

in France, and in America, many thousands of dollars are thus annually employed. Thus does this venerable and benign institution step forth as a husband to the widow, and as a father to the fatherless. The particular charities of a Mason however, he does not proclaim to the world—it is enough for him to be satisfied, that the hungry have bread, and that suffering is alleviated—that he himself will be blessed with an approving conscience and a glad heart, and that He who went about doing good, will reward him openly. The charity of Masonry is not the charity of class or sect; but, like the vast heavens, it envelops the whole human family. Around its altars and in its solemn assemblies, meet the inhabitants of all climes and of all conditions, and contracted sentiments and irrational prejudices are dissolved; while its laws, softening humanity, melt nations into brotherhood. The sublime doctrines of religion it cannot increase, but, like religion, it requires love to God and love to man. With the spiritual intercourse of man with heaven it claims no jurisdiction, and usurps no control; but it continually directs him to that All-seeing eye, which penetrates his most secret thoughts, and teaches him to elevate his soul above the gross indulgences of vice, and refine his affections in the crucible of living virtue, purity and truth.

Our loved institution has, however, in all ages of the world, been attacked and slandered. Mithradath, Bishlam and Tabeel complained to the Persian King against our early brethren; and from that day to the present, ignorance, prejudice, passion and envy have preferred the same charges, though refuted ten thousand times. Against it have been hurled the fulminations of the Vatican, when they were not as they now are, powerless as a shaft against the wind; but when even nations trembled and bowed down before them. The bitterest anathemas of the Inquisition have been pronounced against it. Synods and Associations, without number—religious, social, and political—have spent their energies in attempting to crush it; but, based upon the rock of eternal truth, and supported by wisdom, prudence, charity, universal benevolence, purity and love, it has withstood the tempests which have assailed it, and, like gold tried in the crucible, it stands forth to the world brighter and more beautiful for the ordeal through which it has passed.

It is urged against Freemasonry that it is imprudent, dangerous and sinful to hazard initiation into an order one of whose fundamental principles is, never to reveal its mysteries.

We answer, in reply to this, if every trade, profession, and calling, have not secrets which are never communicated except to those who seek them, and who are qualified to receive them? Are there not many societies now existing which have secrets never revealed, except to those who enter them in the way prescribed by each? Have not the Councils of our Gracious Queen secrets they never reveal, except to their successors in office? Have not the various governments of the world secrets which they ever sacredly conceal? Why, then, should this be urged against Masons? Why should the inducement of being governed by our own laws, and of admitting such into our temple as choose to apply for admittance on our own conditions, be denied to us? It is of the first necessity that the arena of our science be concealed from a class of impostors, common in every age and every land; and that the charities of our Society be given only to the worthy; yet, with that inviolable secrecy and fidelity which characterize Masonry, its benevolence is sometimes betrayed and abused.

It has also been urged against our Institution, that it may conceal a party dangerous to the State; and thereby subvert the claims of justice. The whole scope and tenor of Masonic teachings are opposed to this absurd and slanderous accusation. Loyalty to the government and strict adherence to the law, have at all times been marked traits of the fraternity; and as a consequence of such, our Society has even been cherished by the best of Kings, the most equitable governments, and the noblest and purest judges. The whole encyclopedia of Masonic science and jurisprudence, shows

that the moment one of our number unlawfully engages in political intrigues, dangerous to the State, and to the stability of government, that moment he departs from the principles and requirements of Masonry—the moment he swerves from the strictest justice in his relations with his fellow man, that moment he forfeits his claim to the protection and esteem of his brethren.

The misconduct of some of its members has also been pleaded against the Institution. If this charge be valid against Masonry, it is valid against all other societies.

Do you who are consistent members of a Christian society, condemn the religion of Jesus Christ because of the apostasy and misconduct of those whom you have admitted to membership? Is the hypocrisy of that man, who goes to the house of God on the Sabbath day, and accepts the sacred symbols from the hands of God's messenger as a token of fidelity, and then goes and deviates from the path of honesty and moral rectitude; is this conduct an impeachment of Christianity? Is this an argument against the inherent goodness and purity of the principles he professes and disgraces? If so, then is the Bible itself a myth, and religion a fable. But you will at once reject such an argument and its result, as unjust and absurd as applied to religion, equally absurd and unjust is it, as applied to Masonry.

It is unfortunately too true, that unworthy men have found their way into the Masonic temple, men who know little of Masonry but its name, and as they are bad Masons, so are they bad citizens, bad neighbours and bad men. This is deeply regretted, and every proper method is used to remedy the evil. There is also in Masonry as there is in Christianity, a falling away or fading of the once famed goodness of some of its members. But is not such seen in all societies? Until man's nature is entirely changed, until he ceases to be fallible, frail and imperfect, this will ever be; but I ask again, if this is an argument against the goodness and morality of a society? Let the answer be given in the spirit of candour, and void of prejudice.

