

First, we call your attention to the building itself. In building, great importance is attached to the foundation. The wise builder is most careful just here, he digs until he finds the hard ground or solid rock. Masonry lays broad and deep the foundations of character in piety. The initiate must avow his faith in the Supreme God ere he can enter her portals. The Holy Bible lies open upon her altar. And solemn prayer is acknowledged to be man's chief source of help.

He is the Great Architect of the Universe, who existed before it, planned it in infinite wisdom, and constructed it by omnipotent power. He is the Grand Geometrician, working all things after the counsel of his own will—excluding alike the blind chance or iron fate of the Ancients, the mechanical force or mere tendency of modern science. He is the Most High—over all, guiding all, and working in all for the accomplishment of his own sublime purposes.

The letters by which we spell out the ineffable Name signify little, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Home by any other appellation would be as full of endearment. But the idea of God is the basis of our morality. When the Grand Orient of France, with profane hand, removed this ancient landmark, an indignant protest went up from the whole Masonic world, showing that our faith in God is a profound conviction.

Secondly, having laid the foundation thus securely, next in importance is the walls. The builder seeks materials for the structure, strong, enduring and beautiful, that which will prove most effectual against time and storm, and attractive to the eye. And in the building of character Masonry looks chiefly to integrity. Uprightness is set forth in her attitudes, symbols and signs. Little importance is attached to opinions, they change with the growth of enlightenment.

Beliefs sacred in one age become the execration of another. Mere feeling is not taken into account, it varies, takes its complexion from the circumstances of life, the state of the health and even the conditions of the atmosphere. Integrity, on the contrary, strengthens with years. The flesh may fail, opinions change, and feelings die, but honesty of soul renews its youth like the eagle, and plumes its wings for higher flight. This truly Masonic virtue is the best security of life. It shields our interests, guards our good name, and throws its protecting arms around the sanctuary of home—more effectual than law, force, or even public opinion, is the golden rule written in the heart! Is it not also the most attractive? You remember the familiar aphorism, "An honest man is the noblest work of God!" Kant, the great German, said, "The two grandest objects in nature, coming within the range of our observation, are the starry heavens without and the law of duty within." And a greater than he said, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets."

Thirdly, having laid the foundation in piety, and reared the walls in integrity, Masonry covers the structure with the dome of benevolence. This is the crowning virtue. Man is viewed as dependent in himself. Through the fickleness of fortune he may at any time become poor and penniless and he is then a lawful claimant upon his more favored Brethren. As every atom of matter, whether it lies imbedded in the solid rock, is tossed upon the wave top, or floats in the atmosphere, is connected with every other atom, so every man, whether in weal or woe, is indissolubly joined with his fellow men. Or like the members of the body, such is the sympathy between them, that if one suffers, the others suffer with it. And, therefore, Masonry recognizes the obligation to "rejoice with them