

selves Masons, who in this country would cling to the skirts of an honored Grand Lodge and trail them in the muck and mire of pollution, by making Masons of material which they know has been rejected elsewhere. We furthermore feel compelled to add that if the Grand Lodge of England permits her subordinates to commit so gross an outrage upon Masonry universal, that, whilst protesting, we shall bow our head in shame and blush at the conduct of the mother from whose breasts our own Grand Lodge drank the sweet milk of Masonic Love, Masonic Charity, and Masonic Truth.

ENFORCED MEMBERSHIP.

An esteemed correspondent takes us to task in regard to our views upon enforced membership. We cheerfully admit that he caught us tripping in our statement that anybody could join of his "own free will and accord," but that, of course, he will know was merely a slip. The question in our mind is, what right have we to say to any brother "you *must* belong to a Lodge?" To quote from any ancient documents that such was originally law is sheer nonsense, as, properly speaking, lodges (as we understand them) are of recent origin.

We hold that to insist upon a brother being a lodge member, when for conscientious reasons he may wish for a time to retire from the same, is unjust and unmasonic. We furthermore believe it is a suicidal course to pursue. A brother finds he cannot conscientiously sit with another member of a lodge, yet by this system of enforced membership,

he must still remain a member of that lodge or allow himself to be suspended, or perchance expelled. Our correspondent, we presume, will say, "Let him join another lodge;" but he may live hundreds of miles from any other lodge, and then not know any of the members. No, the system is wrong, and diametrically opposed to the principles of our Institution, which is founded upon Justice, Charity and Brotherly Love.

What justice is there in enforcing a brother to remain a member of a lodge, when for reasons of his own he wishes to withdraw. Is there that liberal and charitable spirit which should characterize Freemasonry in such a *bondage*? What brotherly love is there in such a cramped and narrow minded system? A brother should be as free as the birds of the air. There is no object in detaining the unwilling. Put policy aside. Does our Nebraska brother pretend to argue that such material is of any benefit to the edifice? Fancy a lodge composed of a dozen men, all desirous of becoming unaffiliated. What sort of a lodge would it be? What sort of work would it perform?

Our brother says "suspend" or "expel" such men. This would be a crying injustice and a cruel outrage. Take a man's fees, make him a Mason, and then, because of conscientious reasons, perchance *religious scriptures*, he does not desire to remain in membership, suspend him. Why, the very thought is wrong. If Masonry has to be kept up by an *enforced membership*, the sooner it decays the better. Let our friend picture to himself a church thus supported and thus built up.