

side him. Humanity gains something in that. But this criticism on the narrowness of these Masonic ideals is not well founded. Although the letter of its ritual is continually reminding one that he is bound to his brothers of the mystic tie, by something more than ordinary human relations, yet it never makes this the end of its rope. This is but the groundwork on which a broader charity seeks the good of all mankind, but Freemasonry is not merely a charitable institution. It would not admit a man into its ranks who came for the purpose of being assisted. There is in it a spirit of fraternity. It has no sympathy with that spirit that is willing to lie down before the difficulties of life, and be carried into rest. It makes honest toil the basis of its benefaction. Its duties are mutual, as well as its benefits. But when a man has learned that the grandest characteristics of human life are hospitality, integrity and disinterested benevolence he can be trusted everywhere. When a man vows to sustain unsullied the dignity of a true manhood, and do all he can to maintain it in those with whom he is associated, he will not be a hindrance to the growth of pure principles anywhere. He will ever be the reverse of this. Is not that the noblest charity which teaches mankind to honor the truth, to defend the right: to cherish within the heart that spirit of justice that would give to all their due? That is an abuse of charity which would have one go through life with an open hand, bidding him take who will. The world needs examples of manhood, not distributions of alms; honest ties of affection and fraternity, not universal hand-shaking and sentimental gush. Thou art doing best for thy fellows, Oh, man! when thou art doing something that is noble and true. Inquire not what has been given in the name of charity; inquire rather what of virtue and true manliness the world has known. This alone is the

measure of real worth. In giving this one becomes a benefactor, and fulfils the highest aim.

The third lesson to which I would refer is that which reminds us of our duty to God. There is one question at the threshold of Masonic life, a question that none of you have forgotten, whose answer lies at the very heart of things. Verily, my brothers, this world is governed by some power that is, in itself, wise and just and true. We quibble not with questions of method, or form, or name. We ask no man the shape of his phylactery, or the size of his prayer-book, or the length of his creed. Let him arrange all such things for himself. But God is. The deepest convictions of an intelligent soul speak of an intelligence which transcends all earthly thought. The purest love that warms the heart of mortal pleads for a love that is not bounded by the flight of years. Each cry for justice that goes out from the human heart is a prophecy of some everlasting law of right that holds the universe. This idea is everywhere present in the Ritual of the Order. It is in no sense a godless life that Freemasonry asks you to live. It is a life inspired with the thought of the Highest. There is reason for our plea in the name of a just and true manhood, for He who gave us being is Himself just and true. There is a reality in our thought of fraternity, for we are of one family, and God is our father. The thing that man is constantly saying shows, in some measure, the bent of his mind and the structure of his heart. Men are not hypocrites by nature. This constant appeal to God for help is not all cant. It expresses the honest desire of the soul. But the truth of God's presence and nature as portrayed in these rites and emblems that we use, is broader and deeper than even the most valiant among us are apt to imagine. Not merely as a general principle, but as a vitalizing force, this thought of God abides.