

LIVE MASONRY AS WELL AS TEACH IT.

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IN my address to them I have tried to urge upon the lodges the necessity of practical Masonry, especially calling their attention to the standing resolution of the Grand Lodge, passed in 1870, denouncing as high treason against the most vital tenets of Masonry, the crimes of gambling, drunkenness, licentiousness, and profanity, realizing that the time has now come in our history when we must assume our true position and place ourselves right before society, relative to these sinners. They are too flagrant a violation of our teachings, and too commonly practiced to be longer lightly passed over; the mantle of charity will no longer cover them, and the hour for action has come; we may no longer shun the responsibility of respecting the opinions of society; the Grand Lodge has placed her seal of condemnation on these practises, and our sister Grand Lodges have approved, yet these wholesome regulations have remained on our statutes a dead letter, unpracticed and unenforced. Brethren, otherwise good and true, have well-nigh ruined themselves: our lodges have been mute; a mawkish charity has held them back from enforcing our laws, and our beloved Order has lost, in a great measure, her prestige as the harbinger of morality. Good Masons stand appalled at the fearful violation of the Masonic law, and society condemns the flagrant violation of what all know to be Masonic duty. These departures from duty must cease, or we lose our heritage. Brethren, we have good material; men as true as steel; men who would ornament any society on earth, if we will only break off the rough corners, and fit them for the builder's use. But we have rested in the glory of our beautiful ritual, admired its grandeur, and the drapery in which it is clothed, and forgotten that without exemplification in every-day life it is only a relic of the mystic past. Masonry is either something to be practised, or its teachings are valueless. It teaches sublime truths; it arrays itself in gorgeous drapery; it points grandly to the beautiful, the good, and the pure; it elevates the evergreen of immortality; it tells of high duties and glorious hopes; It lifts the veil of the future and points to immortality and a glorious resurrection and eternal life; yet how far below these grand visions and duties do we practice. Brethren, can we hope longer to maintain our heritage, and enjoy our birthright, unless we live Masonry as well as teach it? It is important that the minds of the Craft be constantly called to the vital importance of a more thorough investigation into the character and qualifications of candidates. You cannot take a candidate without he be worthy and well qualified, and make him a Mason by conferring degrees. He must be a *man*, God-like, his vision undimmed by vice, his thoughts elevated, his reason bearing full sway, stamped with the divine impress, or degrees will *never* make him a Mason. You may manipulate him, and restrain him for a time, but "Truth is mighty and will prevail;" his true character will develop itself, and when too late you will find that you have either a pestiferous meddler or a useless drone. Where were you taught to look first for the embodied principles of Masonry? At the heart. Will degrees make a Mason, and create what does not exist in a man? Never! never! Principles, eternal principles deeply planted by the *great I AM*, can only make Masons. Degrees make members; *Deity makes Masons*. Take one who only knows Masonry as the parrot is taught language, and when all is lovely he may seem to be what he professes, but let the hour of trial come, and you will find him ready to rebel against the principles and teachings of our Order, and exhibit the properties of the *thistle* instead of the *olive*. But, my brethren, are we not in a measure guilty in this, that we do not practice what we teach initiates? We present to the initiate our sublime ritual, explain its moral, and he is deeply impressed with all he sees and hears; he goes forth from the lodge with high resolves and glorious purposes; he meets his teacher and other members to whom he looks up for exemplification, and he sees and hears those for whom he has such reverence violating all the precepts of the moral law, and he feels how are the mighty fallen, and concludes there is nothing in Masonry only its high-sounding professions, and his Masonry is dwarfed by the influence of those to whom he looks up for example, and is either encouraged to violate our regulations or disgusted with our hypocrisy. Brethren coming up from the various camps, valleys and mountains of our lovely territory, entrusted with the watch-care of Masonry, it is your duty to make its laws, expound its principles, and reflect its high prerogatives, and to establish it permanently as the grand old mountains by which we are surrounded, laying broad and deep its foundation of fundamental principles, and crowning it with the evergreen of beautiful exemplification, drawing to it the good and true, and repelling all that is vicious and bad. See ye to it that true Masonry is reflected, its high and holy mission truly exemplified. Mankind, as well as the brotherhood of Masons, have claims upon you. Masonry is designed to benefit mankind, or it is the veriest humbug that ever disgraced the world. Go forth from the sacred temple of Masonry imbued with its spirit, teach its principles, and practice its precepts; thus will you