

all those evils; and I adjure you once more, if you would preserve untarnished the lustre of the name you bear, be more diligent in the application of those remedies. If you are too cowardly to reject the doubtful or expel the unworthy—if you receive into your ranks the applicant of indifferent character because your treasury is impoverished and your revenues are falling away, you have converted your trust into merchandise, and the fate of the ancient money-changers ought to fall, and will fall upon your heads. Reduce your numbers, surrender your charters, let your Lodges perish and seek Masonic association elsewhere, if need be, rather than degrade your profession and compromise the Fraternity by the acceptance of unworthy material. I caution you again against making Freemasonry too popular, too common, and too cheap. I renew the admonition more emphatically to-day, because you are again in the midst of a season of marked prosperity, than which nothing more imperils purity of character. The danger must grow with your growth. As you increase in numbers and apparent power and influence, the shrewd and designing, the selfish and the ambitious, will seek to ally themselves with you, not for the purpose of becoming serviceable to their fellow-men, but with the intent to make Freemasonry serviceable to themselves. Let sleepless vigilance be the guardians at the portals of your temples.

I am not setting up a degree of excellence unattainable, and I desire not to be misapprehended. Freemasonry does not demand perfection. I am painfully aware how soon my own expulsion would follow the establishment of such a test. It does not inhibit any rational enjoyment. That would be to subvert and destroy the social qualities, which it aims rather to cultivate and develope. But it does require, most imperatively, that every one of its votaries shall at least maintain the ground of respectability; and he who falls but a hair's-breadth below that requirement should be cast out without misgiving or regret. Regard your Lodge as a family of which you are constituent portions, and let no one enter there whose character or conduct is such that you would be unwilling to admit him at your own fireside, or blush to present him to your own wives and daughters.

It is because you have departed from these rules of conduct and fallen below this standard of excellence, that you have become frigid and unsocial at your gatherings, and half the enjoyment of being Freemasons has become unattainable. You do not give the sojourning Brother a cordial welcome, because your experience has taught you that *some* who bear that name are unworthy of your confidence and fellowship. But if you had been more careful in making Masons, you would have had no such experience and no such consequent distrust. I have often been pained at the neglect with which strangers have been received and treated in your Lodges. I have seen them depart with more alacrity than they came, glad and relieved, apparently, to escape from a place where they had come expecting Fraternal regard, and found only the forms of politeness, mingled with evident suspicion and distrust. And though, until more care is exercised in the election of candidates, and more energy displayed in the discipline of those already chosen, there will be occasional impositions, yet Masters of Lodges should know that whoever comes to them in the character of a Mason should receive that civility and attention which the fraternal relation entitles him to anticipate, until by some act of his own, he has forfeited his claim to your courtesy and hospitality.—*Grand Master Leonidas E. Pratt, of California.*