

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Soc
4310
55

Digitized by Google

4310.55

From Boston Globe, Aug 4, 1920

One Newfoundland man asked another the following question; When does this Prohibition Act go into effect?

FROM
THE BUSINESS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC



THE GIFT OF
The Heirs of
George C. Dempsey

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE EXOTERIC DUTIES OF FREE MASONS.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

TRENTON LODGE, No. 5, A. F. A. M.,

DECEMBER 12, 1859,

BY

THOMAS J. CORSON, W. M.

Ordered to be published by the Lodge.

TRENTON, N. J.:
MURPHY & BECHTEL, PRINTERS, OPPOSITE THE CITY HALL.
1859.

Digitized by Google

Soc 4310.55
✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM THE HEIRS OF
GEORGE C. DEMPSEY

c

Digitized by Google

TRENTON, December 14th, 1859.

THOMAS J. CORSON, M. D., W. M. of Trenton Lodge, No. 5.

Dear Sir and Bro.—I am directed by a resolution of Trenton Lodge, No. 5, A. F. A. M., to request of you a copy, for publication, of the very able Address delivered by you before our Lodge, on the evening of the 12th inst.

Fraternally Yours,

JOHN O. RAUM,
Secretary of Trenton Lodge, No. 5.

TRENTON, December 14th, 1859.

JOHN O. RAUM, ESQ., Sec'y of Trenton Lodge, No. 5, A. F. A. M.

Dear Sir and Bro.—Your note of to-day, asking, in behalf of Trenton Lodge, for a copy of the Address delivered before that Lodge on the 12th inst., has been received.

The Address was not written for publication; and, indeed, it was so hastily written, and so little care was devoted to its composition, that it is hardly fit for publication. But if the publication and dissemination of it will, in the slightest degree, advance the interests of the Royal Craft, or benefit a single Brother, I cheerfully waive all personal considerations, and herewith place it at your disposal.

Fraternally Yours,

THOMAS J. CORSON.

Digitized by Google

BHS
Gift of
The Heirs of
George C. Dempsey

Digitized by Google

ADDRESS.

My Brethren: — Let us, for our mutual benefit and instruction, devote a little time this evening to the examination of what is required of us as members of that Institution which we love, and which we should delight to honor. Let us, with unbiased minds, cooly and dispassionately inquire what are the exoteric duties of Free Masons, that we may thereby discover whether we are or are not faithful to our vows, and worthy of the name and professions which we have voluntarily assumed.

In the remarks which a sense of duty impels me to make at this time, it will be necessary for me to speak of some of the flagrant sins and glaring faults, as well as those too commonly prevalent minor inconsistencies, of which many of the members of our Order are guilty; and the existence of which has brought discredit and disrepute upon our Institution, and has caused the undiscriminating profane—who unfairly take a part for the whole, and judge us by the acts of erring and unworthy brethren—to arrive at the unjust conclusion that Masonry is not what it is represented to be, and that our professions are mere empty words and hollow sounds, without meaning or vitality.

In speaking of these things, which are an opprobrium and a disgrace to our Order, and detrimental to its very existence, I shall not use gentle words and honeyed

Digitized by Google

phrases, that flow trippingly from the tongue, and fall soothingly upon the ears of the hearers, lulling them into a self-satisfying repose. But I shall speak words of truth and soberness, which, though they may be clothed in rough and homely garb, I hope will be of benefit to all of us. And I pray that, if my words should cause any brother to feel that he has been derelict in duty and has failed to do any of those things, which, as a Mason, he is bound to do, I most earnestly pray that, for his own sake, and for the sake of our beloved Institution, he may be stirred up to a more faithful and energetic performance of his duties. If we have not, thus far, lived in accordance with our professions, we should at once commence a new life. It is folly and madness for us to say that we cannot so reform our lives as to make ourselves "good men and true," for every one can and does, to a great degree, make himself what he is. It cannot be denied that we are in a measure biased by prejudice, and warped by our own peculiar dispositions. But every one can, if he will, so far overcome his prejudices and predilections—the evil effects of habit and association, and the defects of early education and fallacies and falsities of more mature life—as to keep them in subjection; and having done this, he stands forth as a man—the last, the noblest, grandest and best work of creation—only "a little lower than the angels."

