

In this our favored Dominion the craft is continually called on to lay the corner stone of public, charitable and stately buildings, and I am proud to add, of many edifices like the one now proposed to be erected and intended for the worship of the ever living God. The Masonic Order, alone of all other organized bodies has a prescribed form of ceremony for occasions like the present, and though now speculative Masons, yet we are the successors of those operative Masons who reared as well the gigantic Pyramids, the wondrous edifices of Palmyra and Suxor and the Temple of Solomon, as the glorious cathedrals and other sacred fanes. As Free Masons we have retained all our ancient customs, forms and working tools. It must send a thrill of pleasurable emotion through the breast of every Freemason when he remembers that the same forms and ceremonies have been observed to-day with but little variation as were extant and performed in past centuries by our ancient brethren. It is a commendable and proper pride which every Mason has that he can claim to be a member of the most ancient of human institutions, and I may add of the largest, numbering as it does, sixteen millions of Freemason Brethren. May we ever hold fast to the principles of Freemasonry, and never by our conduct sully its fair fame.

It is a custom hallowed by antiquity that on occasions like the present, some brief remarks should be made on one or more of the great moral truths which our Order enforces and the one I shall allude to, will I feel, be peculiarly appropriate, as we have been engaged in rearing a building to be dedicated to the solemn worship of the Most High. The assertion cast on us by our enemies that we are an organization wanting in religion, I publicly proclaim as calumnious and false. The lodge is never opened but with prayer to God asking his blessing on our undertaking, and never closed but with the acknowledgment of our belief in the power and goodness of the Creator. The first great lesson taught the novice on entering the portals of the Lodge, is the necessity of his serious contemplation of the volume of the Sacred Law, which is ever open, so that he may benefit thereby, in his onward progress he is charged to consider it as the unerring standard of Faith and Justice, and