

The Postponement

Masonic Misstep or Squandered Opportunity?

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PREFACE

During the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Masonic jurisdictions promoted programs designed to portray the Craft as more appealing and accessible. The Craft seemed to be facing a grim future: an aging membership and infrastructure compounded by a diminished position in society (although its pop-cultural notoriety remained at an all-time high). Many of these membership campaigns were met with resistance. It was argued the much-vaunted past when men clamored for pole position in crowded lodges robbed the deeply personal experience, thus reducing the organizations to social clubs powered by popularity politics. To be kind (and realistic), the reliance on large numbers was truly a testimony to the popularity of fraternal orders. But, so the story goes, the transformative teachings became victims of success and were forced into the backseat as the day-to-day concerns of business and status came to the fore. It seemed dire as if the rewards of past success and a creeping disinterest amongst the modern youth drove fraternalism onto the rocks.

Yet, as Brother John W. Bizzack, twice past master of Lexington Lodge No. 1 in Kentucky, reminds us, this problem existed long before halcyon days of the mid-20th century. Throughout the 19th century, Masonic leaders recognized the desire for more populous lodges hampered the ability to teach their traditional lessons, which effectively diminished Masonic education and a member's curiosity.

Using his own jurisdiction of Kentucky as a case study, Brother Bizzack points out that the fear of an indiscriminate population boom in lodges was not just chronicled by legendary Masons such as Albert Pike and Albert Mackey, but also in grand lodge proceedings. Bizzack explores how several grand masters addressed the problem. These same concerns continue to haunt us to this day because, as the author implies, that there has always been a tendency to postpone the solutions as if all was well with what we were doing, which was to instruct without content—thereby creating a new hive of unmoored interpretations. He surmises that, “The profound genius of the system of Freemasonry found in its philosophies, tenets, and principles has rarely, if ever, been observed as a legitimate impediment to its appeal by men who are duly qualified to be admitted into ranks. Unfortunately, it seems as if the method we deliver, pass on, and explain has proven to be the impediment.”

Adam Kendal, Editor
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ABSTRACT

In 1889, twenty-four years after the Civil War, the Grand Lodge of Kentucky reported its membership standing at 15,837. By 1899, membership stood at 20,340 (20% increase).¹ In 1909 there were 32,770 members (61% increase).² By 1919 there were 53,182 reported members (62% increase).³ By 1939, there were 62,087 members (17% increase).⁴ In the fifty years and in two generations of Masons between 1889 and 1939, Kentucky added 46,250 members to its roster. This can tell us three specific things. One, is that Kentucky Freemasonry benefited from the Age of Fraternalism (1870-1910) when it is estimated that 40 percent of the adult male population in the United States held membership in a fraternal order.⁵ Two, membership in Kentucky Masonry steadily grew over five decades, which may be considered a positive reflection of Freemasonry. The third thing it tells us is not as glowing: postponing action on more than a century-old problem is hardly for the good of the order.

CONNECTING DOTS

Grand Lodge Proceedings offer tremendous insight. Meticulous in detail, the reports provide substantial data about the unfolding history of American Freemasonry. Rarely, however, is there context to the data. Readers and researchers sometimes walk away wondering what actually transpired because of the lack of context that clarifies why certain legislation was proposed, rejected or passed. Little illustrates what was behind remarks, particular reports, the thinking of men at the time, and decisions made that charted the course of the institution and steered it through the next years, sometimes through multiple decades.

Masonic Proceedings, while documenting important events, decisions, administrative matters, rosters, financials, who attended, formal introductions of distinguished guests, reports, and accounts of many tributes and accolades in the traditional self-congratulatory style found in most fraternity organizations, were never intended to provide extensive background on which a formal history can be easily read. With consistency, Proceedings live up to the intention of simply providing a record.

Perhaps, for that very reason, we search for writings by Masons and non-Masons who interpret Proceedings and offer us what we consider more of a history of Freemasonry, rather than the important, but often dry records and flowery writings found in most. Analysis is essential and must be based on evidence, otherwise it is mere speculation, and we are left only with disconnected facts. The absence of

¹ 1889 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, p. 99.

² 1909 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky. P. 46.

³ 1919 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky.

⁴ 1939 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky.