It requires much care and painful trial so to keep under control and subjection the evil aspirations and impure desires of the human heart, that the gross and sensual shall not preponderate over the pure and noble; but it can be done. We have the power in ourselves to do this. There is much truth in Iago's words, "Our bodies

Digitized by Google

are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce, set hyssop, and weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would lead us to most preposterous conclusions."

We should also carefully consider what may be the influence of our words and actions upon others, for we know that

"Evil is wrought, by want of thought,
As well as want of heart;"

and what is said and done without any hurtful intention, may be productive of great harm. A word once spoken, a thought once expressed, an act once performed, has gained an existence which can never be annihilated—it has become a part of us. Words are but air; but they possess an irresistible power, in comparison with which the avalanche is weak. Who of us would not live differently, in some respects, were he to be allowed the privilege of going over his life again; if, at the same time, he should have the knowledge he has gained by experience? But the railroad of life can be traveled but once; we start from the birth-station, and receive a through ticket to the death-depot—there are no stopping-places on this line. What we do can be done but once, and it behooves us to see to it that we do nothing unless it be sanctioned by the laws of right and justice, else we must suffer for it.

I am no censor or law-giver, but I wish to speak of those faults of which many of us are guilty, with a view

Digitized by Google

to our reformation; and in doing so, I wish to disclaim utterly and entirely having any intention to refer to any particular brother or brethren. We all need to be urged on to a more active exercise of those principles and tenets by which we profess to be governed. We all are blameworthy, for "no man liveth and sinneth not;" and when the faults and short-comings of Free Masons are brought in review, all of us will be found to have come far short of having fulfilled the obligations which rest upon us. And my only object in making these plain remarks, is that you and I, and all of us, may be induced to give more evident proof, in our daily walk and conversation, that we are in deed and in heart Free Masons, and that we practice out of the Lodge what we profess in it.

An absolutely essential and preliminary qualification to being made a Mason is, that the candidate be a man of good moral character, and that he have and declare a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being; this is an ancient landmark, which we in nowise dare violate. One of the ancient charges declares that "a Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law, and, if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist, nor an irreligious libertine." Even if an atheist were to become a member of a Masonic Lodge, (which never should be allowed to occur, and which never can occur unless he be guilty of falsehood and deception,) he would not, because he could not, become a Mason; for he could not understand Masonry, neither would he enjoy it. Those principles to which all true Masons acknowledge allegiance, and which lie at the very foundation of our Institution, could not be received or acknowledged by such an one; and to him our ritual and ceremonies would be an

Digitized by Google

unmeaning jargon. Denying the premises from which the principles of our Order are evolved, the conclusions drawn therefrom would also be rejected by him. And moreover, we dare not trust such a man; for he who, in the clear light of nature and revelation, would deny the existence of a God, must be a fool or a knave—and such a man is unfit to affiliate and commune with us.

Such being the moral qualifications necessary for admission, we should be careful that we are not recreant to our vows, by introducing, or allowing to be introduced, into our Fraternity, such as are unworthy of affiliation with us, and who would bring discredit upon our Order. Let us not be influenced by motives of personal friendship or self-interest, to such an extent as to permit the entrance of any one whose blemishes of character would unfit him to merit the respect, confidence and esteem of all good men. Unless the character of a candidate is good and his reputation above suspicion, it is our duty to exclude him, however dear he may be to us. We cannot, consistently with our duty, admit any one to fellowship with us for the sole purpose of benefiting and purifying him. However praiseworthy the motive might be that would prompt such a course, the experiment is too dangerous—he must be a good man before his admission—he must be one who can give, as well as receive, benefit. Our society is not a moral reform association, for reclaiming the depraved and dissolute; for by admitting such we would be endangering the interests of the whole craft. Unless the blocks presented for our inspection be of good work and sound material, we must reject them as unworthy; for we want no unsound timber or misshapen blocks, that would mar the beauty and symmetry of our holy temple.

