

A Brother died while under suspension for non-payment of dues. The Worshipful Master of his Lodge telegraphed me that before his death his arrears were offered, but the Lodge could not meet in time to restore him, under the circumstances, and at the request of the Worshipful Master, I granted a dispensation that the deceased Brother might be accorded a Masonic burial.

I felt compelled, in a case where a Brother had died while under suspension for non-payment of dues, to refuse a dispensation, there being no existing reasons to call forth the exercise of my prerogative, and I could not allow personal considerations to prevail.

On more than one occasion I have been called on to grant a dispensation to initiate a candidate out of the jurisdiction of the Lodge where he resides. I have in every case, in addition to the good reasons for asking the exercise of my powers being shown, required the consent of that Lodge. Our Constitution confirms the inherent right of every Lodge to initiate residents within its jurisdiction, but allows the Grand Master a dispensing power, and though I would not limit that high prerogative, yet I feel that power should not be exercised to the possible detriment of the Lodge without the opportunity being given of expressing their consent or reasonable dissent. In two instances I have refused to shorten the month's term which our Constitution requires as requisite to intervene between the conferring the degrees. While on the subject of dispensations, I feel bound to remark, that so long as Masons are required to look to the Constitution for their governance, the power of dispensation should be most carefully used. The paramount duty of the Grand Master is not only to enforce the ancient charges and regulations, the Constitutions, the statutes, rules, resolutions and ceremonies of the Grand Lodge, but to observe and obey them himself; and certainly the

dispensing power which is claimed as the inherent prerogative of a Grand Master (I mean beyond those cases where dispensation is expressly permitted in the Constitution), should be exercised, if indeed at all, with the utmost prudence and caution, and these safeguards should be extended to those cases of dispensation expressly provided for. How can a Grand Master enforce proceedings against a Brother for breach of Masonic Rule, when he himself, though shielded perhaps by the unwritten law of prerogative, dispenses with the law laid down by the assembled wisdom of his Brethren and fellows, and creates for temporary purposes another. Better, I believe, that a single case of inconvenience should be suffered than that a positive violation of the Constitution by the exercise of the unprovided for dispensing power be allowed. I say inconvenience, because from the judicious care evinced by the Grand Lodge in their written laws, a case of hardship can hardly ever occur to require the unwritten dispensing power of the Grand Master. While he only puts in use his constitutional powers and does not attempt the exercise of his unwritten prerogative in his government of the craft, their allegiance to him will never be strained or jeopardized.

Application was made to me for permission for certain Brethren to attend as Masons the funeral of a Brother who desired to be buried according to the Ritual of a non-Masonic Society, to which he belonged. I held that the Brethren should not appear as a Lodge, or clothed as Masons on funeral occasions, unless the burial rites were performed under the exclusive control of the Lodge, and according to the procedure laid down in the Book of Constitution, which only allows the addition of the funeral services of the church to which the deceased belonged. The rights and privileges of the church or the minister in performing the burial services are to be interfered with, but