⁵ William D. Moore, *Riding the Goat: Secrecy, Masculinity, and Fraternal High-Jinks in the United States, 1845–1930*

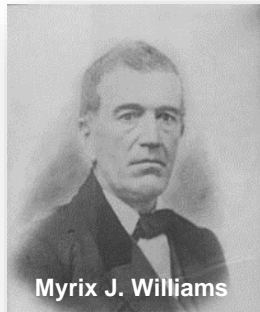
Winterthur Portfolio 2007 41:2/3, NOTE: On page 162 in Moore's essay, he reports that in an article in the *North American Review* from 1897, the writer H. S. Harwood reported that fraternal groups claimed five and a half million members, while the total adult population of the United States was approximately nineteen million. At about the same time, Albert C. Stevens, the compiler of the invaluable *Cyclopedia of Fraternities*, estimated that 40 percent of the adult male population held membership in a fraternal order, and Harriett W. McBride, *The Golden Age of Fraternalism*, Herodotus, Vol. 13, 2005.

consideration or an awareness of what was going in and outside of Freemasonry at the time of any Proceedings leads many writers and researchers on a path away from connecting the dots and putting together the puzzle, as it were, as to why Freemasons do what they do, think about their fraternity as they do, as well as providing reasons for the general condition and even direction of Freemasonry in America.

For example, one reason for the condition of American Freemasonry today is found in how the institution disregarded the adverse rippling effects of growing membership too rapidly in certain eras - a predicament we might call the “Canker Worm Effect,” coined after the use of the reference by a grand master in 1866.

The concerns about the fraternity growing too fast in its membership, leading to a fragmentation of understanding about the aim and purpose of Freemasonry, and resulting in kaleidoscopic perspectives of the purpose and function of the fraternity, was not voiced just once, but several times prior to 1866, and afterwards. Kentucky’s rapid expansion of membership and lodges over its short sixty-six years of existence was outdistanced in membership only by the jurisdiction of New York.⁶

In the 1866 Grand Lodge of Kentucky Proceedings, Grand Master, Myrix J. Williams in his final address cautioned the Craft:



... I feel it my duty to urge them [Lodges and members] to exercise great and increased caution in the reception of candidates for initiation. A want of care in this important particular though it may, by increasing the number of members, be looked upon as an evidence of prosperity, will in the end prove to be highly deleterious; it will be the canker worm on the rose, that seems outwardly so fair and flourishing, but bearing in its bosom the cause of its decay. Let me then urge you to guard well the outward door of the sanctuary.⁷

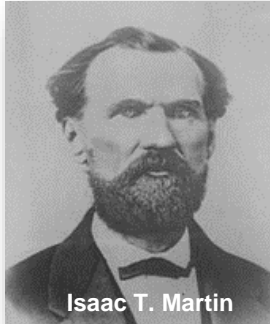
In 1866, there were 380 lodges chartered in Kentucky with a total of 15,157 members.⁸ This represents a 1,000% plus increase over the number of lodges 33 years prior. Grand Master Williams’s concern was well grounded.

⁶ The Grand Lodge of New York, in its first forty-five years of existence, chartered 475 lodges.

⁷ Annual Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, October 1866, Grand Master’s Address, p. 14.

⁸ Annual Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, October 1866.

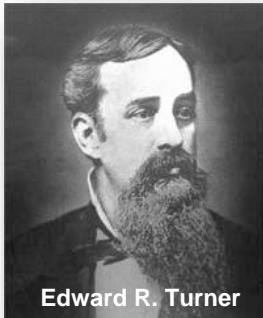
Regardless of his unease, 30 dispensations for new lodges in Kentucky were issued in spite of a resolution the same year that only “the most imperative” of circumstances should govern the chartering of new lodges. The resolution was either ignored, or someone was convinced that chartering of those additional lodges *was* “imperative,” because the next year, nine more were added to the rolls as well.



That year, Grand Master Isaac T. Martin expressed his worry, too, stating that the number of lodges in Kentucky was increasing with “fearful rapidity.”⁹ Nevertheless, by 1869 the Grand Lodge of Kentucky with its 20,000 members stood third in the United States in members and wealth.¹⁰

The evidence-based interpretation we find in these records supports the reality that Freemasonry was already addicted by the mid-1800s to the idea that bigger is better, and that the success of the institution could be measured by the number of names on a membership roster. This dot can be connected to warnings found in earlier Proceedings about the inability of the Grand Lodge to effectively oversee the workings of the many lodges it was chartering in the outlying reaches of the state, and how Past Grand Master Rob Morris (1859) had already described much of the work as “slovenly.”¹¹

We find more dots to connect through 1899.