Digitized by Google

The homely adage that "one crooked stick will make the whole pile crooked," is particularly applicable to our Institution. While the principles of Free Masonry are such that the practice of them will improve and purify all who obey their teachings, yet we dare not trust ourselves to impart our valuable secrets to any who are not already good men and true, for we must have a solid foundation whereon to build our Masonic superstructure; and if we admit the imperfect and unworthy, we will thereby inflict incalculable injury upon the whole Fraternity. Therefore, it behooves us all to guard well the outer door, lest the sacred precincts of our holy temple be defiled by unhallowed feet. Masonry requires not to be bolstered up by numbers, and we need no missionaries to gain us proselytes. Our doors are always open to the good and worthy, and we want no others.

Our Institution at this day occupies a position of prosperity and popularity unparalleled in the annals of history; and we have a sacred duty to perform to the whole craft, wherever dispersed around the globe; which duty is to see to it that we do not—either by carelessness or thoughtlessness, by false feelings of charity, or a desire to gratify our personal friends and acquaintances—permit any to become united with us, but such as are worthy and well qualified to have our honors bestowed upon them, and who will carefully preserve and duly transmit the principles of our Order, and our esoteric rites and ceremonies, in unadulterated purity to their successors.

Masonry is not religion, but it is a very close approximation to it; and it is so far interwoven with it, as to lay us under the most solemn obligations to pay homage and reverence to that Almighty Being whose wisdom guides,

Digitized by Google

whose strength supports, and whose beauty adorns all things. It has been well said that "Masonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by appropriate symbols." But from the commencement of the initiation of the neophyte, until he has been raised to the highest honors that the craft can bestow upon him, the power and majesty of God, and the immortality of the soul, are repeatedly and unequivocally presented to his attention. We are taught throughout the different Masonic lectures and ceremonies, to acknowledge our dependence upon the Supreme Being, and we are also instructed that we should always invoke his aid and assistance, before entering upon any great and important undertaking.

No Masonic Lodge can be opened until the blessing of God has been invoked, nor can it be closed until thanks have been solemnly returned to Him for the many blessings which His bounty has conferred. And the different rites and ceremonies which are peculiar to our Order, are full of allusions and direct references to the wisdom, glory and goodness of the great I AM. In the initiation of a candidate, solemn prayer is offered up to Almighty God, that he may dedicate and devote his life to His service. And in the charge which the novitiate receives, upon being admitted to the ground-floor of our Temple, he is instructed that he must esteem God as the chief good, and implore His aid in all of his laudable undertakings.

Thus speaks Bro. T. S. Parvin, P. G. H. P., of Iowa: "I am not ashamed, my companions, here to confess that I seek daily to live the life becoming a follower of Him who, when on earth, "went about doing good," and I glory that this heavenly light was first revealed to my

Digitized by Google

darkened vision through the solemn and sublime mysteries practiced in the rites and ceremonies of our beloved Order." This is noble language, and every true Mason's heart will approve it. Let us not fail, my brethren, in love and homage to Him "in whom we live and move, and have our being." Let us not be induced to turn from the way of virtue and holiness by the captious sneers of men wise in their own conceit—and in that only—or by the ridicule of the thoughtless and wicked, and the cunning sophistries of the skeptic, lest we learn from bitter experience, that

> "An Atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
> For Deity offended."

As a corollary to the former proposition, a belief in the Holy Bible, the revealed law of God, is strictly enjoined upon us. We declare that we take it to be the rule and guide of our faith and practice. No Lodge is just, perfect and regular, unless the Holy Bible occupies a prominent position therein, and, in christian countries all masonic lodges are dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and St. John the Evangelist, who were christian patrons of the Order.

Brother Alfred P. Robinson, P. G. M. of Delaware, uses the following appropriate language: "The Bible is bestowed upon us as our rule of faith, and he who abnegates its divinity, can not within our halls be allowed to pollute it with his touch. * * * * * * He has no trust in God, and is without a guide over the rough path of life; he is without *hope*, because she has no foundation on which to erect her temple in his heart."

