

UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND.



GRAND SECRETARY'S
OFFICE.

FREEMASONS' HALL,

GREAT QUEEN STREET,

LONDON, W.C.2.

August, 1938.

AIMS AND RELATIONSHIPS OF THE CRAFT.

The M.W. The Grand Master H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, K.G., has authorised the issue of the undermentioned Statement, which, together with the extract from the Board's Report to Grand Lodge, has been ordered to be read in all Lodges and circulated to all the members under the English Jurisdiction.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES TO GRAND LODGE, SEPTEMBER 7TH, 1938.

Owing to representations which have been received with reference to the present political position on the Continent, and its effect upon Freemasonry, the M.W. The Grand Master felt that it was desirable to obtain the opinion of the Grand Lodges of Ireland and Scotland upon the necessity for a restatement of the attitude of Freemasonry towards political affairs and of the principles which govern our Grand Lodges in the recognition of other Grand Lodges.

A Conference was held in London on the 20th June last, which was attended by responsible Officers of the three Home Grand Lodges. As a result of this meeting, a Statement (which is printed as an Appendix to this report—and is printed below) was agreed and recommended to be issued.

The Board, having adopted the recommendation, is now informed that the M.W. The Grand Master has authorised the Grand Secretary to issue the Statement for the information of the Craft and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the position of the Grand Lodge with respect to these matters may be fully understood.

AIMS AND RELATIONSHIPS OF THE CRAFT.

From time to time the United Grand Lodge of England has deemed it desirable to set forth in precise form the aims of Freemasonry as consistently practised under its Jurisdiction since it came into being as an organised body in 1717, and also to define the principles governing its relations with those other Grand Lodges with which it is in fraternal accord.

In view of representations which have been received, and of statements recently issued which have distorted or obscured the true objects of Freemasonry, it is once again considered necessary to emphasize certain fundamental principles of the Order.

The first condition of admission into, and membership of, the Order is a belief in the Supreme Being. This is essential and admits of no compromise.

The Bible, referred to by Freemasons as the Volume of the Sacred Law, is always open in the Lodges. Every candidate is required to take his Obligation on that book or on the Volume which is held by his particular creed to impart sanctity to a oath or promise taken upon it.

Everyone who enters Freemasonry is, at the outset, strictly forbidden to countenance any act which may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society; he must pay due obedience to the law of any state in which he resides or which may afford him protection, and he must never be remiss in the allegiance due to the Sovereign of his native land.

While English Freemasonry thus inculcates in each of its members the duties of loyalty and citizenship, it reserves to the individual the right to hold his own opinion with regard to public affairs. But neither in any Lodge nor at any time in his capacity as a Freemason, is he permitted to discuss or to advance his views on theological or political questions.

The Grand Lodge has always consistently refused to express any opinion on questions of foreign or domestic state policy either at home or abroad, and it will not allow its name to be associated with any action, however humanitarian it may appear to be, which infringes its unalterable policy of standing aloof from every question affecting the relations between one government and another, or between political parties, or questions as to rival theories of government.

The Grand Lodge is aware that there do exist Bodies, styling themselves Freemasons, which do not adhere to these principles, and while that attitude exists the Grand Lodge of England refuses absolutely to have any relations with such Bodies, or to regard them as Freemasons.

The Grand Lodge of England is a Sovereign and independent Body practising Freemasonry only within the three Degrees and only within the limits defined in its Constitution as 'pure Antient Masonry.' It does not recognise or admit the existence of any superior Masonic authority, however styled.

On more than one occasion the Grand Lodge has refused, and will continue to refuse, to participate in Conferences with so called International Associations claiming to represent Freemasonry, which admit to membership Bodies failing to conform strictly to the principles upon which the Grand Lodge of England is founded. The Grand Lodge does not admit any such claim, nor can its views be represented by any such Association.

There is no secret with regard to any of the basic principles of Freemasonry, some of which have been stated above. The Grand Lodge will always consider the recognition of those Grand Lodges which profess, and practise, and can show that they have consistently professed and practised those established and unaltered principles, but in no circumstances will it enter into discussion with a view to any new or varied interpretation of them. They must be accepted and practised wholeheartedly and in their entirety by those who desire to be recognised as Freemasons by the United Grand Lodge of England.

Sydney A. White.

Grand Secretary.