In 1873, Grand Master Edward R. Turner told the attendees of the Grand Lodge Annual Communication during his address to the Craft that all was well. “No note of discord disturbs our harmony; no blight of jealousy or mistake curses the increasing prosperity of Masonry within our jurisdiction.” Notwithstanding his applauding the year, at the end of his address he took a swing at a problem festering in all American Freemasonry – not just Kentucky. In summary he noted there were plenty of books from which to “acquire a knowledge of the science, philosophy, history and symbolism of Masonry,” and indicated that Masons in Kentucky were not rushing to read what was available – not even Kentucky’s own Masonic publication, *Kentucky Freemason*.¹² His remarks were made two years before Albert Mackey would write his scorching, timeless essay, *Reading Masons and Masons Who Do Not Read* addressing the same problem to which Turner refers. His

⁹ Grand Lodge of Kentucky, *Proceedings* (1867), 161.

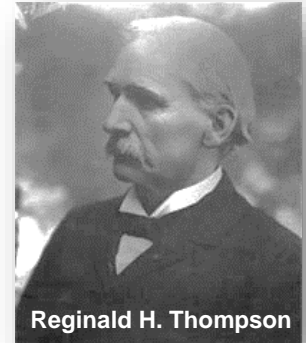
¹⁰ Charles Snow Guthrie, *Kentucky Freemasonry 1788–1978: The Grand Lodge and the Men Who Made It* Lexington, KY: Grand Lodge of Kentucky, 1981, 112.

¹¹ Rob Morris, *History of Freemasonry in Kentucky and Its Relationship to Symbolic Degrees*, Louisville; self-published, 1859.

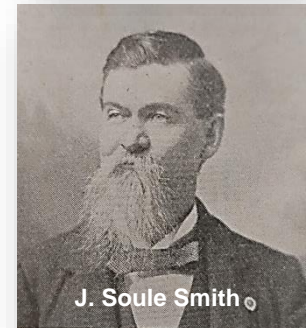
¹² 1873 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, Grand Master’s Address. (“It is to the discrimination of Masonic publications that we are indebted for the general prosperity of the Craft, during the past few years, and a means of disseminating light and knowledge to the Craft, they cannot be overestimated, for it is by the perusal of such we are to acquire a knowledge of the science, philosophy, history and symbolism of Masonry. To merely acquire a knowledge of the usual modes of recognition is far from being all that is required at our hands. This is an age of progress we live in a day and generation when all truths are investigated: therefore, how essential it is to our social and moral development that we should read and consider for ourselves. In this connection, brethren, let me a word commendatory of our home paper, the *Kentucky Freemason*. So far as we have examined, it stands in the front rank of the many Masonic periodicals of the day, and it is a matter of surprise so many Subordinate Lodges and members are found without it.

comments relate directly to the now more recognized growing lack of literacy about the Craft and its aim and purpose, among its many members due to the lack of uniform instruction and ongoing education.

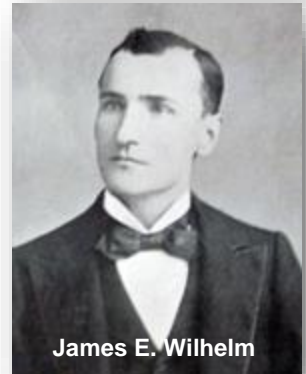
In 1897, twenty-four years and a full generation later, that festering condition was apparently conspicuous enough for Grand Master Reginald H. Thompson to recommend a “system of inspection by which lodges could be visited and instructed” concerning what he called “gross irregularities which are only accidentally discovered after mischief arising from them is done.”¹³ He went on to say that such a system “would remedy and prevent many existing evils, bring the Grand Master into closer touch with the lodges, and the lodges into closer touch with the Grand Lodge, and I believe would redound greatly to the benefit of the Craft.”



Wasting no time, Grand Master James E. Wilhelm created and made appointments to that committee in October 1897, calling it the Committee on Official Inspection. He named Past Grand Master J. Soule Smith, of Lexington, as Chair, and Past Master R. S. Coleman, and Worshipful Brother William Kraus, of Paducah to serve.



At the 1889 Annual Communication, Grand Master J. Soule Smith (1887) delivered the Committee’s report. It was far from glowing, identified blemishes, and called to the attention of the Grand Line and all present the reported condition of Freemasonry in Kentucky. The report also made recommendations to correct the shortcomings at no cost to lodges or the Grand Lodge (a full reprint of Smith’s report may be found at the end of this essay).



The full report was printed in the Proceedings that year, so it was not forgotten, but, as later seen in the Proceedings, was, by reasonable standards of analysis, ignored.