Certain it is that Free Masonry, rightly understood, has a christianizing effect upon its true disciples, teaching

Digitized by Google

them to reverence and obey that Grand Architect of the Universe, who governs and directs all things; so that a good Mason is almost a Christian. The heart is softened and the mind expanded by the sublime teachings of Masonry. The soul is elevated above sublunary things, and we are taught to look beyond the perishable joys of this life, in our pursuit of happiness, to that Supreme Grand Lodge above, where God's ineffable wisdom guides, governs and directs—where pain and peril, doubt and disappointment, fear and sorrow, never enter—and where the soul is blessed with peace and joy unspeakable and full of glory, that will continue through the endless ages of eternity. To this state of blessedness all good Masons hope to arrive, by a faithful observance of those duties which they owe to God, their fellow-men and themselves, and which are strictly enjoined upon them by our lectures and the esoteric instruction peculiar to us.

The legitimate and natural tendency of Free Masonry upon its votaries is, to incline the heart to deeds of charity and love to all men—thus prompting them to relieve the distressed and suffering, and pour the oil of joy into the bleeding wounds of the unfortunate. It exalts and refines the mind, leading it to entertain enlarged and elevated views of men and things, and giving a healthy tone and direction to its aspirations, thus destroying a love for those base and groveling pleasures and pursuits which too often degrade and debase the human family. It subdues our irregular passions, and checks those unhealthy desires, the indulgence of which would lead us into excesses that would disgrace us and render us unworthy of the love and esteem of our fellow-men. It elevates the soul, gently leading it in the ways of peace and pleas-

Digitized by Google

antness, and preparing it for the reception of a strong and abiding love for Him whom it is our duty to love and obey; and with such a preparation, if our minds rightly conceive the end and aim of Masonry, we will be prepared to acknoweledge that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Let us approach this edifice of Free Masonry, and view its beautiful proportions. We find it to be a glorious Temple, dedicated to the living God and devoted to his service. Its corner-stone is Morality, and its turrets are crowned with Virtue. It is founded in divine Wisdom, supported by invincible Strength, and adorned with ineffable Beauty. The warders at its gates, vigilantly guarding it against intruders, are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. The pillars that uphold it are crowned with symbols of Peace, Unity and Plenty. Its inmates labor in the service of their Master, with Freedom, Fervency and Zeal; and they are rewarded by receiving as a recompense for their labors, the corn of nourishment, the wine of refreshment, and the oil of joy. They are so governed by the Plumb, that they walk uprightly in their several stations of life—all of their words are squared by the Square of Virtue—and they ever bear in remembrance that they are traveling upon the Level of Time, to that future world, where the unfaithful shall receive just punishment, and where those that have been faithful to the end, shall receive an exceeding great reward. In their intercourse with each other, they are actuated by the noble principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth—by which they are taught to love their neighbors as themselves, and to deal with all men as they would wish to be dealt with—to relieve the wants of the

Digitized by Google

needy and unfortunate—and to be good and true to all. They are cheered aud supported in their labors by that Faith in God which can sustain the sinking soul in the darkest hours of affliction and despair—by that hope in immortality which fills the soul with beatific visions of future joys, and which acts as an incentive to a constant and faithful performance of duty—and by that Charity toward all mankind which prompts them to perform deeds of love and kindness, which bless both them that give and them that receive. Such is true Masonry, and such are true Masons. Brethren, are we worthy of a place among such?

Thus speaks, in eloquent and truthful language, that pure patriot and noble statesman, Brother De Witt Clinton: "Although the origin of our fraternity is covered with darkness, and its history is to a great extent obscure, yet we can confidently say, that it is the most ancient society in the world—and we are equally certain that its principles are based on pure morality—that its ethics are the ethics of Christianity—its doctrines, the doctrines of patriotism and brotherly love—and its sentiments, the sentiments of exalted benevolence. Upon these points there can be no doubt—all that is good, and kind, and charitable it encourages; all that is vicious and cruel, and oppressive, it reprobates."

