

PROVINCE OF DORSET.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH

THE M. W. THE G. M.

AND

LETTER TO THE PROVINCE,

ON A RECENT CHARGE.

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PRINTED BY E. WILLS,  
AXMINSTER.

FREE MASONS' HALL,  
LONDON 18th OCTOBER, 1853.

R. W. Brother,  
The subject of a report given in the last number of the Free Masons' Quarterly Review, of the proceedings which are there stated to have taken place, at a meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge for Dorsetshire, holden at Wareham, on the 18th of August last, at which you are stated to have presided, having been brought to the notice of the M. W. Grand Master, The Earl of Zetland, I am commanded by his Lordship to enquire of you "whether the report given in the \*Free Masons' Quarterly Review, of the proceedings of the Provincial Grand Lodge, held at Wareham, on the 18th of August last, is correct in substance, as to the Costume in which you appeared, and the Address you delivered to the Brethren." And I am to request that you will favor me with a reply as early as possible, for the Grand Master's information.

I have the Honor to be, with fraternal respect,  
R. W. Prov. Grand Master,  
Your obedt. Servt. and Brother,  
WILLIAM H. WHITE, G. S.

To the R. W. Brother,  
WILLIAM TUCKER, ESQ.,  
Provincial Grand Master of Dorsetshire.

CORYTON PARK, AXMINSTER,  
24th OCTOBER, 1853.

M. W. Grand Master,  
My Lord.

I have received a letter from the G. S. written at your command requesting to know whether a charge printed in the Free Masons' Quarterly Review was delivered by me at Wareham, as there appears, and whether I wore on that occasion certain Robes, there described.—The substance of the charge in the Free Masons' Quarterly Review, I did deliver, and if your Lordship wishes it I can send you the original draft. The Robe also I did wear, but with and in addition to my full Clothing as P. G. Master.—I wish in this matter to be open and honest, and therefore as a Brother County Magistrate, as well as Brother Mason, I throw myself entirely on you.—If I have done any thing annoying to you, or that can be magnified into the most minute scintilla of an attack on you or your dignity as Grand Master, I regret it:—I never intended it:—I never for one moment had

such a thought.—My endeavour has ever been to uphold Freemasonry in every way, and to endeavour to take away the reproach which it once had of being Antichristian, and a mere convivial club:—in this I have eminently succeeded, the Ladies are with us, and the Clergy, if they do not absolutely support us are not against us, in my province; you have no P. G. Master who would support you in the *hour of trial* more than I would; did I not do so to \* \* \* \* \* when I had personal reasons to go the other way? From you I hold my appointment as P. G. M., my allegiance is due to you and you have it. I have myself, before receiving the G. S's. letter, well considered the matter over, and I had determined never more to mix any thing with Craft and Royal Arch Masonry, than what was sanctioned by G. Lodge and G. Chapter.

I have the honor to remain,  
M. W. Grand Master,  
Your Lordship's most obedt. Servt. and Brother,  
WILLIAM TURNER, P. G. M., Dorset.

PRIVATE.

Right Honorable,  
Earl Zetland,  
Aske Hall, Richmond,  
Yorkshire.

FREE MASONS' HALL,  
LONDON, 10th NOVEMBER, 1853.

R. W. Brother,  
I have the commands of the M. W. Grand Master, The Earl of Zetland, to acknowledge the receipt by his Lordship of your Letter dated the 24th October last, in answer to the Official enquiry "whether the Report "given in the Free Masons' Quarterly Review of the proceedings of the Provincial Grand Lodge, held at Warrham on the 18th of August last, is correct in substance, as to the Costume in which you appeared, and the address you delivered to the Brethren," and to which you reply that:—

"The substance of the Charge in the Free Masons' Quarterly Review I did deliver, and if your Lordship wishes it I can send you the original draft. The Robe also I did wear, but with and in addition to my full Clothing of Provincial Grand Master," and you add, that if you had done any thing annoying to his Lordship, or that could by possibility be magnified into an attack upon him, or on his Dignity as Grand Master, you regret it.

