

“By Command of the Rt. Hon. and Rt. Worshipful the Grand Master of the Ancient, and Honourable Society of free and accepted Masons of the last General Assembly, Mercer’s Hall, and for the entertainment of the Brethren,

At the Oratory,

The corner of Lincoln’s Inn Fields, near Clare Market. on Thursday next, the 25th of this instant, June, at 6 in the evening. will be delivered an

Eulogium

upon

Freemasonry,

The first oration on that subject.

“N. B.—At the Feast the Brethren were desired by the Grand Officers, to come clothed to this oration. It will be spoken in the proper habiliment.

“Price of seats to all persons whatsoever, Masons or others—Two shilings.”

It was not the *first* Oration on Freemasonry, but we should much like to know what was said by our Bro. Orator Henley.—*London Masonic Magazine.*

WHAT IS MASONRY?

An eminent English barrister and a member of Parliament, who was also a Provincial Grand Master of Masons, once said that if Freemasonry be not scientific, it is nothing. We agree with the spirit of his remark, but not at all with the letter. He stated one truth, in an exaggerated form, but not the whole truth. It is impossible to boil down into a brief verbal phrase the whole purpose and function of Freemasonry, so as to define them in a single sentence. Ours is a Royal Art, richly endowed of old, and through all the ages since deriving a constantly increasing heritage of intellectual wealth. From tradition we learn that the wisdom of Solomon founded the Craft; the architects of Europe and the East preserved its form and substance; and the revivalists of the early part of the last century, finding it had been gradually assuming a speculative as well as an operative form, superseded the latter by the former, and made the Craft what we find it to-day. It is apparent then that Freemasonry is a growth, a development; that it was not born in a day, nor reared in a generation, nor matured in a century—but is the heir of ages, and now has more noble and glorious purposes than it ever had before. With this ancient and noble lineage, with the royal purpose of the Fraternity to develop the higher nature of its members, and make them morally and mentally wealthier, and socially happier, it need not surprise any one if it be impossible to state in a single sentence the object of Freemasonry. We will devote several sentences to an attempt to state, in as few words as possible, our view of this important subject.

Freemasonry is a social and convivial Order. It gathers into the closest fraternal intercourse those who are qualified by nature and education for admittance into its Lodges. It spreads before them Refreshment that strengthens the inner man, and develops the finest social and healthiest convivial propensities. The Lodge is the Mason’s home, where he meets with Brethren only, sitting with them around the Tressel Board and the Banquet Board—where heart beats to heart and hand clasps hand. In this union there is Strength, for the Mystic Tie is Love. This is one statement of what the Craft is and does.

Freemasonry is a moral Order. It builds no longer perishable edifices of stone, but living spiritual temples. Man is immortal, and it is upon man it labors. And it works with proper tools. All of the Craftsman’s implements are symbolical—every one teaching its lesson. Twenty-four inch Gauge and common Gavel, Plumb, Level, and Square, Trowel, and Compasses—all adorn a moral and point a tale, all lead to reflection upon the lower nature in man, which is to be subjected, and the higher nature which is to be made supreme. Faith in God and belief in the immortality of the soul are the first and last lessons of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry is an intellectual Order. It stores the mind with knowledge ready phrased for the memory, where if it once find lodgment it will never depart. The work of Masonry is a fruit of perennial growth and bloom, through time into eternity. Those who are made Masons in heart, and whose careers are redolent with the charities of life, whose minds expand under the culture which the Craft affords, in the great hereafter when we shall rise to a higher sphere of existence, will be prepared to advance from one stage of intellectual growth to another. But the Work, proper, of Masonry, does not embody all of its culture. It was this thought, doubtless, that prompted the words of the English Provincial Grand Master that we quoted at the beginning of this article—that Freemasonry is nothing if not scientific. We agree with him so far as to unequivocally assert, that no matter how well the Work of Masonry is done, *more* needs to be done, or after all the Work is *not* well done. Sign and