THE COLD SHOULDER

Although handed clear historical benchmark offering the first state-wide assessment of the condition of Kentucky Freemasonry, long-serving Grand Secretary H.B. Grant, chose not to mention, much less include, any information about Smith’s report in his book, *Doings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, 1800-1900*.¹⁴ His rehash corresponds with the approach and style of writings about Freemasonry by Freemasons wherein the primary features focus on chronicling the popularity of the Craft, and not necessarily the blemishes. Grant, however, was only one of the many offering a version of Masonic events in Kentucky that ignored Smith’s report, much less recommendations.

¹³ 1898 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, p. 17.

¹⁴ H.B. Grant, *Doings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, 1800-1900*. Masonic Homes Book and Job Office, Louisville, 1900.

J.W. Norwood, who wrote, in 1913, *The Concise History of Lexington Lodge No. 1, F. & A.M., November 17, 1788-1913*, does include information about the condition of Freemasonry at the time and previous years, but never mentioned Smith, except as a member of Lexington Lodge No. 1, and that he was grand master. J. Winston Coleman, in his 1933, *Masonry in the Bluegrass*, wrote much about the Grand Lodge and events in Kentucky, but apparently did not believe Smith's report was relevant to the history of Freemasonry in the state. He included nothing about the report. The same is true for Charles Snow Guthrie's 1981 book, *Kentucky Freemasonry – 1788-1978, The Grand Lodge And The Men Who Made It*. In Guthrie's work, J. Soule Smith is mentioned, but without reference to his 1899 report.

Why did these writings, intending to offer history, fail to acknowledge what Smith's report disclosed? The absence of Smith's report and recommendations, or even a brief mention of it, tells us something as well when we begin to connect the dots.

Ignoring the significance of the report, along with its revelations about the condition of the fraternity, as canvassed by a past grand master, seamlessly parallels the favored approach and style of writings about Freemasonry by Freemasons in those periods. The primary accounts appearing in writings (aside from statistical data and such) at the time largely focus on praise for the idea of Freemasonry, the popularity of the Craft and customary accolades, but not on its more *serious* blemishes.

There is no question about whether there were blemishes in the history of Masonry in Kentucky and elsewhere, even without Smith's formal report. Perhaps, it was the level of the seriousness of a blemish that governed whether writers wished to further examine or even call attention to its influence on the fraternity. No matter, any potential influence of Smith's report and findings died the afternoon of the session in which it was given.

We find later in the 1899 Proceedings the following:

THE PROPOSED INSPECTION SYSTEM. The question recurring upon the motion to concur in the recommendations of the Committee on the Inspection System, as read by PGM J Soule Smith (pp. 49-54), Bro. J. M. Beatty moved to postpone the matter indefinitely. The motion to postpone was adopted.¹⁵

Smith died in 1904. There is no record whether he pursued his recommendations in the subsequent Proceedings.

Characteristically, there was no context given about the motion to postpone. No reported discussion as to why it was tabled is found in the Proceedings, nor the vote tally. So, we are left to interpret that the motion to concur with the recommendations of Smith's committee and approval of the subsequent motion to "postpone the matter indefinitely" says the members present clearly did not agree with the recommendations and, perhaps, even the findings in the report.

The vote to postpone "indefinitely" the recommendations of the report was tantamount to declaring that there was nothing in Kentucky Freemasonry at the time warranting further discussion or examination. The disturbing reasons that such recommendations were made or that it was deemed necessary to have a

¹⁵ NOTE: J.M. Beatty was Master of Proctor Lodge No 213 for fifteen different terms. From the Biographic Sketch of Emile B. Beatty, Grand Master, 1943-1944, Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, 1944.

committee inspect lodges in the first place were never formerly addressed. The report was ignored as were the problems it exposed. At the minimum, the opportunity to exercise some introspection was squandered.

We can take from that rejection that those who the report condemned were the ones who voted against it.¹⁶ Judging from how quickly the report and recommendations were postponed, suggests, in the absence of context about it in the Proceedings, that the majority believed at the time that whatever they did was not in need of being addressed. To an outsider, the situation appears to be similar to one that might be found in a school yard where one says, “Is too!” and the other shouts, “Is not!”

There is no record of fact that tells us Smith and his committee overstated or exaggerated their findings, nor is there any record (other than how later writing ignored the report) that everything in it was not an accurate account of the general state of Freemasonry. If all “was well,” why did the grand master in 1897 and 1898 push such a proposal for a committee? Again, if all “was well,” why did the grand master in 1898 bother to create, appoint members, and charge the committee almost immediately?