His Lordship never for a moment imagined any intention of a personal attack, and therefore begs you will dismiss from your thoughts any such idea; but the Proceedings referred to, were so completely at variance with the Ancient Constitutions and foundation of Freemasonry, and to the expressed and declared Laws of the Grand Lodge,

which he as Grand Master, is solemnly pledged to uphold and enforce, that he feels it impossible to view them without the deepest pain. He doubts not that the opinions you expressed are the convictions of your Mind, but the doctrines promulgated are so opposed to the universality of the Craft, which admits within its Pale, all who "believe in the glorious architect of Heaven and Earth, and practise the sacred Duties of Morality," and that without enquiry into their particular mode of Worship, that he cannot permit any of his Officers while in Lodge, to introduce subjects of controversy, and thereby risk the breaking asunder those ties by which the virtuous of every persuasion may be united in the firm and pleasing bond of fraternal love.—You say, that, with your Robe, and in addition to it, you wore your full clothing as Provincial Grand Master, that it is which makes it obnoxious to the Law; out of Lodge every one may wear whatever decoration he chooses, and express whatever opinions may please him, it is only within the Lodge walls that the laws forbid the introduction of aught which might excite differences of feeling and be a prelude to personal discord and contention.—It is not here necessary to enter upon an examination of the statements made in your address, many of which are historically incorrect, but the publicity you have given to opinions so opposed to those which have ever been held and pronounced by the Grand Lodge of England, and by the Ancient Craft, imposes upon the Grand Master the necessity of these remarks, and at the same time of relieving you from the burthen of an Office, the Duties of which it is manifest you cannot longer discharge without a sacrifice of your convictions.

The Grand Master cannot refrain from reiterating how deeply he is pained by the course which he is compelled to adopt, at the same time assuring you that personally his sentiments of regard remain unaltered.

I have the Honor to be,

R. W. Sir & Brother,

Yours truly and fraternally,

WILLIAM H. WHITE, G. S.

To

The R. W. Brother,

WILLIAM TUCKER, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

CORYTON PARK,

21st NOVEMBER, 1853.

My Lord,

I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your decision communicated to me by the G. S., in his letter dated Nov. 10, and I trust your Lordship will see no objection to the course I am about to pursue, in replying to that letter in the present form, inasmuch as my removal from the P. G. Mastership of Dorset, must eventually be published.

I had trusted that when I addressed the letter to your Lordship, dated Oct 24, and marked "*private*" on the address, either that your Lordship would have afforded me an opportunity of more fully stating my opinions respecting the course I had thought proper to pursue at Wareham, previous to your Lordship's coming to a decision, or in case of your Lordship's declining to receive any private communication, you would have requested from me an *official* reply to your official communication. I may my Lord be mistaken, but I apprehend that a letter distinguished as "*private*", should not have been regarded as either official or conclusive, or employed as a means for substantiating the propriety of removing me from my office, nevertheless I have thought it right to publish my *private* letter to your Lordship, as in consequence of your Lordship's decision I desire nothing more earnestly than that the widest possible circulation may be given to the circumstances which have led to my dismissal.

It is natural after the attachment which I have ever shewn to Craft masonry, and after my constant endeavours to sustain its principles, and as I am convinced to carry them out to their legitimate development and conclusions.—It is but natural I repeat, that I should strive to justify myself before my Masonic Brethren, and deprecate the severity of your Lordship's sentence upon me, seeing that unfortunately there is no appeal from your Lordship's verdict.

In the first place it appears that the union of Craft Jewels, with the dress and decorations of Christian Masonic degrees, not recognised by the Book of Constitutions, and decided by your Lordship as opposed to them, is one ground of offence. If your Lordship can take the trouble to make the inquiry, it will be found that the late George the 4th and also the Duke of Sussex wore non masonic jewels with the full masonic costume of Grand Master. This combination of non-masonic, with masonic decorations, is by no means uncommon in many provinces, and not always discountenanced by P. G. Masters. I am aware that it is irregular, and that in this point I had erred against the Book of Constitutions, and had in consequence taken the resolve as expressed in the concluding paragraph of my private letter to your Lordship, not to repeat that error for the future. I am obliged however to seek for other reasons for your Lordship's decision, inasmuch as every brother must consider that the infraction of the law referred to, regulating a mere question of costume and not any vital point of masonry, has been too severely avenged by the deposition of a P. G. M. from his office.