In the construction of that Masonic edifice of which each one of us is a component part, we commence at the foundation with Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; and we finish at the cope-stone with Virtue, Morality and Brotherly Love. Love commences it, and Love concludes it. How noble! how beautiful! how surpassingly glorious should this symbolic Temple be, which we are to

Digitized by Google

erect in our hearts! Love, the crowning attribute of the Deity, is the foundation and the completion; and enclosed within this sacred structure, are all of those virtues which make men good and holy. Let us so build this divine Temple in *our* hearts, that all of its chambers may be pure and spotless, so that no evil thought or impure desire can enter therein, to defile and pollute it, and so that it may be a fit dwelling-place for truth and virtue. For thus, and thus only, can we "fit our minds as living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Having thus taken a cursory view of speculative Masonry, and what it requires of its votaries, let us examine wherein it is that professing Free Masons are guilty of a violation of principles, and are recreant to their professions. And in doing this, only a few of the most prominent and important points can be considered; for the limits of one lecture will not suffice to enable us to go over the whole ground; for this is a fruitful theme and one well worthy of careful consideration.

There is one vice, the practice of which, by members of our Order, brings more dishonor and just censure upon us than any other—and that is Profanity. This disgusting habit is too shamefully prevalent among men calling themselves Masons—calling themselves Masons, I say—for no man who is addicted to this sin, and who habitually practices it, is a Mason in his heart. The profane swearer has never properly felt and appreciated the force of the obligations resting upon him; nor has he ever had his soul illumined by the pure light that emanates from Masonry; for if he had, he would forsake his evil ways. How terrible it is to hear oaths and imprecations

Digitized by Google

from one who professes to put his trust in that God who has said, "I will not hold him guiltless that taketh my name in vain"—and who has declared that he takes the Holy Bible to be the rule and guide of his faith and practice—who has been solemnly instructed never to speak the name of the Deity but with that reverence due from a creature to his Creator—and who has been taught that before Him we should all bow with reverence, worship, and adoration! How shocking it is to hear such an one profane that great, mighty and terrible name—that name above all other names—the name of Him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords—from whom, and by whom, all things exist, and to whom all things are in subjection; and before whose awful majesty, kingdoms, and principalities and powers sink into utter insignificance. How dreadful it is to hear that name flippantly and irreverently spoken—and to hear oaths flowing from the lips of those who profess to trust in God, that make the hearers shudder!

Think of this matter, brethren—think seriously of it; and if any of you are guilty of this sinful habit, think what an indignity you are offering to the Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth—think what a wrong you are committing to yourselves—think what an incalculable injury you are inflicting upon that Institution which professes to make its followers good men, moral men, and pure men.

For other sins there may be some excuse or palliation, which ingenious sophistry will devise to satisfy an easy conscience; but for this, there can be none whatever. While the commission of other sins may bring us temporary pleasure or supposed benefit—while fraud and dis-

Digitized by Google

honesty may add to our possessions, and deceit may shield us from exposure and punishment—profanity can neither add to our store, give us pleasure or secure our safety. The profane swearer is a volunteer in an unholy cause who serves the Devil gratuitously.

But, debasing and self-degrading as this habit is, yet indulgence in it so fastens it upon us that it "grows with our growth, and increases with our strength," until it gains a power over us that can be overcome only by the most determined and unremitting exertions.

"Habits are soon assumed; but when we strive
To strip them off, 'tis being flayed alive."

Of all the vices of which men are guilty, this is the least excusable. It destroys our own self-respect and deprives us of the respect of others; it places us on a level with the lowest of the low, and the vilest of the vile, for it is the vernacular of rogues and criminals. It renders us unfit to mingle with the pure and the virtuous, for it is tabooed and prohibited in all respectable society. It brings down upon us the censure and reproach of all right-minded people, and subjects us to the condemnation of every noble and upright heart.

