

as it should be. The man entering the portals of the Lodge room should (if properly instructed,) be truly impressed with the idea that "Freemasonry purifies the man." Study the lessons taught by the Working Tools alone, and it is impossible that a Brother can pass between the pillars, ascend the winding stairs and penetrate the Sanctum Sanctorum, or kneel before the altar of Almighty God as the martyr did thousands of years ago, without being impressed with the solemn character of our fraternity, and the holy truths advocated by our institution. Truly, "Freemasonry purifies the man."

We trace our history back to the remote ages; we can easily (in fancy) connect our present organization with the mysteries practiced by the philosophers of ancient times, and in all, through all ages and under all circumstances, secret societies existed in which the purest theories of a theo-philosophy were propounded, discussed and studied,—in all of them the true teachings of the Craft were exemplified, the holiest principles of our Order practiced, and the creed that "Freemasonry purifies the man," illustrated by the purity of the lives of those adherents to these Theo-philosophic Secret Associations, to which our present system owes its origin.

"Freemasonry purifies the man,"—how can it help doing so? Before the neophyte can enter the Lodge he must declare his belief in a Supreme Being, a future reward for virtue, and punishment for vice. Before he is brought to light he must again acknowledge that in times of difficulty and danger he places his faith in the Great I Am, and all through the ceremony of the initiation the infiniteness of the Creator overshadows the puny finiteness of the created. He beholds the three great lights of Masonry. He is surrounded by symbols that all typically point Godwards; every lesson apparently is inspired by the Author of his being;

every sentence is pregnant with the thought of that Vitalized and Deified Essence of Divine Truth, which man calls GOD. "Freemasonry," therefore, truly "purifies the man."

It can be taken for an admitted axiom that there is no degree in Freemasonry proper that is not pregnant with the most sublime principles and the holiest tenets, throughout all which exists a theo-philosophy, which is vitalized by a spirit of Divine Truth, that like an artery sends its vitalizing currents, with its endless ramifications, throughout the whole body of the Craft. Such being the case, the true Freemason necessarily learns to contemplate the power of the Divine Being, and permits his mind to rest in contemplation upon the wisdom of His ruling, the strength of His power, and the beauty of the sympathy and purity of His holy teachings. "Freemasonry" must necessarily, therefore, "purify the man," because it draws him closer to the God of nature; through the surroundings of nature, every leaf, and bud and blade of grass *speaks* to the Freemason of God. This is the theo-philosophy of The Masonic Creed.

The Freemason must be a true and moral man, upright in his dealings, honorable in his character, and pure in thought and deed. If he is not so, he has never studied the principles of the Craft, and understands not the principles of the Order. A Mason must *practice* charity, exemplify brotherly love, and be as firm as adamant with regard to truth, then "Freemasonry purifies the man."

It is consequently true that if a Brother properly studies the principles of the Craft, and practices the tenets taught in the Lodge room, he must necessarily become a better and purer man. He cannot be faithful to his vows, and adhere strictly to his obligation, unless he becomes a moral man, relying upon Divine assistance for guidance and protection. We do not, cannot, recognize a Mason