

may be called Masons, but the name will be no title or honor, but rather a reproach and condemnation.

The faithful Mason will keep steadily before him, first of all, his *individual accountability to God*, the Great Architect and Grand Geometrician of the Universe. Wherever his business or his inclination may lead him, in the busy marts of commerce or the halls of legislation, amid the keen excitement of public business, or in the sacred quietness and calm of his own fireside, he will never fail to realize the presence of that All-seeing Eye which surveys the planets in their courses, and yet coadescends to watch over the faltering footsteps of the humblest child of man. He will not forget that he is responsible, in his individual capacity, for every talent that has been entrusted to his care. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." He cannot escape from this personal obligation by sheltering himself under the broad wing of the Order to which he belongs. He is not lost sight of as a unit is lost sight of in the aggregate that contains it, nor can he plead exemption from any duty because the body of which he is a member undertakes and performs it. He must start with that body in an exertion of his own power.

And yet, as individual effort, when left to itself, amounts to very little, it becomes a second duty of the Mason to *remember his corporate life*—his participation in a fraternal bond. The raindrop that falls from the clouds finds its way back to the ocean which gave it birth. It is a child of the sea, caught by exhalation, out of the arms of its mother, to which it hurriedly returns by direct descent from the sky, or by a circuitous percolation through the soil. As a globule, it is nothing; but as a part of the mighty waters which are made up of single drops, it helps to float navies and encompass continents. We are children, in like manner, of a common humanity. We are born into the world as the outgrowth of a stock which existed before us. We inherit by birth and providential surroundings all the benefit to be derived from the comparative advance in civilization, of the society into which we have been cast. No one of us began life without the advantage of helpers preceding us, who gained for us something. And so we continue, every day, to enter into the labors of others. The ablest statesman and the most learned scholar are indebted, each in his turn, to generations that have passed; and any man who hopes to accomplish in his time any marked result, must enter upon ground which has been providentially prepared for him by earlier efforts than his own. Like the raindrop, we find our element in society, and our power to do, in combination with our kind.

Hence the origin, my brethren, of the Order of Freemasons. Every child of Adam is truly related to every other member of the human family, and his duties are as wide as his relationship. But, because in so vast a body both the duty and the relationship are apt to be lost sight of, the aspirant after fraternity is inducted into a fellowship, composed of others like-minded with himself, who are banded together for this very purpose, viz., to install fraternal charity, to cultivate and expand its region, to elevate the aims, assist the endeavors and guide the labor of its members, to lead them to seize the opportunities of good which they are privileged to enjoy, and help them to a manly and holy development.

The historian Gibbon, among the celebrated five causes to which he attributes the rapid growth of Christianity, mentions this as one, "The *union and discipline* of the "Christian Republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state "in the heart of the Roman Empire." A great and important truth underlies this statement, which is equally applicable to the history of the Masonic Order. Our Order is a republic, a commonwealth, an independent and increasing State, with its officers, laws and discipline. As such it makes itself felt, a regularly organized power in the midst of other powers. Its rule is a moral rule, but it is nevertheless visible in the chastened lives and beneficent charities of its loyal and obedient subjects. It seeks not a place among political fabrics, of which, notwithstanding it is one of the main upholders, but no secular policy can compare with it in the extent of its influence. Among the polished nations of Europe and America, and the swarthy children of the desert, 'mid the snow-capped mountains of the Arctic regions, and on the burning sands of Arabia, wherever human forms have covered human hearts, there the symbols of our Order have taught their lessons and displayed their unconquerable power.

You are aware, my brethren, that this vast organization originated in associations which at first were mere fraternities of commerce, having for their object the protection of trade, and the development of mechanical skill and industry. Men of the same calling combined together to elevate that calling or protect it from oppression. The earlier forms and uses of the Masonic Fraternity seem to have been devoted to architecture and building, keeping pace with and doubtless aiding the progress of architecture, by training and organizing the forces necessary to the erection of costly palaces and temples. The initiates and fellow-crafts were trained in operative masonry and the sciences essential to itself, and the master builders' art was thus perfected, and