No man living—not even the profane swearer himself—dare attempt to justify the use of profanity, for no justification of it can be offered. No man, pretending to be a gentleman, will dare to swear in the presence of refined society. And yet too many, who refrain from it under such circumstances, will at other times interlard their conversation with the most horrible oaths and imprecations, and "fall to cursing like very drabs"—seeming to forget that there is an all-seeing eye, from whose vision we can never escape.

Digitized by Google

No one, except in the ravings of the wildest delirium, when reason has abdicated her throne, would curse and swear upon his death-bed. And yet, when we consider the uncertainty of human life, we know not how near the grave we may be at this very moment—one step more may land us in eternity,

"'Tis a stern and startling thing to think
How often mortality stands on the brink
Of its grave, without any misgiving:
And yet in this slippery world of strife,
In the stir of human bustle so rife,
There are daily sounds to tell us that Life
Is dying, and Death is living."

We should at all times so live, as to be prepared to answer that summons, which must sooner or later come to all of us, to appear before the Judge of the world, to answer for deeds done in the body. If we will but keep our hearts pure, and divest our minds and consciences of those vices which would degrade and debase us, then will we be ready to answer that summons with alacrity, and to "welcome the grim tyrant, Death, and receive him as a kind messenger sent from our Supreme Grand Master, to translate us from this imperfect to that all-perfect, glorious and celestial Lodge, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides."

The strongest argument that can be used against Free Masonry—and the only tenable one—is, that immoral and profane men are allowed to remain in fellowship and communion with us. It is an argument which cannot be refuted, for it is too true. This should not be the case. Such men should be summarily dealt with. Every possible effort should be made to reclaim and reform them

Digitized by Google

by reason, persuasion and entreaty; but these efforts failing, we should at once get rid of them in the quickest and most effectual manner possible, for their presence is an injury and danger to our Order.

Two of the Grand Lodges of the United States have issued orders to their Subordinates to expel from membership all such as are habitually profane, after having used the necessary lenient measures to cause a reformation; and it would be well indeed if all the other Grand Lodges of the Union would follow their example.

The Grand Chapter of Texas has adopted the following resolution, which entitles the Companions of that Grand Chapter to the heartfelt gratitude of the Craft: "*Resolved*, That, whereas profane swearing, gambling and the intemperate use of intoxicating drinks is, by the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Texas, declared un-Masonic, therefore, all Chapters subordinate to this Grand Chapter are hereby positively instructed not to confer the Chapter degrees upon any person addicted to either of these vices, he or they being unfit material for the Royal Arch Temple, whose corner-stone is *Morality*, as taught by the Holy Bible, that Great Light in Masonry."

It gives me pleasure to quote, in this connection, the manly words of Bro. Thos. McCulloch, M. W. G. M. of Tennessee. He says: "As members of the Fraternity, let us forever aspire to the standard which Masonry lifts up as the measure of moral excellence for all its votaries. We laud our Institution as a school of morality and virtue, and claim to be the Sons of Light; but others will judge us by our fruits, not by our pretensions, and they will judge Masonry by us, not by what we say it is, nor by its ritual, ceremonies and symbols. We profess a high

Digitized by Google

veneration for the Supreme Being, and for that omnific word by which He is named. A Mason, then, cannot take His name in vain without doing violence to one of the main principles of the Order. In so far as he does this, he is false to himself and his brethren; and I would submit whether, if, after sufficient admonition, there be no reformation, he should not be put on trial before his Lodge?"

The Grand Lodge of Arkansas has resolved, "That any kind of gambling, profane swearing and the intemperate use of ardent spirits, is un-Masonic, and that such as are guilty of this un-Masonic conduct, be subject to admonition, suspension or expulsion." In reference to this resolution, the Grand Master says: "Let the world see that we retain no gambler, drunkard, profane swearer or Sabbath-breaker in our membership. Carry out the resolution above cited, and we will compel the world to believe that no man can be a Mason but a GENTLEMAN."

