

will ; otherwise they will have to meet the most dire consequences, and even death itself. And moreover, if any shall be judged to have betrayed the discipline or resisted the commands of their superiors, extreme punishment is often inflicted on them, and that, indeed, with such boldness and dexterity that very frequently the police fail in discovering or bringing the criminals to justice. Moreover, to practise deceit and to conceal themselves, to bind men to themselves, as slaves with iron fetters, without alleging any reason ; to employ for any crime these slaves of another's will, to bare their arm for slaughter, whilst guarding themselves from punishment, is an enormity at which nature revolts. Wherefore against these associations reason and truth compel one in justice and natural virtue to fight." (1)

This true picture of Freemasonry moved the adepts and put them under the necessity of defending themselves. Certain dignitaries of the sect, while admitting the truth of some of the charges, disclaimed all connection with extremists, and endeavored to diminish in the public mind the effects of the Sovereign Pontiff's fearful denunciation.

"I grieve to think," wrote a sectary, "that there are Masonic bodies which may have laid themselves open to many of the charges which the Encyclical letter contains." And the same writer, in defence of the assertion that the Pope's sweeping censure should not include all the Lodges, appealed to the rules and constitutions of certain English Lodges, one and all breathing a spirit of religion and charity, and obedience to the law, etc. But the Holy Father had proven unanswerably that Freemasonry, from every point of view, was a source of ruin for a people ; that it attacked not only the religion of Christ but civil society and the family as well ; that as a secret organization it was subversive of the very principles on which society was founded. Hatred of God and His work, hatred of Christ and His Church, and the perverse wish to drag man from

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(1) Litt. Encycl. *Hum. Gen.* : Rome, 1884.