

ancients believed in the efficacy of prayer. Near Licopolis, about the time above-named, there dwelt an hermit called Holy John, who built a rude hut on top of a large mountain. He prayed five days, and received visitors on Saturday and Sunday, when he opened a small window. During fifty years he never ate cooked food. Even the emperor of Rome would send officers to consult him. Such a person to-day would be styled a crank, and yet fifteen hundred years ago many thousands of people would make long journeys to consult with a hermit who might be able to tell them how to find God. John the Baptist was the forerunner of the new religion, and up to the time of Constantine, A.D. 325, about one-twentieth of the people were Christians.

The work still goes on, and while the earth is not yet Christianized by any means, with the aid of the great invention of printing, the probability is that ere another century rolls around, the Christian religion will predominate over this planet. Liberalism is the spirit of the age. In America a man can think as he pleases, and the time is fast approaching when freedom of speech will prevail everywhere.

Contrast our day with A. D. 324, in which, at Rome, two thousand persons were put to death for being Christians. Contrast also our time with that event where a Gothic king compelled ninety thousand Jews to be baptized. This searching the scriptures makes a good government. That we are prospering is an undisputable fact. One time, a whole nation of one hundred and twenty thousand persons disappeared, and twenty years later not a person could be seen. War and turmoil was the cause.

One of the great Masonic writers informs us, that at the revolution in 1688, only seven lodges were in existence in England, and of them there were but two that held their meetings regularly, and these were chiefly Op-

erative. This declension of the Order may be attributed to the low scale of morality which distinguished the latter end of the seventeenth century.

And how, indeed, could Freemasonry, pure and spotless as it is, remarks a great writer, continue to flourish at a time when the literature and morals of this country were in a state of semi-lethargy, and a taste for reading or the pursuit of science and philosophy had scarcely begun to manifest itself amongst the middle classes of society?

A modern writer says, "Though the reign of Queen Anne has been generally termed the Augustan age of literature in this country, owing to the co-existence of a few celebrated writers, it is astonishing how little, during the greatest part of that period, was the information of the higher and middle classes of society. To the character, of the gentleman neither education nor letters were thought necessary, and any display of learning, however superficial, was among the fashionable circles deemed rudeness and pedantry."

Such was the condition of society just before the revival of 1717.

The writings of Addison and Steele, who lived about 1712, had much to do to counteract this depraved state of morality. The historian states, "These writings have set all our wits and men of letters upon a new way of thinking, of which they had but little notion before."

We contrast the spirit of Masonry of to-day with that of the spirit of the revival, and we readily see what progress has been made through the agency of the Great Light upon our altars. In those times (1717) the public saw nothing of Freemasonry but its annual processions on the day of the grand feast. It was considered merely as a variety of the club system, which then prevailed amongst all ranks and descriptions of people; and as these institutions were of a convivial nature, Freemasonry was reduced, in public opinion, to the