The answers to those questions are not open to speculation because evidence-based interpretation of events tells us about the general state of the fraternity in Kentucky, and in other jurisdiction as well, the same circumstance contribute to answering later questions about some of the issues that continue to face the fraternity today.

Among those answers we find that yesterday is as today: too many Masonic libraries remain dusty. We see advocates of the idea that more members are essential - as if that has ever been valid evidence of the success of Freemasonry itself. We see inefficiency and incompetence just like any organization of size does – size simply makes both more visible. We find reports of lodges unable to function with any degree of effectiveness. We continue to see a kaleidoscope of understandings of our aim, purpose and our rituals and their delivery. And, we also feel the effects of being unable to retain members, evidenced mostly from the high number of those suspended each year for non-payment of dues who apparently do not see value in being a member of their lodge – a total of 94,379 or an average of 1,547 per year since 1959 alone.¹⁷ None of those things are a criticism, but are an evidence-based interpretation that come from connecting dots.

“For the good of the order” is a phrase that does not always mean what we end up doing *is* for the good of the order. The point of the concept is that we strive to apply the principles of harmony in our attempts to guide our fraternity. That can be a daunting challenge to accomplish when those charged with the responsibility on either side of an issue may prefer to cling to myopic perspectives, remain unaware of

¹⁶ Note: Some of the remarks in Smith’s report noted: “Secretaries are too often inefficient, and Masters are too often incompetent. Records are kept in a slovenly manner.” “... access to the Book of Constitutions is ignored entirely or left to accumulate dust in the home of the Secretary or Master.” “These errors are sometimes the result of carelessness or indolence, but more often of honest and ignorant effort to do the right thing.” Part of the report recounts those areas where weakness and inefficiency were identified and what the committee believed necessary to correct it, i.e., teachers must be competent. Taking the latter proposition first, it is necessary to consider what shall be taught. This might be briefly stated as follows: (1.) How to conduct business for the lodge; (2) the prominent features of the secret work. The teacher, then, must be something more than a mere ritualist. He must be able to explain the best methods of keeping accounts between Secretary and Treasurer, and with the individual members of the lodge. See *Smith’s full report for other details*.

¹⁷ The 2019 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky reports the average lodge dues at: \$49.43 (roughly .14 cents a day), p. 43., Unpublished research project by the William O. Ware Lodge of Research, Dan Kemble, Master, *Membership Losses in Kentucky – 1959 to 2019*.

circumstances and history, or reject the idea and imperative labor required to connect dots and examine events of the past - no matter the topic or organization - in an effort to get closer to truth.

The profound genius of the system of Freemasonry found in its philosophies, tenets and principles has rarely, if ever, been observed as a legitimate impediment to its appeal by men who are duly qualified to be admitted into ranks. Our administration of the method in which we deliver, pass on and explain its purpose under the stewardship of our long-standing model has proven to be the impediment.

Smith and his committee said, "Reforms move slowly, and there must be instruction before there is inspection."¹⁸ Neither occur when "postponed indefinitely."

Who Was J. Soule Smith?

Joshua Soule Smith (1848-1904) was born in Clifton, Georgia. Smith joined the Confederate Army at the age of fifteen where he served in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864 and was held as a prisoner in Point Lookout, Maryland. In 1866, Smith moved to Kentucky where he graduated from Kentucky University's School of Law in 1871. Smith later served as a law lecturer at Kentucky University's School of Law and held the positions of Fayette County Attorney and judge of the Lexington Recorder Court. Smith wrote for various periodicals including the "Lexington Observer and Reporter," the "Lexington Press," the "Cincinnati News Journal," the "The Louisville Times," the "Gatling Gun" and served as the Lexington correspondent for "The Courier-Journal." Often Smith wrote under the pen name "Falcon." In addition, Smith was initiated at Benevolent Lodge in 1868 where he later served as Master. He was also a member of Lexington Lodge No. 1. He wrote extensively regarding Freemasonry and the Knights Templar Webb Encampment, No. 1 of Lexington, Kentucky of which he was an active member in high standing. Smith served as Kentucky Grand Lodge Grand Master from 1887-1888 and was appointed High Priest in 1880. He was known as a staunch opponent to clandestine Masonry which was emerging in the United States. His famous 1890 recipe for Mint Juleps appeared in Kentucky Whiskies in 1949. His writings waxed eloquent about the drink he referred to as "bottled poetry" and "the zenith of man's pleasure - a man who has not tasted one has lived in vain." His address to the Annual Grand Communication in 1888 stands as one of the longest in the history of the Kentucky Grand Lodge at 24 pages. was described by the Los Angeles Herald in his 1904 obituary as "perhaps the best-informed Mason in the United States."