The M. W. G. M. of North Carolina, says: "A good Mason's heart sickens and sinks within him, when he hears a Mason taking the name of God in vain; when he sees him plunging into the deadly hilarities of the intoxicating wine-cup, and when he sees him, in the panoply of a just and upright Mason, at the gaming-table. In an age so enlightened as this, with a code of moral ethics to which the world has free access, it would be regarded as ridiculous mockery to pretend to so much morality, if it is to be disregarded in the daily practice of our lives."

The Grand Lodges of Maryland and Oregon have resolved: "That profane swearing is a vice as unbecoming a Free Mason as a Christian, and that it is the bounden duty of Masters and members of Lodges to exert their

Digitized by Google

power and influence for its suppression among the Fraternity, and if persisted in, the offending brother should be subjected to discipline."

The M. W. G. M. of California, says: "It would seem strange that Masons should be seen reveling in riot and excess, and yet they are seen; but strangest of all would it seem that Masons should ever be found profane to that degree of excess that would make a novitiate in impiety blush, and yet I have heard that august name, at mention of which Archangels bow their heads and the powers of darkness are seized with fear and trembling, used as a common by-word, and often spoken irreverently by those who are expected to set a better example, and whose almost only fault is sometimes this!"

Brother Albert G. Mackey, in his work on Masonic Jurisprudence, speaks thus: "I know, indeed, of no offence more directly opposed to the whole spirit of the Institution, than a profane use of that holy name, which is the most important feature of the system of Masonry, as the all-pervading symbol of that divine truth which it is the professed object of every Mason to discover. Profanity in a Mason, therefore, while it is an insult to the majesty of our Maker, is also an irreverence for the religious design of the Masonic Science, and as such, is a Masonic crime."

I offer no apology for making these copious extracts, for it is well for us to know what the Craft, throughout the Union, think of these vices which are a burning shame and disgrace to our Order; and, particularly, the crowning vice of all—profanity. Would that I were gifted with the irresistible force of eloquence, and the persuasive power of pathos, that I might speak to you on

Digitized by Google

this subject in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." Would that I could speak glowing words of force and power, that would sink deep into your hearts, for this is a matter of the most vital importance to all of us who love our Institution, and who wish to see her prosperity sustained and her usefulness extended. If any of you, Brethren, are addicted to this defiling and disreputable habit, at once cease it. For your own sake, that you may preserve your self-respect and the dignity of your character and professions; for the sake of your brethren, that they may not be unjustly censured on account of their association with you; for the sake of our beloved Order, that it may be preserved in its beauty and purity, I pray and beseech you, by every argument that would appeal to the noble feelings and generous impulses of your natures, abandon, at once and forever, renounce and abandon this accursed vice, which is condemned by God and man!

Charity, that "perfection of every virtue" which covers a multitude of sins, is a virtue that we are called upon to practice toward all mankind, and most particularly to our brethren; and it should be the peculiar characteristic of every Mason. This is the most noble and exalted of all the virtues which can grace a man, for our selfish interests gain nothing by the exercise of it, except that satisfaction which always results from the performance of good deeds. One of our charges expressly declares that universal benevolence we are always to inculcate; and "to do good and communicate," is a command which all Masons should obey. Charity is the round of the Masonic ladder that is nearest to Heaven, and we are no true Masons if we fail to be charitable and benevolent. An un-

Digitized by Google

charitable Mason is a monstrosity. We are bound by the most sacred sense of duty to relieve suffering humanity, in all the various forms in which it may be presented to our notice. If your brother is needy, let your hearts and purses be opened to him; contribute to his wants as liberally as his circumstances may require and your ability will admit. Let your assistance be given freely and unhesitatingly, for "*bis dat qui cito dat*;"* and always let your contributions be made quietly and unostentatiously, so that the recipient shall feel no sense of humiliation, nor your pride be puffed up thereby.

Charity consisteth not so much in the amount given, as in the motives which prompt the giving and the freedom with which we make the bestowal. The widow's mite was more acceptable than the rich man's offering, for he gave from his store what he could spare without inconvenience, while she gave her all, knowing that whoso giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.

