

That they are the bane of the institution of Freemasonry is evident to every one who has ever held a supervising position in an official capacity in the Order, and how to make them available is the problem that many have attempted to solve, but the result has been generally far from satisfactory. They still exist with their blighting influence; the vitality of Masonry is sapped to its very roots by their connection with it, and it withers in the noon-tide of its prosperity, as the plant in sandy soil withers beneath the scorching rays of a meridian sun. It is almost a wonder how such drones ever became Masons, for their petition must have come as their own voluntary act, and they have never been known to do anything voluntarily in a Masonic way since. They pay their dues, when compelled to do so, to preserve their Masonic standing, and attend their lodge in obedience to a summons for the same reason. If asked to perform any Masonic duty, such as sitting up with a sick brother, providing for those who are destitute, or relieving those who are in distress, they have important business which must be attended to—they are very sorry that it has happened so—but they must be excused this time. They never perform any such service while there is any possible way to avoid it, but they are the first to ask it for themselves in the hour of need, or when they can be benefitted by it, and if it is not properly rendered to their entire satisfaction, Masonry is declared to be a humbug, and Masonic obligations the merest pretence. The beautiful lessons of brotherly love and charity inculcated so impressively in the several degrees they have taken, have fallen like good seed upon stony ground, and hence bringeth forth no fruit. Now it is evident that there must be some defect, something wrong, or this condition of affairs could not exist, and to endeavor to discover the cause and apply the remedy should be the aim of all who desire to increase the usefulness and promote the prosperity of Masonry. There are undoubtedly many reasons which will present themselves to the thoughtful Mason, but chief among them, we apprehend, is the fact that a great many men have erroneous ideas in regard to the institution before they become members of it, and not finding it just what they had supposed it to be, in their disappointment they lose all interest in it and become simply nominal Masons. They had imagined that Masonry was a highway to distinction, honors, riches and power, but found instead that it laid upon them new cares, labors and responsibilities, which they were unwilling to assume. Instead of a desire of being serviceable to their fellow creatures, it turns out that their desire is to make the whole fraternity of service to themselves, and if this can not be done they have no further use for Masonry.

Another class have become drones because they have never learned enough of Masonry to become interested in it, or they do not agree with a majority in the management of the lodge, or they have had a personal difficulty with some brother, or some members do not live up to their idea of morality and they do not wish to associate with such profligate fellows. Instead of doing their own plain duty in such cases, they shirk the responsibility, and attempt to throw all the blame on others. The great trouble in this whole matter is, these men have none of the spirit of Masonry in them, and ought never to have been admitted into the lodge. Let our brothers then profit by their past experience, and more carefully examine into the character and qualifications of those who may seek admission into our Order. Let it not be sufficient that there is nothing against the moral character of the applicant, but see to it that he possesses positive qualities, and the capacity to understand and appreciate what will be required of him as a Mason. Make less members and more Masons, and there will be fewer drones in our lodges.—*Masonic Advocate*.

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## THE CHIEF CORNER STONE.

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A FIRM and unshaken belief in the Divine authority of the Bible, is as distinctly set forth in the doctrines of Freemasonry, as the belief in the existence and perfections of God. Denying this cardinal doctrine of Masonic faith, the splendid and imposing structure of what we proudly call Craft Masonry, is left without one of its main corner-stones; the cement is dislodged from every joint in the building, the pillars and supports are cracked and broken; the columns and walls sway from their perpendicular line; the seams and joints gape and yawn; the arches have lost their keystones; the girders and rafters have lost their bolts and braces, and the whole superstructure, from foundation to cope-stone, is left to the mercy of the pitiless storms, soon to be prostrated, and its magnificent ruins trodden into the dust of oblivion by the rough and merciless hand of time.

By the honored Fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, the Bible is received everywhere as an accredited volume of Divine inspiration. It is found on every Masonic altar in every regularly constituted lodge. It meets us, with its impressive lessons and solemn sanctions, at every step in our progress through the various