¹⁸ The Committee On Official Visitation And Inspection, Grand Lodge Of Kentucky, F & A. M. Grand Annual Communication Louisville, Kentucky. October 17, 18 And 19, 1899. Pages 49-54.

APPENDIX

Full Report from the Committee on Official Visitation and Inspection

GRAND LODGE OF KENTUCKY, F & A. M. GRAND ANNUAL COMMUNICATION
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY. OCTOBER 17, 18 AND 19, 1899.
Pages 49-54

OFFICIAL VISITATION AND INSPECTION. P.G.M J. Soule Smith, for the special committee appointed last October (Proceedings 1898, - page 4 of cover), presented the following report, which was- made the special order for Wednesday morning immediately after opening: To the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Kentucky F & A M.

In the address of our lamented Grand Master Thompson, delivered to this Grand Body at its meeting in 1898, the following passage occurs (pp: 17-18, Proceedings 189S): , "The infinite number of questions which the Grand Master is called on to answer; the many irregularities which are brought to his attention, and the entire absence of uniformity in the work, and in the practices of the different lodges, I may so speak, all seem to indicate that there should be inaugurated some system of inspection by which lodges could be visited and instructed in the law and practice of the Grand lodge, and the gross irregularities which are only accidentally discovered after the mischief arising from them is done, could be promptly corrected. "I think if the Grand Master was authorized to appoint a sufficient number of learned and discreet Past Masters as his proxies to visit and inspect the lodges within their respective districts, with the powers of the Grand Master for the time being, to inspect the books and examine into the practice of the lodges so visited, and make written reports to him at given times during the year, it would remedy and prevent many existing evils, bring the Grand Master into closer touch with the lodges, and the lodges . into closer touch with the Grand Lodge, and I believe would redound greatly to the benefit of the Craft." This recommendation was by Grand Lodge (p. 24) referred to Committee on Jurisprudence, and upon their suggestion was referred to a Special Committee to report at this session (p. 69).

In conformity with this action our present Grand Master appointed as such committee Brother R. H. Thompson, P. G. M., Brother J. Soule Smith, P. G. M., and Brother W. R. Kraus, Brother Thompson being chairman. After the lamented death of Brother Thompson, the present chairman was appointed in his place and Brother R. S. Coleman was added to the committee.

The appointment of Right Worshipful Brother Thompson as chairman of the committee was not only technically proper, but peculiarly appropriate-ate, since to the consideration of this subject he had for many years brought an ardent zeal for Masonry, governed and directed by a peculiarly conservative and precise intellect. Had he lived, his ideas would have been formulated in this report so clearly as to admit of no double meaning, and so wisely as to commend them to all true Masons of the State. The present chairman of the committee was with Brother Thompson during the preparation of his address, and, with him, discussed at great length the question now to be considered and its kindred subjects, referring to the use of "unauthorized books" and the neglect to use the Book of Constitutions. Upon both these latter topics Grand Master Thompson ex-pressed himself strongly in his address (pp. 18 and 19 of Proceedings).

These three subjects he considered together, and his expressed intention was to have them placed together in his address. The opinions then held by him, the apprehensions he entertained, and the evils he desired to correct were well known to the writer of this, and the position of our departed Grand Master will be substantially stated and elaborated in this report. Grand Master Thompson was too good and wise a Mason to end his life at the graveside; his works do live after him; and the song, which his dumb lips can no longer sing, shall still live in the heart of a friend. Though dead, he yet speaketh.

[Committee Official Report Begins Here]

There can be no question that some plan of inspection for our subordinate lodges is needed, and badly needed. Secretaries are too often inefficient, and Masters are too often incompetent. Records are kept in a slovenly manner, minutes made on loose sheets of paper and imperfectly entered on the lodge book, or not at all; the Book of Constitutions is ignored entirely or left to accumulate dust in the home of the Secretary or Master. The Grand Secretary's office is a model of neatness and accuracy; the blanks and instructions sent out from it are complete and explicit, yet neither the example, nor precept, nor the assistance given seems to enable Secretaries of subordinate lodge stop make correct reports to Grand Lodge, or prepare properly the papers in cases on appeal. Too often the Master, ignorant of fundamentals in Masonry, commits grievous errors or omits necessary proceedings, so that the lodge is put to the expense of a new trial, or else an unworthy brother goes unwhipped of justice to become an eyesore to the public, and an excrescence on the body of Freemasonry.

