

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, FREEMASONRY

THE NEW AGE

MAGAZINE



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The Official Organ of
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is continually being recruited by a stream of young men from industries which rely upon unskilled boy labor, and turn it adrift at manhood, without any specific industrial qualification, and that it will never be diminished till this stream is arrested."

The thousands that leave school before completing the grade studies to take up their life work, unprepared and half-baked, bear mute testimony to the fact that "something is rotten in Denmark," to use a Shakespearean phrase. If we want to be a proficient and productive nation we cannot afford to neglect these things. The United States Government saw the necessity of encouraging and fostering vocational education when Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act, and established the Board for Vocational Education. On October 26, the first Federal grants of money (allotments totalling \$423,532) to the States was made, seven States having complied with the law by submitting plans for—

the promotion of vocational education and agreeing to match every Federal dollar with money publicly raised by the State or local community. Texas has complied with the law as far as agricultural education is concerned, and an allotment has been made for salaries of instructors in agricultural schools.

The payments are made through State boards for vocational education and are divided into three general classes, as follows: Money allotted on the basis of rural population for the salaries of teachers, supervisors, or directors of agricultural subjects; money allotted on the basis of urban population for the salaries of teachers of trade, home economics, and industrial subjects, and money allotted on the basis of total population for the maintenance of teacher-training courses in these branches

The total available for use during the current fiscal year is \$1,800,000, and an equal amount must be raised by the States. Thirty-five States have so far submitted plans to the Federal Board for approval, and they are being passed upon as rapidly as possible. Negotiations are in progress between the Federal Board and States which have not yet submitted any plans.

States to which grants have been made, and the amounts, follow:

Arizona—For teachers of agriculture, \$5,000; for teachers of trade and industrial subjects, \$5,000; for teacher-training courses, \$5,000.

Arkansas—Agriculture, \$13,898; industrial, \$5,000; training courses, \$8,590.

California—Agriculture, \$9,197; industrial, \$17,375; training courses, \$12,972.

Maine—Agriculture, \$5,000; industrial, \$5,000; training courses, \$5,000.

New York—Agriculture, \$19,535; industrial, \$84,950; training courses, \$49,724.

Pennsylvania—Agriculture, \$30,744; industrial, \$54,745; training courses, \$41,821.

Utah—Agriculture, \$5,000; industrial, \$5,000; training courses, \$5,000.

Texas—Agriculture, \$29,974.

Although grants are made on a relative population basis, the law provides that the minimum shall be \$5,000.

WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN AN AGNOSTIC ?

"Lincoln was not a type. He stands alone—no ancestors, no fellows, and no successors."
—ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

One of the greatest tributes ever paid to a public man was paid to Abraham Lincoln, by Robert G. Ingersoll, the great agnostic. "Lincoln," he said, "was not a type. He stands alone—no ancestors, no fellows, and no successors. Wealth could not purchase, power could not awe, this divine, this loving man. . . . He spoke, not to inflame, not to upbraid, but to convince. He raised his hands, not to strike, but in benediction." In speaking of Lincoln as this "*divine, this loving man,*" Ingersoll struck the keynote of the great publicist's character. We are all, in one sense of the word, *divine*. We are incarnations upon this planet of the Source of All Things, the one resplendent Life that constitutes the Soul of the Universe. In some men the fire of divinity is blown into a white heat, in others it merely smoulders. It is never quite extinct in any individual, needing only some terrible crisis, some social or political cataclysm to fan it into a scorching flame. The recognition of one's divine origin, of one's dependence upon a Divine Providence has always distinguished the truly great man. The mere materialist, the agnostic, cannot rise to heights sublime in any walk of life. Our great agnostic, Colonel Ingersoll, had command of a wealth of rhetoric, but the *divine afflatus* never descended

upon him to make his words immortal, for he was the doubter of his age. But he spoke of Lincoln as "this *divine* man," and we feel constrained to interpret the phrase to mean Lincoln's full appreciation and recognition of a Divine Providence, of an infinite "I" within himself and an infinite "I" outside of him, be Ingersoll's meaning what it may.

Ever since the death of Lincoln a controversy has been waged regarding his religious views. It is discussed in books, in the daily press, and in magazine literature. It flares up and dies down, only to rise again. Some writers have proclaimed Lincoln to have been an agnostic, an infidel, and a skeptic in religious matters. Only recently in the New York press has the discussion taken on an acute stage. Like Banquo's ghost it will not "down." Freethinkers, on their "soap-boxes," have glorified in the supposed fact of Lincoln's infidelity.

