

aspire to. But the objects of knowledge are infinite, and therefore the fountains of knowledge at which he may drink are inexhaustible. This sublime truth, that man was created for eternal progress, was one of the earliest teachings of Freemasonry, and illustrated in its most ancient rites. And to-day the Order announces it in multifarious forms, and asserts it in all its instructions. Not only is it symbolized by the *Three Steps*, but it is the great and living thought that inspires the entire ritual. The *Three Steps*, the *Winding Stairs*, and the *Solemn Illustrations*, all perpetually cry in the Mason's ear, "On, ON, FOR EVER!"

THE POT OF INCENSE.—This emblem of a pure heart is peculiarly expressive; for such a heart perpetually ascends in perfumes of filial gratitude, like the cloud of celestial fire that filled the temple of Jerusalem, and the heaven-descended flame that burned continually in the Holy of Holies. God, as an object of worship, is revealed to the consciousness of man in various ways. When we contemplate with admiring wonder the grandeur of the mountain, the vastness of the sea, the beauty of the landscape, and the glory of the heavens, the mind, instantly and involuntarily, is impressed with the sense of a Presence grander than the mountain, transcending infinitely the sea in vastness, more beautiful than the landscape, and far more glorious than the heavens, and to that Presence—the Ideal and the Ideal Beauty—the soul rushes by a natural aspiration. This aspiration is worship, and through this communion of man with the Infinite he receives the elements of a divine life, the energy to achieve noble things, and is thus raised above all other orders of created beings on earth. The incense which ascends from the kindled urn is an emblem of this aspiration of the soul to God, and thus Freemasonry enjoins the obligation of worship. "The Mason is not to engage in any undertaking

without invoking the aid of the Deity," because, through this communion with the Highest Good—the Infinite Perfection—his intellect expands and is endowed with creative forces; his heart glows with a divine enthusiasm, his soul is attuned to what is moral and beautiful; his life becomes radiant with noble virtues, and his works are established in strength and beauty.

THE BEE HIVE.—The slothful inactivity of the rational drone is severely reproved by this striking symbol. The industrious Bee rises early to the labors of the summer day, gathering from the *Masonic Carpet* of nature an ample supply for the winter of his year. By imitating this example, man might enjoy all the necessities, and even the luxuries of life; while he would avoid vice and temptation, and merit the respect of mankind. On the contrary, idleness is the parent of immorality and ruin. Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. Hence Freemasonry, in all its instructions, recognizes labor as a supreme duty, and a divine law. It regards the Deity as the "Grand Architect," the "Divine Artificer," the "Master Workman" of the universe. All its forms, symbols, ceremonies, and types are fashioned by this idea—all point to *labor* as the chief duty of life, and the call to labor as the grandest of all vocations. It represents God as ever working to diffuse more of beauty and order, goodness and justice, throughout the worlds which he has formed, and solemnly urges man to follow the divine example.

* * * * *

Work with hand and work with heart;
Work, the heavens are always working;
Nature reads a text to Art.

Let each brother be a workman;
Higher worship, there is none!
With its hymn of work-devotion
Nature is one choral tone!

Ever working, ever doing,
Nature's law in space and time;
See thou heed it in thy worship,
Build thou up a life sublime.