These errors are sometimes the result of carelessness or indolence, but more often of honest and ignorant effort to do the right thing. In either case, any scheme of betterment must proceed on the assumption that the delinquent officers are willing to be instructed, provided the means of information are properly presented to them. They have, it is true, access to the Book of Constitutions and the circulars of the Grand Secretary; so has every child in this commonwealth access to text-books, but few of them will learn without a teacher. Oral instruction is necessary, and every lodge in the State should have an opportunity to receive it.

This oral instruction should be chiefly directed to the Masters and Secretaries of the lodges and should apply to the technical duties of these officers, and the "landmarks" of the secret work. In working out this plan these are essentials: 1. The instruction must be free to all, and accessible to all. 2. The teacher must be competent. Taking the latter proposition first, it is necessary to consider what shall be taught. This might be briefly stated as follows: (1.) How to conduct business for the lodge ;(2) the prominent features of the secret work. The teacher, then, must be something more than a mere ritualist. He must be able to explain the best methods of keeping accounts between Secretary and Treasurer, and with the individual members of the lodge. More trouble in lodges is due to disputes on money matters than to every other cause. The accurate recording and filing away of bills against the lodge, the proper conduct of trials, the re-cording of testimony, the preparation and authentication of transcripts for appeals and other official documents, should be taught.

To these qualifications he must add a knowledge of the secret work, based on scholarship and meditation, and developed into philosophic harmony of language. His "work" must be more than parrot repetition of unmeaning phrases—it must be the perfect clothing of unutilized thought. He must be ready with a reason for the faith within him and must teach where other teachers may condemn and criticize. If his "work" is not the best, his pupils should have a chance to know that fact. In the "landmarks" of the three degrees he must be proficient and must be able to explain the reason of every step, the philosophy of every gesture. Freemasonry is a philosophy of morals—a religion veiled by the symbols of an operative Craft. It is the science of universal thought, the socialism of universal action.

The explanation of its smallest ceremony has beneath it a deeper explanation, and beneath that there is still a profounder meaning. No man can claim, justly, that he knows all the learning and philosophy of even the first degree in Masonry. The man who is a ritualist, and nothing more, does not even know that his explanations do not explain. He can only say "I so received it" or "it looks better than the old way." Many of them would say—and some of them have said—"the book says so." No Mason who respected his obligation would ever write or print a "book;" no Mason ever has done so without writing himself down a liar and a perjurer; and still Grand Master Thompson said in his address (p.18): "The use of improper and unauthorized books is made a high offense by Oct. Regulation No. 73, and yet I have received information which leads me to believe that Master Masons are in the habit of selling such books to uninformed brethren and professing to have the sanction of the Grand Lodge for so doing. I recommend that a regulation be adopted, making it an offense for any Master to sell or give away such books in this jurisdiction, or to bring any such book into a lodge room and affixing the penalty of ex-pulsion for any Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft or Master Mason found guilty of so doing."

This Grand Lodge has, from its birth until now, consistently refused to adopt or permit any system of "book work," and the late College of Custodians emphatically repudiated a proposition looking toward that result. There is no authorized book containing the Kentucky work, and there never was. Kentucky Masonry has not, and will not, set the seal of its approbation on any Judas Iscariot who has bartered his soul for thirty pieces of silver. Therefore, the Masonic

teacher must be one who can know the false work and reject it. Then we are confronted with the fact that few such men exist—possibly there is not one in this jurisdiction. The same man is not often accurate in business details, and philosophic, in thought. The perfect Secretary is hardly ever an efficient Master. Different qualities of mind are needed in the two stations, and the Masonic teacher must possess the faculties of both. He must be able to instruct in minute details; he must be able to elucidate the outgrowth of profound principles. No such man was ever known to the writer of this, nor does he live in hopes of ever seeing him. But if such a perfect Mason existed, how would he be able to reach all the lodges in this jurisdiction? The Grand" Lodge can take nothing from the funds of our Home for any purpose; it ought not, it must not, for the salvation of our children is paramount to all else. The city lodges could afford to pay the expense of this instruction; but the weak lodges in the country, who most need help of this kind, are not easily accessible. The cost of visiting them would be great, and they are less able to bear even a smaller burden. Nor would it be just that they should pay more for the same services than their more fortunate and wealthier brethren. Grand Lecturers and Grand Orators have the same human nature as other people who are not so grand, but possibly more useful. They would prefer to visit a prosperous lodge, -where the work would be exemplified with robes and magic lanterns, and a banquet would follow their exhausting labor of looking on. We are told that even ministers of the gospel prefer to visit where the chickens are fattest and the milk and honey most abundant. Then if Mahomet cannot go to all the mountains, why not let all the mountains come to Mahomet? It can be done without costing the Grand Lodge anything or putting the subordinate lodges to any expense what-ever. Every lodge in Kentucky has a right to send its representative to the annual meetings of the Grand Lodge. These brethren are here from two to four nights during the session, with no business to occupy their time. Why should they not be instructed then? Some lodge in Louisville would no doubt furnish a hall free of charge, and the meetings would be instructive and entertaining to all who came. If anyone failed to come his lodge could know the reason why, when he returned to them. If anyone failed to learn, he could blame no one but himself. This brings us again to the question of the teacher.

