



LODGE VEGAS # 32

DEISM

In an abstract sense, Deism, or Theism, is the belief in God, but the word is generally used to designate those who, believing in God, reject a belief in the Scriptures as a revelation. The sect of Deists which, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, enrolled among its followers many great intellects, such as Toland, Collins, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Fume, Gibbon, and Voltaire-is said by Findel (History of Freemasonry, page 126) to have "necessarily exercised an important influence on the Fraternity of Masons"; and, he adds, that "we cannot doubt that it contributed essentially to its final transformation from an Operative to a universal Speculative Society." The refutation of this remarkable assertion is best found in the first of the Charges adopted at the revival in 1717, and which was published in the Constitutions of 1793. A Mason is obliged, by his tenure, obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine," where the words irreligious libertine refer to the Freethinkers or Deists of that period. It is evident, then, that the Deists could have had no influence at that time in molding the Masonic organization.

There is still better evidence to be found in the old records of Freemasonry during several preceding centuries, when the Operative was its dominant character, and when the dogmas of Christianity were fully recognized, which must necessarily have been the case, since Freemasonry during that period was under the patronage of the Church. There is, in fact, no evidence to sustain Findel's theory, that in the transition stage from the Operative to the Speculative, when such men as the deeply religious Ashmole were among its members, the Deists could have infused any of their principles into its organization or exercised any influence in changing its character.

Freemasonry, at that time sectarian, demanded almost a Christian belief-at all events, a Christian allegiance-from its disciples. It is now more tolerant, and Deism presents no disqualification for initiation. An atheist would be rejected, but none would now be refused admission on religious grounds who subscribed to the dogmas of a belief in God and a resurrection to eternal life.

- **Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry**

DEBATE

Debates in a Masonic Lodge must be conducted according to the fraternal principles of the Institution. Masonic debate or discussion should not become wrangling disputes nor quarrelsome contention. in the language of Doctor Oliver, "the strictest courtesy should be observed during a debate, in a Mason's Lodge, on questions which elicit a difference of opinion; and any gross violation of decorum and good order is sure to be met by an admonition from the chair." It must

be always remembered that the object of a Masonic: discussion is to elicit truth, and not simply to secure victory. When, in a debate, a Brother desires to speak, he rises and addresses the chair. The presiding officer calls him by' his name, and thus recognizes his right to the floor. While he is speaking, he is not to be interrupted by any other member, except on a point of order. If called to order by any member, the speaker is immediately to take his seat until the point is stated when the Master will make his decision without debate. The speaker will then rise and resume his discourse, if not ruled out by the Master. During the time that he is speaking, no motion is permissible. Every member is permitted to speak once on the subject under discussion; nor can he speak a second time, except by permission of the Master, unless there is a more liberal provision in the by-laws of the Lodge. There are to this rule two exceptions, namely, when a member rises to explain.

And when the mover of the resolution closes the debate by a second speech to which he is entitled by parliamentary law.

- **Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry**

IMMORTALITY - THE CIRCLE

By S.W. Williams G.H.P., Tennessee

"In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth-- and the Earth was without form and void.

At some point of time in the vast Eternity that is gone, when an unknown Planet was at its perihelion, there was thrown from its surface, whirling into Space, a single Atom of Matter that, guided by the Limitless One, started on its course and forged out of the Ether a place for itself--a home among the Stars--where it could fulfill its destiny of gradually perfecting a place whereon Man could dwell and work out his mysterious mission.

Such was the "BEGINNING"--the birth of this World of ours; and, as the Great Creator looked He saw that "It was good"--and "God said Let there be Light and there was Light." Then, throughout another myriad of years, by the same mysterious power, Vegetable Life appeared and "It was good"--only to be followed by Animal Life--and "It was good"--and then, the CLIMAX--God's crowning Work, MAN-- "Male and female created He them."

All things come of God--and all return unto the Great Giver. "Cast thy bread upon the waters and it shall return unto thee "after many days." As we do, so shall we be done by. Darkness and Light shall be meted out in strict measure. Like begets like--an Acorn never produced a Violet any more than Hate can yield Happiness. All things pass from Eternity into Eternity. There never was a beginning to Time, and there can be no ending. The Light that WAS, is that which IS and IS TO BE--only as we grow more and more like Him from whence we came, we shall be more and more in the Light, and the Light shall drive out the DARKNESS; then we shall become the Children of Light--SONS OF GOD--because He is "Our Father." This is the demonstration of the CIRCLE.

