may be burned and appear to be destroyed. Combustion is really a chemical experiment and under controlled conditions it is possible to show that nothing whatever has disappeared but has only changed into another form. The heat of the sun used in lifting water from the sea to the mountains can be recovered by a hydro power installation on the stream flowing from the snow fields or glacier. It is the same energy which has gone through several changes of form. There will be some leakages at different points but that is understood. Under experimental or laboratory conditions an almost complete balance can be shown.

The argument is that if chemistry and physics which deal with material values can prove that these are conserved, it is reasonable to conclude that moral and spiritual values which are just as real,

though not so readily measured, are also conserved. And since in the field of our observation, i.e., in this life they are not, then some other existence must offer the opportunity for their continuance. Hence there is needed some form of immortality. Or in other words death does not mean annihilation or the end.

What do we understand by immortality? May there be more than one way of realizing it? Has the world always meant the same thing at all times and to all men? Clearly it has not. One has only to read the Old Testament to see that any clear idea of a future life came quite late in the story. The notion of any spirit life, that is existence apart from a physical body, is of relatively recent time. The most satisfactory theory is that it was an outgrowth from the experiences of the dream life. Space forbids a more detailed discussion of this interesting topic.

Out of it all have come three principal ideas of immortality. The one commonly held in our cultural group is that each individual outlives in a spirit existence time as we know it, and continues to experience joy or sorrow, well being or suffering, reward or punishment much as we do in this life. Grafted on this stem may be a belief that the child goes on developing or that a second chance is allowed to make good, or on the other hand that physical death is the end of probation and there is no such second chance. Eternal reward and punishment figure prominently for many people in this belief. Another conception of immortality is one held by many millions in other parts of the world. In this belief the universe is a great entity from which in a sense the individual human soul is for a time detached but to which it returns to be as it were reabsorbed and losing its individual identity shares the immortality of the whole. Still another belief which is held by an increasing number is that it is hard to believe in an individual immortality and that the pantheistic conception is too abstract, but that a very real immortality consists of the constantly growing chains of influence which are set in motion during life. It is easy to see how a parent or teacher lives in children or students. It is also easy to see how a statesman shapes the life of a people long after he has gone. And in different degree every life does the same kind of thing within the range of its influence.

The point is that even such a fundamental teaching of Freemasonry as the belief in immortality has been and is progressive. What is necessary and possible is for every man to work out for himself a plan on his own trestle board, making sure that it is one worthy of his best effort and leaving room for such revisions as experience and wider knowledge may suggest. One thing is certain, whatever the details of the great plan may be, no penalty will fall upon the man who sincerely and faithfully everywhere and always does his best and who understands that today's best is the foundation of a greater best for tomorrow. This may justly be regarded as the summation of progressive Masonry.

### "THE REPUTATION OF THE FRATERNITY"

(Condensed from a Bulletin published by the Masonic Service Association of the United States and republished by special permission.)

"TO preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied must be your constant care."

Every Master Mason is charged with that great duty. Obviously it means the reputation of the Fraternity before the non-Masonic world. That reputation is one of the greatest assets of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry has certain contacts with the public. The world at large observes us in funeral processions, burying our dead with reverence and honor, if with ceremonies strange to profane eyes. It watches our Grand Lodges lay the corner stones of public buildings, pouring the ancient sacrifice of corn and wine and oil, dedicating the building to its uses. It sees us occasionally attend divine services in a body. It can obtain and read, if it will, a multitude of beautiful books about Freemasonry, from which it can learn of the fundamental principles which underlie the Order.

But "the secrets of Freemasonry are safely lodged in the repository of faithful breasts."

Some Masons consider certain matters as "secrets" which are not so in fact, even though they are not the subject of common talk or vain boast. It is no "secret" that Freemasonry teaches and inculcates, in-so-far as in her power lies, those principles of law, order, morals, citizenship, fear and love of God, which make for the highest type of manhood.

Reducing the great teachings to the least possible number of words and avoiding duplications produces the following list of those matters which a Mason is taught, and to which he promises, either actually or by implication, complete agreement. On these rest the reputation of the Fraternity:

Belief in God	Obedience to Masonic authority
Brotherly love	Courage
Temperance	Service to others
Justice	Setting a good example
Veneration	Dignity
Good Citizenship	Secrecy
Observance of the Sabbath	Truth
Fidelity to trust	Prudence
Self Sacrifice	Prayer
Sharing strength and wisdom	Peaceableness
Faith	Honesty
Charity	Judgment
Relief	Resignation
Fortitude	Trustworthiness to confidence
Reverence	Preservation of the Ancient Landmarks
Golden Rule	
Education	

If every Freemason lived up to all these teachings, what an Utopia the world would be!

But what is remarkable is not how many Masons fail, but how many succeed! That they do succeed is evidenced by the reputation of the Fraternity in non-Masonic circles. Were Masons as a class false to their teachings, lax in their conduct, forsworn as to their obligations, Freemasonry would not possess the fair reputation she has.

It is said in the Great Light:

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

If the Man of Galilee was content to reduce "all the law" to fifty-three words, surely Freemasonry might formulate an equally short statement for her aims and purposes. But while "all the law" may be put into a few words, many thousand words of New Testament are needed to explain the teaching of Christianity.