It has been said that no one man possesses all the attributes of the perfect teacher. But two men may in some degree approximate what is desired. There are two nights open for this purpose. Let the Grand Secretary himself, or by his deputy, have charge of this school of instruction on one night. It would save him much time and worry to have competent Secretaries in sub-ordinate lodges, and he could well afford to give one night to the instruction of delegates. Let the Grand Master himself, or some brother appointed by him, have charge of this school on the other night. Let the lectures given not consist of platitudes about "the Mystic tie," or the recitation of doggerel verses, but of real instruction. Let everyone present-prepare himself to ask pertinent questions and let the best minds in this Grand Jurisdiction be there to criticize, and, if necessary, to condemn. The two teachers should be indicated a year in advance, and the brethren desiring information could from time to time send them written questions to be answered before the school in open session. These two nights, which are now wasted, could thus be profitably employed.

Reforms move slowly, and there must be instruction before there is inspection. When this school of Masonry is once in operation, there will be a new class of pupils every year, and in time knowledge will be diffused throughout the lodge. But it is well enough to have some sort of inspection from the beginning. The inspectors should be appointed at once and should visit each lodge and make reports to the Grand Master of deficiencies. These reports would serve as a guide to the teachers, who could call attention to them in their lectures. The inspectors could themselves attend the school, and they, too, might possibly hear something there to their own advantage. This scheme seems to us practical, and though very crude now, yet, year by year, it may be improved upon. It costs nothing to try and can do no harm if tried. If it shall add anything to the efficiency of our officers or contribute at all to the betterment of the Craft, this committee will not have labored in vain.

We therefore suggest the following regulations:

GRAND LECTURERS AND INSPECTORS. Resolved, That at or before the close of each Annual Convocation of this Grand Body there shall be appointed two Grand Lecturers, who shall serve for one year and shall receive for their services the same mileage and per diem, during attendance on the Grand Lodge, as would be paid each of them as representative of his lodge. One of said Grand Lecturers shall be appointed by the Grand Master, one by the Grand Secretary, and, upon failure to appoint, the Grand Officer whose duty it is to make such appointment shall be deemed to have appointed himself to the position. 2. During each annual meeting of this Grand Lodge a school of instruction shall be opened, consisting of two sessions, each session to be presided over by one of said Grand Lecturers, due notice of the time and place of meeting of said school shall be given, and all Master Masons of this jurisdiction in good standing shall have the privilege of attending said school. 3. It shall be the duty of said Grand Lecturers when the Grand Lodge is not in session to answer all proper questions propounded to them in writing from any subordinate

lodge or officer thereof in this jurisdiction, which answers shall be final, if satisfactory to the lodge; and said questions and answers shall be reported to the school of instruction at its next meeting for information and discussion; but no such decisions shall be considered as law of this Grand Lodge unless approved by the Grand Master and confirmed by the Grand Lodge. And either of said Grand Lecturers may visit and instruct any subordinate lodge desiring his services, at any time during his term of office and shall receive therefor such compensation as maybe agreed upon with said lodge.

The necessary stamps and stationery shall be furnished each of said Grand Lecturers by the Grand Secretary upon proper requisition, the same to be paid for by the Grand Lodge. 4. It shall be the duty of each Grand Master, as soon as convenient after his installation to appoint one or more skilled Past Masters in each legislative district, as inspector for said district.

Said inspectors shall visit each subordinate lodge in their respective districts at least once during the Masonic year and shall inspect the books and work of such lodges and make a report in writing of said inspection to the Grand Master on or before September 30, of each year. 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption, as a Regulation, and remain such until repealed or amended by the Grand Lodge, and a copy of it shall be sent immediately to every subordinate lodge in this jurisdiction.