

There are but three grades of punishment applicable to offences against Masonic law and morals, viz: suspension, exclusion, and expulsion. The Grand Lodge may award any one of these three; but a private Lodge only the first and second, and even then subject to appeal to Grand Lodge.

Suspension may be definite or indefinite, but always pre-supposes a termination, by restoration to full membership or otherwise—as when a Lodge suspends one of its members for non-payment of dues, whenever the conditions are complied with by the payment of the sum due at the time of suspension, with the accruing arrears, the suspended member resumes his position, without any action taken or required by the Lodge; or when a member is suspended on a specific charge, and the matter laid before Grand Lodge, the latter may try the accused afresh, and, if guilt is proved, inflict such punishment as may be proper.

Exclusion is the removal of a member's name, by a private Lodge, from its roll, for a proved breach of its by-laws, or of the general laws of the Craft, subject to an appeal by the person accused. The Grand Lodge would, of course, in case of appeal, review the judgment of the Lodge appealed from; but if the whole procedure was found regular, the offence proved, and of such a magnitude as to call for such a punishment, it is doubtful how far the Grand Lodge would be justified in disturbing the judgment, and forcing a Lodge to receive back into membership a member so excluded. If no appeal has been made to Grand Lodge, and no action taken by that body, the brother would naturally stand towards the Craft as an unaffiliated Mason.

The power of expulsion is vested in Grand Lodge alone, and cannot be delegated to any person or persons whatever. It is the deliberate act of the whole Craft, and cuts off an individual from all the rights and privileges of Freemasonry without appeal. This power is, I understand, exercised in several of the States of the Union by private Lodges; but the principle must surely be incorrect. When a candidate is initiated, he is not only received as a member of the Lodge where he first sees the light, but, and this is out of sight the greater privilege, he is admitted a member of the universal Masonic Brotherhood; and, I do not see how he can be deprived of this privilege except by his peers, in other words, by the whole Craft assembled in general convention—that is, by Grand Lodge. The whole extent to which a Lodge can punish, is in reference to a brother's membership with that Lodge. If anything further is called for, it must be brought before Grand Lodge, and so be the act of the whole Craft.

The system of fines used at one time to be quite a favourite mode of punishment in Lodges, and may be so still in some cases, for all I know to the contrary; but very little argument is necessary to shew how incorrect the system is. Granted, for one moment, the power of a Lodge