

to pay a debt according to promise, perhaps, on the faith of a brother Master Mason. Suppose the evidence establishes the breach of faith to have been wilful and the defrauding premeditated—the strongest case that can be made on the “business” basis—the fact that one brother has lost money by trusting another is almost the only one taken into consideration. It was a purely business matter at the start, and should have been subject only to the laws of business. It has now apparently become a Masonic matter of the first importance, for, upon its settlement, hangs the Masonic life or death of a member of the Lodge. As it was business, it would be well to inquire how the business was done. Such an investigation would, in nearly every instance, show the accuser more to blame than the accused. It would prove that he had been mixing up his business affairs with Masonry, and making money transactions depend entirely upon the compact of the Masonic brotherhood. He had taken the word of a brother mason for a property consideration, in which as a business man, in a purely business matter, he should have required ample security on the usual scale of values. If he was doing business he should have secured himself in the transaction by means known to business men. Then no trouble could have come, nobody could have been defrauded, and no one’s masonry could have been called in question. That’s business.

If he was practising masonry to accommodate a brother, which he had a perfect right to do, he should not falsify the name, and compromise his profession, by turning it into this very serious business before the Lodge. Now, no mason, as such, has the right to demand of a masonic brother business accommodations which he could not expect and would not ask of a profane. Masonry gives him no such franchise, or exemption, or special privilege in his business affairs; neither does it obligate him to grant such favors to another. It has nothing to do whatever with these matters, and when it touches them it is sure to get its hands soiled. If a mason is in want and distress and asks a favor which involves a money value without an equivalent or security, let his appeal be met in a true masonic spirit. Such relief should be freely bestowed. If his improved circumstances in the future enable him to repay in kind, let him not forget the debt. That’s masonry.

It has been truly said, there is no friendship in business. In the same sense there is no brotherhood in business. Business is a game in which blood-brothers often play as antagonists. They are justified in using against each other every advantage of position, knowledge, foresight and superior qualifications generally. Brother masons avail themselves of the same privileges in their worldly intercourse. Were they to discriminate in favor of the large class of their brethren, and permit masonry to guard their business interests exclusively, they would soon be forced to withdraw from the field of trade defeated, routed, and objects of future charity.

Such faith in the theory of the masonic institution is beautiful and deserved, but such abandonment to the integrity of individuals will not do in this business world. Every department of life has its laws, which cannot be infringed upon without disorder and confusion. Business demands that its laws be rigidly observed. Its presiding goddess is the serene form of Justice. Masonry has this and several other beautiful divinities in its gallery of virtues and graces. Business means gain and wealth:—Masonry, love and charity. Neither can interfere with the