

The able and profound scholar, Oliver, says: "Masonry gives a distinct refutation to the infidel and the deist, and without any reference to forms and modes of faith, it furnishes a series of direct evidences, which operate to establish the great and general principles of religion, and points to that triumphant system which was the object of all preceding dispensations, and must ultimately be the sole religion of the human race, because it is the only religion in which the plan of salvation is clearly developed."

The eminent Dr. Boere, of Frankfort, says: "Masonry is the Holy Spring where faded beauty re-found her homage, darkened wisdom her light, and weakened power her strength."

The Rev. A. C. Arnold, author of *Modern Eleusinia*, says: "We don't hesitate therefore to say that we regard *Masonry* as the truest expression of the mind and thought of Christ this age is destined to witness. Christianity is its central idea, and the foundation of our Temple. Nay, *Masonry* is Christianity—Christianity applied to life, and realized in man's relations one with another."

The greatest *lights* of Christianity entertained these opinions. Melancthon, Huss, Wolsey and Locke, Ashmole and Newton, Wren and Dodd, Warren and Dalcho, Franklin and Washington, and many other great, learned and scientific men whose names grace our records.

They have all spoken in the most flattering terms of its utility and purity, and its adaptation to the wants and necessities of our common humanity, and of its great potency in reforming the rude manners of society in the infancy of the world.

Yet the clouds of doubt and uncertainty have not been removed from the pathway of knowledge and investigation, and the records of history veiled in the mist of ages have failed to discover the mystery in its character, or point to the place or day of its birth.

While it is not the intention of the writer to disturb the repose of the sacred arcana of *Masonry*, or tread those hallowed precincts of purity, but simply to draw some thoughts from those scintillations of light which are reflected from her sublime symbolism.

Could Purity, Innocence and Fidelity have been retained by our first parents, and they continued in their Paradise of bliss, where God held sweet communion with them, and Nature supplied their wants; fanned by soft perfumed winds as messengers of health, and refreshed by the gentle dews of Heaven, all tending to promote their happiness to the fullest extent, they must have paused amid the grandeur of those scenes of beauty to contemplate, adore and worship the Divine wisdom that ordained, and the mighty vigor that called them into being.

I repeat, had our first parents remained sinless and maintained their relations to God, *Masonry*, the Church, or any organization, religious or benevolent, would not have been required by man.

The Divine form (for man was made in the image and likeness of God himself), placed at the head of creation, and having unlimited dominion given him, with but one moral and intellectual equal, and no superior save God alone, he was God's custodian to do his pleasure, and enjoy perfect and uninterrupted bliss. But being unacquainted with the power of his untried will, and relying with implicit confidence in that lovely being which God had given him as a help-meet, and having sought and having found companionship with the vilest beast of the field, through his persuasion he left the citadel of his power, became weak and fell, and then every moral impulse of heart became changed, in all his relations to God; yea he was *dead, legally dead*, for the law was to him: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." All his talk with God was now ended, all communion severed. Stung with remorse, yet independent in mind, he went from Eden, which had been his home, to earn his bread by the sweat of his face.

Turning to take a final farewell, he saw the fading beauties of Paradise passing under a dark cloud, which was fast settling down upon her, and while gazing on this solemn scene of gloom the recollection of his disobedience flashed upon his mind, sorrow entered his heart, while the tears of repentance coursed down his manly face. He knelt and breathed a fervent prayer for Divine forgiveness. Then came a voice from Heaven saying, "*I will be thy helper.*"

This was the birth of (Moral and Mental) Speculative *Masonry*. It was nothing more, nothing less.

Speculative (Moral and Mental) *Masonry* is the science of labor, the art of building up, beautifying and adorning the soul and the mind, and had its origin in the first sorrow for sin, the first tear of repentance, and the first prayer for Divine forgiveness.

"To circumscribe the desires, subdue the passions, keep a tongue of good report, practice charity and maintain secrecy," is the foundation stone on which this beautiful, Mental and Moral, edifice of *Masonry* is erected. There it has stood through all ages, and there it is destined to stand till time shall end in eternity.