In the next place it is asserted that "the *proceedings* referred to, "at Wareham, were so completely at variance with the Ancient Constitutions and foundation of Freemasonry, and to the expressed and "declared Law of the Grand Lodge, which you as G. M. are solemnly "pledged to uphold and enforce, that you feel it impossible to view "them without the deepest pain." I think that the authority for your Lordship's accusation, the F. Q. R. does not contain in its report of the

proceedings at Wareham any proof of the assertion hazarded in the paragraph I have quoted, I unhesitatingly assert that the "proceedings" were strictly conducted not "at variance" but in perfect accordance with "the Ancient Constitutions and foundation of Freemasonry, and with the expressed and declared laws of the Grand Lodge". The meeting was numerously attended and witnesses will not be wanting if required, to sustain my opinion. I now turn to the last point of accusation, namely that, "the doctrines promulgated (by me) are so opposed to the universality of the Craft, which admits within its pale, all who "believe in the glorious architect of Heaven and Earth, and practise the sacred duties of moralit, and that without enquiring into their particular mode of worship". One difficulty attends my free discussion of this point, which also affects your Lordship, I advocate the full development of the worship of the Divinity in all its attributes, and that of the sacred duties of the moral law as expanded in the Christian law. In a word I profess the principles and hold the degrees of Christian Masonry, to which your Lordship is masculinly opposed, and for which I firmly believe I have been deposed by your Lordship. But the universality of Craft Masonry is not affected by Christian Masonry, no one can enjoy the privileges of the latter who has not proved himself a good man in the former, and who consequently has promised his allegiance to Grand Lodge. It is a necessary qualification for the Ancient and accepted Rite, that the Candidate comes recommended by his honest practice of the principles of craft masonry. How then such can be adverse to the universality of Craft Masonry or check its success or promulgation I am at a loss to imagine! I trust my Lord that you have not been prompted by others to take a hasty step, on grounds, which they have not the ability, and your Lordship has probably not the time sufficiently to examine!

I acknowledge all the principles of Craft Masonry, I quarrel not with him who is satisfied with them, and cares not to pursue them farther, he will still claim, and I will ever render to him the privileges he may seek at my hands. Imperfect as these statements are from the circumstance I have alluded to they are due both to your Lordship and my Masonic Brethren generally.

It is my intention to publish a letter to the Officers and Brethren of my Province, over which I presided, who have served me so well, so faithfully, and so affectionately. I have no disposition to revive the discussion, unless urgent circumstances demand it of me, satisfied that those who know me best, will most truly and justly appreciate my actions.

I remain my Lord,

Your Lordship's obedt. Servt. and Brother.

WILLIAM TUCKER.

CORYTON PARK,  
21st NOVEMBER, 1853.

To the P. G. Officers, Masters of Lodges and Brethren, of the Province of Dorset.

My dear Brothers,

The Grand Master has deprived me of the Office of Provincial Grand Master.

The correspondence which precedes this letter, will inform you of the grounds on which his Lordship has dismissed me, and I leave you to form your own opinions on the statements therein contained. I need not say to those not holding the degrees of Christian Masonry, that I could no more enter on the full explanation of its principles to them, than they could unfold Craft Masonry to the popular world. Those who are acquainted with those degrees will really understand my position.

Provincial and Past Provincial, Officers, Masters, and Brethren of the Province,

I thank you collectively and individually for the good, faithful, and affectionate service you have ever rendered me as your P. G. M.

The office of P. G. M. enabled me to do much, that a Mason not so exalted in rank is unable to perform. The possession of that office could not increase my masonic zeal, the loss of it cannot diminish it, and if I required incentives to keep that zeal still alive and active, I have but to turn to the congratulatory addresses which attended my installation seven years ago, as your Provincial Grand Master.

One word in conclusion.—Study carefully the principles of Craft Masonry,—practice them,—reflect upon them,—examine their bearings,—search for their essentials, and rely upon it you will appreciate with many others their vital importance, and their universality increased and augmented by the principles developed in the degrees of Christian Masonry.

And now farewell,

Your P. G. M. no longer, still

Your Brother in Masonry,

WILLIAM TUCKER.