

MESSAGE TO POSTERITY
By Sir Samuel Griffith
An Australian Masterpiece (approximately 1910).

245. It is of prime importance that the public, and perhaps lawyers in particular, should be fully aware of the basic principles of human society, and human rights, of which there is a woeful ignorance throughout the world. So this message from one of Australia's greatest sons is of great weight after the passage of a century. Lip-service is constantly paid to him, and his portrait is prominent in the High Court building at Canberra, opened by the Queen on 26th May 1980. He retired from being Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia in 1919, having previously been Chief Justice of Queensland, and, later, Premier of Queensland.

On 22nd July 1880 he introduced into the Queensland parliament a remarkable measure which he termed The Elementary Law of Property. He did not proceed with this Bill, no doubt through lack of support. But some 30 years later he again brought its declared principles before the public. Shortly after his retirement he published an article upon what he termed The Fundamental Error of all social life, which he declared was the 'Mastery Rule' whereby the great majority has to obey the command of a small minority. And he urged that the Mastery Rule be done away with and a Fraternity Rule established in its stead. If the community at large could be taught to regard the principles of Natural Law, as set out in his Elementary Law of Property, as axiomatic, in the same way as they regarded many other rules of right and wrong, the world might at length attain to a Fraternity Rule, which would be "no more than Christ's command to love thy neighbor as thyself", than which there is no truer democracy..