Again we ask the question: "Was Abraham Lincoln an agnostic? And we answer most emphatically, "No!" That he was a believer in dogmatic Christianity admits of considerable doubt. But that he denied the existence of God and the immortal destiny of the soul—bed-rock doctrines of Freemasonry—we do not admit for a single instant. In all his published speeches and official documents there is not a line of evidence to disprove his faith in an over-ruling Providence. The story of his alleged *infidelity* (that is to say doubt as regards "revealed religion") springs from the assertion of his former law partner, William H. Herndon, who alleges that Lincoln, during his early manhood, wrote a manuscript directed against religion, but afterwards destroyed it. As he matured and came fully into his own, his views changed; he became a deeply religious man as all have testified who came into personal contact with him. But being a *religious* man does not necessarily bind a man to any particular creed or church. And yet Lincoln did not scorn the church, but constantly went to the Presbyterian Church, while President, and joined with others in openly confessing God before men.

Ida M. Tarbell, in her "Life of Abraham Lincoln" says:

For a short period of his life when he was about 25 years of age, it is certain that he revolted against the Christian system, and even went so far as to prepare a pamphlet against it. The manuscript of this work was destroyed by his friend, Samuel Hill. This period of doubt passed, and though there is nothing to show that Mr. Lincoln returned to the *literal interpretation of Christianity* (the italics are mine) which he had been taught, and though he never joined any religious sect, it is certain that he regarded the Bible and the church with deep reverence. He was a regular attendant upon religious services, and one has only to read his letters and speeches to realize that his literary style and his moral point of view were both formed by the Bible.

It was after his election to the presidency that we begin to find evidences that Mr. Lincoln held to the belief that the affairs of men are in the keeping of a Divine Being, who hears and answers prayer, and who is to be trusted to bring about the final triumph of the right. He publicly acknowledged such a faith when he bade his Springfield friends good-bye in February, 1861. In his first inaugural address, he told the country that the difficulty between North and South could be adjusted in "the best way," by "intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance in Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land." When he was obliged to summon a Congress to provide means for a civil war, he started them forth on their duties with the words, "Let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear and with manly hearts." In August, 1861, he issued a proclamation for a National Fast Day which is most impressive for its reverential spirit.

After the death of his son, Lincoln was frequently seen with the Bible in his hand, and he is known to have prayed often. Says Miss Tarbell: "His personal relation to God occupied his mind much." There can be no doubt upon these points. Read the famous Gettysburg speech and witness Lincoln's dependence on God. No, Abraham Lincoln was no *agnostic*! No truly great, sincere and loving soul can be! The word "infidel" sometimes hurled against Lincoln, has been cast at many other great souls, aye, even at the Nazarene, by the dogmatists of his time. But this rather opprobrious word today means anything else but *atheist*; rather does it stand for a rebel against the social and religious order of the times. But *agnostic* means what it always has meant—a skeptic; one who professes not to know, and frequently places all other people in his own category.

FAME

Who buried Atlantis
 And devoured Egypt?
 Into what jaws has Athens gone?
 Galley-slave and Agamemnon, the great king, are shovelled under,
 And the girl that combed the hair of Helen is dust with her golden mistress. . . .
 Cities of great pride, with their multitudes,
 Have gone down,
 And Spring, that called out the boy Dante into the streets of Florence,
 Silent when Beatrice walked,
 Opens wild roses in the ruins over the dead,
 The snows where Saga heroes fought
 Melted with those warriors,
 And the desert girls of Arabia are only a song and an echo in our brains.

—James Oppenheim: THE BOOK OF SELF.

"History has no room for all those who throng about her gates without succeeding in getting in and leaving traces of their stay."—Guizot.

There is one degree of the Scottish Rite that always makes a great impression on the thoughtful aspirant—the Fifth, or *Perfect Master*. It trenches more or less on the Third Degree of the Symbolic Lodge, and yet tells the story in a different manner. Its lesson, in the main, is the duty we owe to the dead as regards their sepulture and memory; and faith in the immortality of the soul. It has still another lesson: *the insignificance of man* and the *immensity of God*. We are but grains of sand on the seashore, the bubbles and froth of the wave, wreaths of smoke in the air. All this is poetically and wonderfully expressed in the book of *Ecclesiastes* of the Old Testament, from which Freemasonry has borrowed some of its most effective bits of ritualism; and in the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayam. The great silence of death and the utter oblivion that overcomes the vast majority of men appal the human heart. The English writer, W. S. Lilly, in his "Wisest of the Greeks," expresses himself as follows on this tremendous theme:

I suppose there are few thoughtful persons who from time to time have not been overwhelmed by the consideration of those two vast realms of silence, the past and the grave. Certainly, Nature herself invites our meditation upon them as we go on in life and draw near to its inevitable end. The truth of the Homeric comparison between men and leaves grows upon us when *we* begin to fade and realize, ever increasingly, that we too "shall follow the generations of our fathers and shall never see light." The generations of our fathers—how many generations since the dawn of human history, to say nothing of the countless ages which preceded it! And this is "their brief epitome." One after another they

Perish, and no one asks
 Who or what they have been;
 More than he asks what waves
 In the midmost ocean have swelled,
 Foamed for a moment and gone.

