

right example. Yet even in the hands of the best men, the Institution is apt to be abused, or its power for good frittered away unless there is an intelligent comprehension of the true object for which it exists.

What then, it may be asked, is that object? How shall we define it?

The answer to this is variously given by different authorities; and even when we interrogate the ritual of Freemasonry itself, we get very different replies. Few of these, however, are very satisfactory, as they usually embrace far too much, and make the most preposterous claims as to the beneficial objects which it has accomplished or may accomplish. Take for example the statement that is so frequently made that the three great principles of the order are *brotherly love, relief and truth*, or in other words that it aims at promoting these. Now, every mason knows that, so far as *truth* is concerned, practically nothing is done by Freemasonry in any direct way for its promotion. It is, indeed, in no way hostile to any truth, either religious, moral or scientific, but is simply content to leave all these matters alone. If there ever was a time when the craft was in exclusive possession of any truth, either ethical or scientific, that time has long since gone by; and probably the best service which it could now render to the cause of truth would be to still further purge its ritual from fables and historic misrepresentations, confining itself to the pure symbolism which is its only legitimate material, and which it knows so well how to use. It certainly has no right to claim that it seeks either the discovery or promulgation of truth. And therefore unless we interpret the word in the qualified sense of truthfulness or honourable dealing as between man and man we ought to drop it from our list of principles. If however we should accept of it in that sense, then both it and *relief* may properly be regarded as the practical outcome of *brotherly love*; for where there is true brotherly love, there must be at the same time as the necessary effects of it, both a readiness to render assistance to brethren in need, and a desire to deal truthfully and honorably by all.

We may take the *promotion of brotherly love* then, as being the one great end of the masonic organization, all other objects are only subordinate to that; and anything that may be in any way inconsistent with it is altogether foreign to the genius of Freemasonry.

And certainly there could be no grander object proposed for any earthly institution than that of drawing the members of the human race into closer fellowship with each other; of seeking to make every man feel that every other man is his brother; of kindling in men's hearts everywhere that spark which bursting into a flame shall burn away the barriers of prejudice and suspicion, of envy and jealousy, and fuse mankind into an harmonious family; of awakening and quickening that feeling of interdependence which leads the strong ever to help the weak, and the great to stoop to the lowly; of encouraging that feeling of regard for the interests of others which banishes all double-dealing and dishonesty, inclining men ever to give others their just due. With such an aim, we have no need to be ashamed of our existence or ashamed to ask for the sympathy and the countenance of all good men.

Of course, it is not for a single moment claimed that this is the only organization or institution working towards this great and glorious end. Happily for society there are now many influences tending in the same direction, and aiming at the same consummation. And none can rejoice more than we do at any success resulting from them. We would bid God speed to all outside as well as inside our own body, who are striving in any honorable way to unite men in the bonds of universal brotherhood.

Not only, however, is this our real aim, but we believe that Freemasonry is reasonably well adapted to carry out this aim. It admits to its membership men from every rank in society, of every religious creed, of all political views, and of every nationality. It gives them the opportunity of making