There is a ONENESS in all things. Nothing is complete in itself-- but everything bears some relation to all else in Creation, without which kinship nothing would be complete and all things would be destroyed. This mysterious relationship ends not with this World-- for Earth is simply a small part of the Boundless Universe wherein there are millions of Worlds, each of which came into existence just as this one did--because God willed it, and it was a part of His GREAT PLAN. What that "PLAN" is, it is not given us to fathom-- but we know this--we are Children of Light and Light is of and from God--and HE is "Our Father." As a Father counselleth his children so

speaketh He unto us, and we are told to speak unto HIM; for does He not say:--"Seek and ye shall find, ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

An Eternity of Love, Light and Life constitutes the Immortality which is promised us of God. But Immortality is for Eternity, and Eternity is a Circle, without beginning or ending. This body which we see with our physical eyes is not truly US--it is but the covering which conceals our true self--a sort of Cloak with which we are provided, and which we wear while sojourning on this Planet. We put it on when we enter the World and discard it upon leaving it--what, then, is MAN ? He cometh, he knoweth not whence, and he goeth, when summoned, into the vast Eternity of Time and Space to do the Will of the Father in other Spheres.

Children of Life--"The Life Which is the Light of Men."

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"The same was in the Beginning with God."

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

"In Him was Life; and the Life, was the Light of Men. And the Light shineth in the Darkness; and the Darkness comprehendeth it not."

-Source: The Builder - June 1915

The Model Master

By Most W. Bro William Mercer Wilson

To become the model Master of a Lodge should be the ambition of every Brother, and to discharge with efficiency and zeal the duties of that important office should be his most anxious desire. These duties are not confined to the mere repetition of a few phrases, learned by rote, but he should be enabled to instruct the Craft, not only as to the meaning and origin of our ceremonies, but also to explain to them the philosophy which is veiled in its allegories and illustrated by its symbols.

He should be able, also, to convince his Brethren, that all science and art, legitimately directed, are but lines that radiate towards the great " I AM;" that the Sciences are the media by which we are led to contemplate the goodness, greatness, wisdom and power, of the Great Architect of the Universe; and that the Arts are the modes we have developed of expressing our sense and admiration of the wondrous glories of an Almighty Father which are scattered around us.

The Master of a Lodge should also, in his life and in his conversation, be a model for his Brethren to admire and imitate, and should himself practice, out of the Lodge, those great moral doctrines and virtues which he inculcates within its walls. He should be punctual and methodical in all things, and, both by his character and conduct, command the respect, the esteem, and good will of all men; for, as the Master is supreme in his Lodge, and distinguished by his position in the Craft, so should he also be distinguished as the possessor of an irreproachable character, a dignified demeanor, an expanded intellect, and a liberal education. Happy and prosperous must those Lodges be which are governed by such men! - their time of meeting is looked forward to by the Brethren with the most pleasing anticipation. Prompt at the hour, every Brother is at his station, and the work is carried on with pleasure and profit. The Worshipful Master who presides over his Lodge with ability, firmness, and decision; (for without force of character there can be no force of impression) whose manner is courteous yet dignified; whose decisions are consonant with reason

and Masonic Law; and who dispenses light and information among the Craft, will ever be regarded by his Brethren as one who is entitled to their highest respect and their most fraternal regard.

The anxious enquirer after Truth and Light feels that he may appeal with confidence and safety to such a ruler of a Lodge, as to one who is not only able and willing to reward and advance him according to his ability and worth, but to one whose duty and high privilege it is to diffuse the beams of light and to scatter abroad the seeds of truth. The aspirant, animated by the love of truth, uninfluenced by mercenary motives, duly appreciating the philosopher's apothegm, that "Knowledge is Power," and prompted by higher desires, eagerly presses forward, believing in a nobler destiny and aspiring after a brighter record; it is the Master's duty to assist him in his research - it is his high privilege to "pour the balm of instruction o'er the mind," to fill it with light, to stir up its powers, and to raise it to its proper supremacy over matter. It is for him to bestow upon the neophyte - if he finds him worthy and qualified - not only wealth but power also; not the wealth that corrupts its owner, nor the power which enslaves its dependent, but the ennobling wealth of wisdom and the enduring power of knowledge.

The Financial affairs of the Lodge are managed by such a Master with prudence and economy - he regards debts due either by or to his Lodge peculiarly as debts of honor, and takes care to have them promptly arranged - the Brethren, loving the man and respecting his authority, submit to his decision with cheerfulness and alacrity, and are ready at all times to aid him in his efforts to advance the interests of the Order. The cement with which he has bound the Brethren together is not confined to the Lodge Room, but is carried out into the world, and practical illustrations of friendship and brotherly love are daily exemplified. Time will not now permit me to enlarge upon the various qualities and virtues which adorn the model Master. I must therefore leave the subject for the present, and conclude by remarking, that I feel proud and happy in being enabled to say that, I believe, we have among us many Masters and Past Masters of Lodges who are an honor to the Fraternity and the Order-many, who are not only Masters of men but also of work, and who are indeed entitled to the proud distinction of being regarded as the cream of the Craft.

- Source: The Craftsman 1866

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