

ed by the teachings of the order to practice its precepts in life. There is no value, he said, in the name of "brother," if the struggle for superiority leads to the discarding of brotherly sentiments. He warned the brethren against the danger of considering the trivial and unessential the main object of Freemasonry. He said that the Grand Lodge of Germany has been misjudged and assailed because its rites, history and regulations were not understood, and asked if something could not be done to enable larger circles to form a correct judgement. He advised the publication of the history, origin and development of the Grand Lodge, and urged that body to break through the wall of historical secrecy. He ordered a document to be read, heretofore kept secret, to wit: the charter of the Grand Lodge obtained by Von Zinnendorf. The necessity of a revision of the ritual was alluded to, and it was acknowledged that the historical criticism of the day had become a power, from which even the most sacred traditions can no longer escape. That power, he declared, was making demands upon the Order which could no longer be refused. Satisfactory proof of historical traditions is demanded, and he acknowledged that the requirements of the present time would have to be complied with. Investigation has been commenced and would be followed to a satisfactory conclusion. If the traditions were confirmed, doubts would disappear; and if anything should prove to be untenable, love of truth would give them courage to sacrifice it.

He also demanded a simplification of Lodge life, but did not desire reforms at the expense of those old customs which still possess and can diffuse vitality. "Shall the decayed and superfluous," he asked, "be permitted to smother that which is good and possesses vitality? If we permit this, it will be our fault that many brethren will never penetrate to the substance; that some will turn away reluctantly or in derision, while others will use the Order as a means of gratifying selfishness and vanity; so that it will become morally corrupted, instead of morally elevated." "Let us beware," he said, "that by a too obstinate adherence to old customs, of which we have grown fond, we do not become blind to the necessities of the present, whilst the age progresses with tremendous strides."

He cautioned the brethren, however, not to proceed indiscreetly, but to see that the Order, by its rites and regulations, morally ennobled its members; for if it did not effect that, their labors, in spite of the richness of the symbolism and explanations, would become a useless waste of time and strength, and degenerate into empty phrases and a barren plaything. He directed particular attention to the necessity of imparting sufficient information to the brethren of the lowest degree to enable them to understand what was offered to them. He did not wish to be understood, however, that the rites and symbolic acts should be thrown together promiscuously, or that Entered Apprentices should be promoted to Mastership before the proper time; but that a proper understanding should be obtained from the beginning of what is new and strange to them. The acts and symbols of the Order should warm their hearts, incite their thoughts, and strengthen the conception of the present time, the indispensable condition for which is a *proper understanding*. "Let us discard the fear," he said, "that we are doing wrong when we transfer from the teachings of the higher degrees into the lower all that fructifies the latter. It is the best use we can make of these higher degrees; for, in our time, the St. John's Lodge is the chief object in Freemasonry, and therefore of the highest importance."