

which so many men honored by the name of Christians have not been afraid to enter, that the thought of the anathemas *so often fulminated* against them by the Church, and that the knowledge of the clemency of the Holy See for these erring ones, arriving by means of the present letter to those who have been seduced, may recall them to the way of safety, prevent the ruin of so many souls, and obviate the necessity of our employing severity."

We are right glad that the old priest did give us a chance at the mercy of God, for all Freemasons believe in Him and have faith in His justice and goodness, and are perfectly willing to let the whole matter rest in His hands. It was well that our late brother, Mastai Ferretti, now pope, put in that clause, "so often fulminated against them by the church," for after so many centuries of church curses he must begin to realize that our Heavenly Father is not so much opposed to us as he would like Him to be, and that it would not be bad policy to pay Him some deference. We have given sufficient to show that the church we have alluded to emphatically forbids its members from becoming Freemasons, not simply because we are a secret society, for they have hundreds of them within the church, and there is no more secret institution in the world than the Order of the Jesuits, but chiefly because it is liberal and non-sectarian. It will not preach and enforce its dogmas, nor will it allow the church to dictate the character and name of its religion. The true element of strength for the priesthood is ignorance and bigotry in the church, and to have only a membership who with a blind and unreasoning faith will obey all orders and justify all means to reach a victorious end.

General education and enlightenment are an enemy of the church, hence the system of public schools which teaches a child to read something besides a catechism is looked upon as heresy, and the public schools of Europe and America are to-day under the ban of the pope as the head of the church.

On the other hand Freemasonry stands out as a beacon light in the wild ocean of fanaticism, calm and immovable, bidding defiance to the storm, and offering a shelter to all, irrespective of their personal beliefs. Freemasonry is tolerant and conservative. It interferes with none and allows none to interfere with it. It collects and distributes its own charities and teaches its own philosophy of morals for the improvement of mankind in its own way, regardless of the dictation of any class of men.

Is it pure and true christianity which prohibits its members from becoming Freemasons?

Is it an intelligent and exalted christianity which prohibits its members from belonging to any mutual society of relief and love?

Is it Christ-like to curse and send to "eternal damnation" all those of His church who see proper to associate with christians of various denominations and call each other "brethren?"

Is it christian to shut off from church relief poor widows and helpless orphans simply because their protectors once belonged to a band of brothers who work and toil in the noble cause of charity in the name of Freemasonry?

Is it doing Christ's service to follow a corpse to the very edge of the grave and curse it, and forever curse the very ground it lies in, simply because the man was once a Mason?

Is it honest christianity to accept week after week, month after month and year after year, the hospitality and regular contributions of Freemasons for charitable purposes, and then send them to hell when dead?

Is it like Christ, who ate with publicans and sinners, to deny the most consistent members of the church the privileges of the supper, simply because they belong to a benevolent society outside of the church?

In brief—is it like Christ to be intolerant, to be unforgiving—to be self-conceited; to be proud of a brief clerical office; to assume the powers of God; to pretend to make the laws of Heaven; to interfere with affairs of state; to sow discord in families; to proscribe the private rights of man; to hurl countless millions of souls to eternal hell for mere opinion's sake?

If it is, then we grant that the old priest at Rome is right and that he has many imitators and followers, but if he is right, then the Bible life of Christ was a mistake and no wonder the Masonic lodge is cursed for having installed that Book as the "Great Light" in Masonry. We have thus given prominence to this question, because some fanatical priests of various sects have begun a crusade against us, and we wish to draw the attention of our Christian Masons too look after what kind of leaders they are following. Nine times out of ten, whenever you hear your preacher making a tirade against a peaceful, moral and charitable institution like Freemasonry, you can rest assured that he is either a jesuit in disguise or else does not know the first principles of what he is talking about, and therefore is not worth his wages.

A NEW, beautiful, and elegantly furnished Masonic Hall, at South Bend, Indiana, was dedicated on the 24th of June last.