It is also said that the preservation of the secrets of Masonry is due only to some ridiculous or shameful practices, which compels the initiate to be silent after he has undergone the ceremony. Can any one believe it possible, that the thousands of illustrious men of every rank, age and country; Philosophers, Statesmen, Judges, Divines, Princes, Kings and Emperors, whose names emblazon the annals of Masonry, would aid in supporting and perpetuating an imposture? The whole world is appealed to, in justification of our moral system; our constitutions are well known; they have been freely submitted to universal investigation, they are solemnly declared to be the principles by which we are governed, the foundations on which we build, and the rules by which we work. It will be seen that the morality of Masonry is on a broader basis than Paley's, and its religion, free from sectarianism, is purity and truth. Every social and moral virtue will adorn those who reduce to practice the teachings of the Lodge room, and the principles upon which they are built.

But I must bring these remarks to a close, for I fear I have already detained you too long, and wearied your patience. I sincerely thank you for your attention, but permit me in conclusion to recapitulate a few of the results of this ancient and noble science.

It has rendered Atheism less popular; for the Atheist and irreligious libertine cannot pass the threshold of a Masonic lodge. It has exalted the name of Jehovah as an object of reverence; induced a belief in revelation and directed the attention of mankind to the Holy Scriptures. It tends to circumscribe human passions and to render the conscience more sensitive. It lessens the frequency and reduces the horrors of war, by removing national prejudice and bringing nationalities into communion with each other. It inspires mutual esteem, confidence and philanthropy, in the breast of man, and implants there habits of self-restraint and benevolence, and finally, it has tended to pre-

servo, perpetuate and advance the arts and sciences, and every useful branch of human knowledge.

Such are some of the results and tendencies of Masonry; and if the imperfect sketch I have here presented, should tend to clear away one prejudice, or dispel one doubt, it will be to me a sweet reward.

To the Worshipful Masters, respected officers and beloved brethren of the Lodges assembled here to day.

I should feel that my duty was not accomplished, were I to permit this occasion to pass, without a word or two to you. Let me remind you, that although Masonry is not a proselytizing institution, neither is it a passive and inert one; but demands constant unremitting action. To you peculiarly belongs the luxury of doing good. Benevolence, in thought, in word and in deed, is a Mason's bounden duty. That holy spirit you should ever exercise towards each other especially, and towards all mankind. Wait not for objects of suffering and sorrow to be brought to your notice for sympathy and aid by persons of the world—show that the teachings of the Lodge room have had their legitimate effect, by seeking them out, and ministering such consolation as necessity requires, and your means will permit. For thus are you summoned by Him, who spake as never man spake. The needy and unfortunate ever demand it of you, the afflictions of the homeless, the sorrows of the orphan, the woes and tears of the wretched, and the cries of the widow are at all times appealing to you. All the noble and generous impulses which infinite tenderness and compassion have implanted in your hearts call upon you.

To you also is committed the vast responsibility of adorning the Masonic temple. I charge you to be careful how you select the materials for it. Remember that numbers do not necessarily constitute strength, neither does apparent respectability imply fitness. Bear in mind that one faulty stone defaces and weakens the whole structure. The sordid and avaricious man, however respectable in the eyes of the world, is as unfit to enter the portals of our glorious temple, as the physical and intellectual imbecile. Ever keep before you the symbolic teachings of the square, that you may do your duty to your God and your fellow men. Let the rectitude of your daily life be a living refutation of every slanderous report; copy the example of that pure and holy man, whose day we have assembled to celebrate, and may the great light of the Lodge room, illumine your pathway and direct you onward until you gain admission to the Grand Lodge above. Peace be with you, my brethren, in your varied occupations, may prosperity and happiness attend you; and finally, let me part with you in the beautiful lines of a highly gifted craftsman of another land.

Trust not the future, the present is open,
Earnestly strive, thy vocation to fill,
Would you be useful, take this for a token,
Never from virtuous action be still,
Go to the widow and cancel her weeping,
Harbour the orphan in charity's keeping,
Waken the soul that's remorsefully sleeping,
All may do good if they have but the will.

Trust not the future then; be not a dreamer,
Join in the ranks of truth, justice and love,
Walk in the presence of God your Redeemer,
To day—the present is yours to improve:—
Work for your Maker, it is not laborious,
Work for your brother, the task is all glorious,
Work for yourself, and if only victorious,
Angels will crown you in heaven above.

Two gentlemen of opposite politics, meeting, one inquired the address of some political celebrity, when the other indignantly answered:

"I am proud to say Sir, that I am wholly ignorant of it."

"Oh, you are proud of your ignorance. Oh! Sir?"

"Yes, I am," replied the belligerent gentleman, "and what then, Sir?"

"Oh, nothing, sir! nothing; only you have a great deal to be proud of, that's all."