

and strives to make them good citizens and loyal subjects, by impressing on them the duty of implicit obedience to all lawfully constituted authority, it steadfastly refuses to ally itself with any political party as such. Its aim, as far as worldly politics are concerned, is not to promote the advancement of any set of men or school of political thought, but to imbue all with those golden principles of large-hearted Charity and Liberality, which would lead them, if they must differ in opinion, to differ in love.

3. *Freemasonry is not a substitute for, or a rival of the Church.*—It is not religion, although some men may seem to make it so. Were there no such thing as a Divinely-promulgated system of faith in existence, it *might* be regarded as an excellent human organization for the preservation of the fundamental principles of natural and revealed religion. But the circumstances under which it took its rise as the help and handmaid of the Jewish Church, as well as all its subsequent history, afford conclusive proof that it was never designed to usurp the place or office of the Church of God. Stereotyped on its archives, and limiting all its obligations, is this grand concession, that it shall not interfere with a man's duty to God;—that whatever may be his religious convictions, whatever creed may secure the allegiance of his understanding and his heart, his profession of the principles of Freemasonry shall in no wise affect them, but always accord to them profound respect and honor.

I ask again, then, What is Freemasonry? And I answer—

*Masonry is Friendship, Love and Truth.* These three words define with sufficient precision, the principle which is the basis of our Order, and the lofty ideal which we seek to realize.

It is a *Friendship* which rises superior to the artificial distinctions and arrangements of society, the prejudices of party, and the pecuniary conditions of life; it is a *Love* which knows no limit, or inequality, or decay; it is a *Truth*, an Honor, which binds man to the eternal law of Duty, in opposition to all the calculations of Interest, and all the blandishments of Self-love. Freemasonry, therefore, is no *new*, and it will be no ephemeral thing. It is as old as Time—perpetual as Eternity.

Among the almost endless variety of human wants, there is not one which makes itself so keenly felt as the want of Friendship—the intimate and trustful communion of soul with soul. And yet such are the habits of modern society and the spirit of the times, there is no want so difficult to supply. Many hearts there are, glowing with warm affections, oppressed with deep and earnest longings for friendly intercourse with sympathizing and responsive hearts, and yet, like the spirit of the parable, wander up and down the deserts of life, seeking that which they never find. Freemasonry seeks to supply this want, by bringing man to a clearer recognition of his duty to his fellow-man. In the world without there are innumerable artificial distinctions and arrangements which tend to separate man from man, and to erase entirely the sense of fraternal obligations.

In Masonry, on the other hand, there are no honors or distinctions but such as are based on *MERIT*. Our association is thus calculated to develop and give activity to the social sympathies and affections, and thus make men feel that the sacred terms of Friendship, Love and Truth, are not illusions,—mere empty names invented only to amuse or deceive, but the watchwords of a high and noble life. He who enters our fraternal band, is supposed to rise above the common life of selfishness, hypocrisy, and deceit. He joins a society of brothers, on whose kindness he may always rely—whose words to him will be always true, and whose acts will be al-

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