

us to speak no evil of a brother, but to protect his good name from the assaults of a slanderous enemy; it teaches us to open our purse strings, and to contribute to the relief of a poor, distressed, worthy brother—to bind up the broken heart of the widow, and to take by the hand the poor orphan, and to lead him into the high walks of virtue, honor and usefulness; it teaches us to pursue those noble sciences which develop the mind, and store it with knowledge; it teaches us to be good citizens, loyal to the government, and cheerfully to submit to legal authority; it teaches us to look to the Supreme Architect of the Universe as the source from whom flow all the blessings which we enjoy—never to mention his name but with reverential awe, and to invoke his blessings on all our great and important undertakings.

I do not claim for Masonry more than is its due, nor attribute to it principles which it does not teach. I do not substitute it for the Christian religion; it alone will not save men's souls. It teaches every moral and social duty that Christianity does, everything except the *spiritual regeneration* of man. It tolerates no acts or practices prohibited by Christianity. It is a perfect code of morals and of social order.

True Masons practice the teachings and principles above laid down. The best of Masons are the best of men, and the purest of Christians. The true Mason is a "good man and true." By the practice of the noblest of virtues, the Mason attains the highest ends of Masonry; and, on the contrary, when associated with debasing vices, Masonry ceases to do good. As the church, when it loses its spiritualism, and becomes swallowed up in the vices and crimes of the times, "hath a name to live, but is dead," so Masonry, when it departs from the practice of those noble and glorious principles upon which it is founded, loses all its power to do good.

The world needs such an institution as ours. Men need every good influence which can be brought to bear upon them. Whatever will restrain men from vice, and turn them into the paths of virtue, deserves the encouragement of all good men. Our natural inclinations are evil, and these inclinations, like an augmenting stream, swell as they are indulged. How fearful is the unchecked tide of vice! Away yonder, in the North-West, from a little lake, there flows a little river; as it meanders its southward course, its tide is increased, here by a creek, there by a rivulet, and here again by a larger river, pouring in her waters upon either side. Trace it down through the valley of the great South-West, and we find it a mighty river—a majestic Mississippi—tolling its turbid waters along, cutting away its banks, breaking crevasses, inundating and desolating whole sections of country, and finally disemboguing into the Gulf of Mexico; such is the unchanged current of human vice. That current is swelled, here by an evil temper indulged, there by an evil habit contracted, and here again by a vicious act committed, until it overrides all moral restraints, drowns every noble aspiration, and finally bears the unfortunate victim to the gulf of hopeless ruin!

It is to check this rushing current, that leads to ruin, and to convert it into the gentle and placid stream of love, charity, truth, and morality, that Masonry directs its highest aims. We cannot too fully appreciate our position as Masons, nor too scrupulously regard our obligations as such. Those obligations are too solemn, and our position too important, to be lightly considered. Masons, like Christians, are known by the works they do and the lives they lead. All the beneficial influences of the Order, all its claims in favor and adoption amongst men, its evidences of healthful and beneficial influence, depend entirely upon the fruits of the Order, as developed in the lives and actions of the Brotherhood. And as we love Masonry, love to chronicle its successes, and to contemplate its glorious results, let us strictly live according to its precepts, and square all our actions with all men by the rules which it inculcates; thereby showing to the world that Masonry is what Masons claim it to be.

Freemasonry has always had its open enemies, but it has triumphed over them all. Its secrecy has been assailed by the ignorant and bigoted, and

passion and prejudice have spent their fury upon it, but Masonry stands unscathed. An arrogant Church, wielding the arm of civil authority, has thundered its bulls against all who promoted or favored the Order, or who gave the smallest countenance or advice to Masons, or were, in any respect, connected with them, proclaiming them enemies to the tranquility of the State, and hostile to the spiritual interests of souls. These bulls have been followed by edicts, threatening the servitude of the galleys, the fine of a thousand crowns in gold, the tortures of the rack, to persons of every description who were daring enough to breathe the infectious air of Masonic assembly. And yet Masonry has kept the "even tenor of its way," unmoved by these hostile demonstrations of the Church. A little over a century ago, many Masons were imprisoned, and suffered all the horrors of a dungeon life, at the hands of the "Bloody Inquisition," because they would not divulge the secrets of Masonry, and forswear and abandon the Order; and even in enlightened America, and in the present century, some of the purest and best men of the land have been seized and held "in durance vile," by the resolutions of a corrupt partizan legislature, and ordered, under heavy penalties, to expose the "secrets and designs" of Masonry. The Institution has been slandered by a subsidized press, and a bitter partizan war has been waged upon Masons, and their principles misrepresented by corrupt demagogues and selfish party leaders.

But under all these persecutions and oppressions, neither confinement in dungeons, nor the fear of fines, nor the tortures of the rack, nor the anathemas of the Church, nor punishment by civil authority, have ever driven a single Mason to become recreant to the trust reposed in him by the Order. All have been faithful, under all circumstances, to the bitter end. Masonry has invariably come out of the storm, shining more resplendently than ever, just as the earth, after the cloud has passed away, and the rains have fallen upon it, looks fresher and greener than before.