Yes, gone; and for the most part their memorial has perished with them. How sad and strange it is—at least that is my experience—to wander about the ruins of some ancient city. There are the massive stones which once composed palaces and temples, mute witnesses to myriads of vanished lives: there are the stones, but where are the builders? A whole civilization, different from ours indeed, but unquestionably great from the tokens of it which remain, gone like an "insubstantial vision."

But the stillness of these far-off centuries is broken here and there. Over the waste of thousands of years great names, good and bad, have come down to us: "great deeds done endure." Of some of the chief benefactors of our race indeed we do not know even the names. We ask in vain who invented writing, who discovered fire, who first entrusted his frail bark to the sea. But their gifts unto men remain, and are the foundation of the civilization whereby we now live. And as the years advance, oblivion recedes. For centuries, while man was emerging from racial childhood, darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people. But still light has traveled to us from ages very far off, revealing creative epochs which may yet be profitably studied: making known master spirits who yet "rule us from their urns." (*19th Century*, May, 1917.)

For the skeptic and materialist life must indeed be sad as they descend into the Valley of the Shadow of Death without so much as the feeble light of a lamp

to guide them on their way. To the Perfect Master, however, this life is only a stepping stone to a more perfect existence in the realm of spirit. For him, death possesses no terrors nor sting. It is but the raising of the curtain on another act in the grand drama of the soul. His memory among men may speedily be forgotten, but what of that? All these efforts to attain fame on earth are doomed to disappointment so far as the majority of men are concerned. Take, for example, the field of literature. The steam rotary press and wood-pulp paper have made printing so cheap that almost any tyro can publish a book these days. The result is that the market is flooded with tons of trash, books, pamphlets and magazines, not worth the paper they are printed on. The efforts of really good writers to survive amid this sea of banality are extremely difficult. Literary fame! What is it in this age? A rope of sand to hold by. A good resolution to make is to read no books except those that have the stamp of *classics*. It is a waste of time to do otherwise.

MASONS AND AMERICANS IN GENERAL, TAKE DUE NOTE

We clip the following, which should be highly interesting to all good American citizens, from the *Masonic Chronicler* (Chicago) of January 5.

NO SURRENDER TO THE KAISER

A dispatch of unusual interest appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* of recent date. It should be read and considered by all Americans. It is printed in full because it fails to tell the whole story and it needs a critical analysis to find the purpose of the cardinal. It reads:

Baltimore, Md., Dec. 25.—Cardinal Gibbons, responding to an inquiry today as to what he believed the most essential thing to be done to win the war, said: I believe that the best way to end the war early in the coming year is for the central powers to make a definite proposition, and one that will embrace all their aims and demands.

On the part of the United States, I believe that the best governmental action would be for the officials to put themselves in a receptive mood for the generous consideration of any peace offer that might come from the Central Powers. I think that all Americans should put themselves in a position to sympathetically receive and consider any offer embodying fundamental concessions that would commend themselves to the Allies, and to ponder over these propositions in a dispassionate and broad-minded way.

It might not be unfair to inquire why Cardinal Gibbons evaded the question, "What he believed the most essential thing to be done to *win* the war?" He did not answer the question. Why? Can it be that he does not want the United States to win the war? It is hoped no such thought enters the Mind of the Cardinal.

The cardinal gave his idea of how to *end* the war, and suggested that the Central Powers "make a definite proposition, and one that will embrace all their aims and *demands*." He then proceeded to state that he believed the officials of the United States (not the Allies) should "put themselves in a receptive mood for the generous consideration of *any peace offer* that might come from the Central Powers."

This seemingly harmless statement on the part of Cardinal Gibbons should cause all citizens, and especially Roman Catholics, serious concern. Reduced to plain English, it means that the Kaiser should formulate his demands and the United States should accept them.

This plan is given as the best way to *end* the war early in the coming year.

The declared policy of the United States government is well known. The president has clearly defined the attitude of the United States and it is at variance with the plans of the cardinal.

Why does the cardinal give it as his opinion that the people should put themselves in a position to "sympathetically receive and consider any offer" from the war lord? The war could be ended in 30 days if the United States and its allies would accede to the demands of the Central Powers.

Patriotic Roman Catholics should, and no doubt will, resent any effort to influence the United States to change its avowed determination to spread democracy and liberty to other sections of the world and to destroy military autocracy to the end that peace and happiness may become permanent.

If it is the avowed purpose of the Roman Catholic church to instill in the minds of the American people that the war should end regardless of the terms, its purpose will fail. The people of this country understand the issues and they will not be swerved from their determination to stand by the President until militarism shall have been completely crushed.

Cardinal Gibbons may recommend surrender to the Kaiser, but there will be no surrender. It might be well to suggest that the Pope keep his hands off.