Men learn by repetition. They absorb that which is told to them, and retold, and told once more. Freemasonry but follows the ancient manner of teaching when she iterates and reiterates the duties of a Mason towards his God, his neighbor and himself. But because Freemasonry teaches by repetition, her detailed reiteration makes possible many ways in which a Mason may offend. If he does not actively break a rule, he may fail as a Mason merely by a negative attitude. To fail to do good is not necessarily to do evil, but neither is a failure to work mischief necessarily a doing of good works! It is expected of men that they will fail, otherwise they are not men, but gods! If no man ever failed, Freemasonry would be unnecessary. When the building is completed, the workmen depart. When the House Not Made With Hands is perfectly erected, the Craft is of no more use.

It is one thing to fail in any Masonic duty; it is another to fail so publically that the reputation of the Fraternity is hurt—that reputation of which we are taught that its preservation is of vital importance. Occasionally, more's the pity, it is necessary for a Masonic organization to take practical steps in regard to some brother who has failed to live up to the teachings of Masonry. Masons are only men who have solemnly agreed to do certain things; sometimes they are forsworn. Sometimes our committees do not do their work aright and we are given cracked stones to work upon. Sometimes a good man changes as he grows older, and even the sweet and gentle influence of the Craft cannot hold him in the straight and narrow way.

It is human to want to "get even". Our brother wrongs us; it is only natural to wish him haled before the bar of lodge opinion, and, perhaps, punished for his infraction of his obligation. Brethren often see no further than the immediate present; the immediate wrong doing; the immediate lodge trial

and its results. A word of wise caution may make him look further. No man, unless suffering wrong of the most grievous character, but may be caused to stop and think by reminding him of the many obligations and duties he assumed when he, too, became a Mason. Let all such be asked, gently, kindly, considerately, but pointedly—"Will this action you propose benefit you as much as it will injure the lodge, the Fraternity? Will the results, inevitably to some extent public, not do more harm to that reputation which we cherish than they will do good to you? Is it not possible that our erring brother may be brought to make amends by less drastic means than the sad lodge trial?"

Let no brother retort, "but it should not become public!" Agreed, a lodge trial should never be a public matter. But while we hold our own with the Mystic Tie, and the cord of secrecy is tight about our lips, we do not hold relations and friends. John Smith is tried and suspended, perhaps expelled. He no longer goes to lodge. People want to know why. In self defence he says what he can—but what can he say? Inevitably the result of the trial becomes public. Then we suffer.

To whisper good counsel in the ear of an erring brother is sound Masonic teaching. To prevent tarnishing the reputation of the Fraternity we must not only endeavor to live up to the high level of our teachings, but strive to help our brethren do likewise. The best way, the brotherly way, the way of Freemasonry, is by the kindly caution, the friendly word of admonition, the hand stretched out to assist and save the worthy falling brother.

Freemasonry—so we truly believe—is one of God's bright tools for shaping of the rough ashlar which we are.

Let us strive to keep it bright.



### NOTED FREEMASON DEAD

The death occurred in an Edinburgh nursing home on March 26th, 1941, of Thomas Girdwood Winning, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. W. Bro. Winning, who was born at Braxholme near Hawick, was the son of the late John G. Winning, factor to the Duke of Buccleugh. He was educated at George Watson's College, Edinburgh, and later qualified as a solicitor and was in practice in the town of Hawick until 1926 when he was appointed Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge.

He was a much respected and effective officer and travelled widely in the course of his duties. He served with the Lothian Border Yeomanry in the last war, and later was associated with many clubs in the City of Edinburgh. He was made a Justice of the Peace.

Bro. Winning visited the Grand Lodge of Alberta in 1939 when we were favored to entertain guests from the three British Grand Lodges.

He was a Past Master of Lodge St. John No. 11, Hawick, and an honorary member of the famous Canongate Kilwinning Lodge No. 2, Edinburgh.



### THE GRAND MASTER'S WAR DEFENCE FUND

The following acknowledgment was received in the Grand Lodge office on May 19th, from the United Grand Lodge of England:

"April 21, 1941.

"I am enclosing a receipt for the very generous gift of £1,120 from the Freemasons of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, to be applied to the relief of those who have suffered through enemy action in this country or through causes arising out of the War.

"I cannot tell you how greatly we appreciate this demonstration of fraternal sympathy and how grateful we are to you for giving us the means to extend a helping hand to the many unfortunate people who have lost their homes and often their livelihood. We have found that some immediate monetary assistance has given immeasurable relief to the recipients to enable them to tide over the difficult period before other help is available.

"I would like to convey to your Grand Master and the brethren of your Grand Lodge the gratitude of the many whose burdens have been lightened, as well as the very sincere thanks of the Brethren of this Grand Lodge."

(Signed) SIDNEY A. WHITE,

Grand Secretary.

It is hoped that all donations to this Fund received by our Lodges will be forwarded immediately to the Grand Lodge office, so that the full amount will be available for disbursement by the Grand Master.



### PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

There are a number of Proceedings of previous years in the Grand Lodge office, including a limited number of those for 1940. Any brethren desiring to obtain copies can do so on request, accompanied by postage, six cents per copy.



The essence of culture is never to be satisfied with the conventional account of anything, no matter what, but always instinctively to cut through it and get as close as you can to the reality of the thing and to see it as it actually is.

—Albert Jay Nock.