But although our noble Order has repelled the assaults of these open enemies, and gallantly withstood all the outside pressure, yet she has received, and daily receives, deep stabs, whence she has the least right to expect them. Of all the wounds ever inflicted upon Masonry, she has received the deepest and most fatal in the house of her friends. We are too often compelled to deplore the departure of those who have taken upon themselves the vows of Masonry, from those principles and practices which she inculcates, and the Brotherhood are covered with shame and confusion by these practical denials of our principles by those who profess them. How often is it that the question is sneeringly asked: "Is it possible that that man is a Mason?"

How often do we find the Mason—the member of a Lodge "in good standing"—profanely taking the name of the Most High upon his lips; violating alike the rules of good breeding, the injunctions of Masonry, and the commandments of God!

How often do we see a "Brother," maddened with intoxication, reeling as he walks, insanely uttering profane and obscene language, babbling folly in the streets, or lying like a helpless beast in the gutter! the slave of a debased appetite! bringing mortification to the Fraternity, odium upon the Order, premature death upon himself, and disgrace and penury upon his wife and children!

How often do we find those who have been elevated to the sublime degrees of Masonry, sitting at the gambling table! surrounded by the basest of the base! the vilest of the vile! A Mason and a "professional gambler!" a follower of that most ignoble practice, (I will not say calling,) that sister and nurse of the lowest vices! that mother of the blackest crimes! that crusher-out of all the nobler aspirations of the heart!

How often has the Mason stained his hand in his Brother's blood! traduced his good name, or wantonly violated his most sacred rights!

How often does falsehood sit upon the Mason's lips; misrepresenting the principles and practices of others; assuming false positions to himself; stirring the bitter waters of strife!

How often does the Mason indulge his passions and prejudices, and suffer them to mar him and lead him captive; lead him into silly peevishness, irrational anger, and criminal violence!

How often do we find Masons whose hearts are impervious to the cries of distress; whose purse-strings grow tighter, as the voice of charity calls louder: whose god is money! Why, there are Masons so stingy that they actually demit from the Lodge, to avoid the payment of the little pittance of dues! And such ought to demit! Of what benefit are such men to Masonry, or to any other institution, or to the world! And of what benefit is Masonry to such a man?

These are Masons *in name*, but not *in deed*. Though they belong to the Order, they are unworthy a place in its precincts. They are unfit representatives of the principles they profess. Though they profess its principles, they belie those principles and precepts by their unmasonic practices. However eloquent in their praises of Masonry, they are not its friends. Their whole influence is against the Order. To point others to Masonry as the path of honor, virtue, morality, justice, prudence, truth, brotherly love, charity, but not to walk therein themselves, is like the finger-board on the highway, which points in the right direction, but moves not an inch itself on the way. How much better, were they living, friendly guides, not only pointing the way, but leading the way, and relieving the tedium of the hours, and shortening the miles of the journey, with true, social discourse.

But Masonry is not responsible for the conduct of its *unworthy* members. Lodges and individuals may be responsible; for the bad material might and ought to be rejected; and unreformed, bad men might and ought to be expelled. No institution, either of human or divine origin has ever been so well guarded, or can be, as to escape the contaminating touch of bad men. It seems an inexorable law of nature, that the *tares* and the *wheat* must grow together.

Still Masonry has accomplished much good in the world, notwithstanding all its enemies, within and without the Order. History records many of its noble deeds and glorious results; but the thousandth part of the good done by Masonry has been recorded in no book, save that of the Recording Angel.

Ladies, your presence in such large numbers, and the smiles of your approbation, add greatly to the interest of this hour. To the educated and refined man—to the intelligent Mason—all labors become recreations; all cares become pleasures; his very sorrows become joys, when woman, lovely, tender, sympathetic woman, smiles approval of his labors, seeks consolation in his cares, sighs sympathy in his sorrows! Although, from the nature of our organization, woman is denied admittance into the Order, and the sublime secrets of Masonry are withheld from her, yet she is not denied its blessings and its benefits. She is one of the chosen objects of its highest blessings.

For woman, Masonry is a spirit, instinct with life and full of good; and in every relation of life—as wife and mother—as sister and daughter—it casts over her its protecting wings, shielding her from a thousand ills. Dangers and evils ambush woman at every tread in life; but around her honor and her good name, her virtue and her happiness, Masonry hovers encamped, like the angels of God around the prophet upon the mountain, protecting and defending her from danger and ruin. Like the Shekinah above the Mercy Seat, Masonry spreads around woman the shield of strength and faith, and becomes to her at once the symbol and presence of safety and defense.

None but Masons know the fullness and extent of these benefits. How many a happy wife enjoys to-day the sweet society of a loved companion, who, but for Masonry, would be clad in the weeds of sorrowing widowhood! How many smiling boys and girls enjoy, to-day, the caresses, the counsel and the protection of a devoted father, who, but for Masonry, would be left in orphanage to battle with the thousand ills and snares of life! How many mothers and fathers rejoice, to-day, in a manly, moral son, the pride of their hearts, and