

Church makes man more sacred to himself, his family and his country than Masonry does, pray let me know.

There are certain things about Masonry that seem very peculiar to some. It has made a chief point of its charities, and to avoid abuse of our generosity, it was found necessary to protect ourselves to a certain extent, because we all know that there are the providential poor—those who after having done their best need help—and the wilful poor, and a discrimination between these two classes is essential. We soon learn to know whether a member is worthy or not, as we become so intimately connected with him and his habits and business, and if he demoralizes and wastes himself and his means, he loses that strong Masonic grip upon the charities of a Masonic Lodge. We can dispense our charities equally as fairly and equitably as any institution in the world if we choose to exercise our intelligence, thus bringing the really worthy cases to the front. But if a member becomes unworthy of help we are under no further obligation to him than to seek his reformation. A good Mason aims to keep a firm Masonic hold on the fraternity by being worthy, and then, should legitimate misfortune overtake him, Masonic benevolence will surely break the force of that misfortune.

Yet a view of Masonry that takes in only its charities is meagre and limited. Our real work and mission is to be found in our preventative rather than in our benevolent policy. Going back to the origin of Masonry every man had to be qualified in some trade, and he must therefore be a competent man; he must not be a slave, a cripple or an imbecile. He would not be admitted unless he had the ability to earn his own livelihood. That is why Masonry prevents, to a certain extent, the need of charity; in other words, Masonry honours itself more in its non-charities, when rightly conducted, than in its active charities. To stay disease is as good as to cure it; to prevent crime is