Charity is shown, not only in contributing pecuniary relief, but also in the many acts of kindness and gentle sympathy, which a generous heart is always prompted to perform towards the wretched and unfortunate of every grade and condition.

"A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae na cash to spare him."

If a brother be down-cast and disappointed, give him a helping hand to raise him up from the slough of despond, and gently whisper in his ear words of hope and encouragement, which will strengthen and fortify him to bear up under all his trials. If he be afflicted by the loss of all that is nearest and dearest to his heart, cheer and

* He gives twice who gives quickly.

Digitized by Google

console him with words of sympathy and love, and point him to that source "whence all earthly comforts flow," and whence the weary and heavy laden may always obtain consolation.

If a brother offend and maltreat us, let us not be harsh and cruel to him; if he injure us, and we have power to inflict revenge and vengeance upon him, and to crush and ruin him, let us yield our power, and extend mercy and forgiveness to him, for while it is "human to err, it is divine to forgive." Therefore, if we would obtain mercy, we should be charitable, kind and merciful to all.

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,
Upon the place beneath; it is twice bless'd—
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings.
But mercy is above this scepter'd sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings—
It is an attribute to God himself—
And earthly power doth then shew likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.
* * * * * * *
Though justice be thy plea, consider this—
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy."

As a proof that the noble principles of Charity and Benevolence actuate us, let me incidentally call your attention to what Free Masonry has done in our midst

Digitized by Google

within a single year. It has cheered the saddened heart of sorrow, by providing relief for the destitute widow and orphan; it has administered to the wants of needy brethren in our midst, and has provided for the stranger within our gates; and no application for assistance has been made to this Lodge that has not been responded to and granted. * * * * * * *

It has led us to the grave of a departed brother, there to offer up the last sad rites of love and fraternal affection ere his body was committed to the narrow house appointed for all living. Delicacy forbids my entering into particulars or enlarging upon this point; but these things give us cheering evidence that there is a life and spirit in Free Masonry, which should cause our hearts to glow with honest pride and satisfaction.

And not only thus, but in our judgment and opinion of our brethren, and of all men, we should exercise a charitable disposition. Too often do we form unjust opinions of our fellows, and inflict unmerited censure upon them, because we do not comprehend the motives which govern them. Because others may not do just what we think they should do, that does not prove that they are wrong, for human nature is weak and fallible, and our judgment is very apt to err, so that we should be very careful how we condemn, lest we too may be condemned.

Let us, then, be kind and considerate, not only in our acts, but in our words and opinions. Let us remember, that until we shall have become much more nearly perfect than we now are, and until we can more correctly see *through* the *acts* of others, to the *motives* which prompted those acts, it behooves us to be slow in acting the parts of denouncers and judges. Let us, at all times, give broth-

Digitized by Google

erly advice and admonition; but seldom, indeed, should we attempt to dictate or reprehend with severity.

An erring brother will much sooner be reclaimed and brought back to the path of virtue and duty, by gentle words and fraternal pleadings, than by the fulminations of the law or threats of punishment. Kindness can conquer where force would fail.

"Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human.
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.
Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias;
Then at the balance let's be mute—
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted."

Many other subjects urge themselves, with strong claims, upon our attention, but time and space forbid their consideration now. Intemperance, Licentiousness and Dishonesty, as well as other vices, of which some of the unworthy members of our Fraternity are guilty, require careful consideration; but it would render my remarks entirely too prolix and tedious were I to attempt to give them even a superficial notice at this time.

A few words upon a subject that is of great importance to us, and I shall have done: I refer to the very reprehensible practice, that is too generally indulged in, of talking of matters that occur in the Lodge in presence of, and to,

Digitized by Google

those who are not members of the Order. I do not mean to say that any are guilty of exposing the strictly and technically esoteric portions of our ritual and ceremonies; but all business transacted within a Lodge, should be held strictly secret. The seal of silence should be set upon our lips in regard to all that occurs within a lodge-room. Some of the brethren, and particularly the younger ones, are entirely too garrulous and communicative in regard to matters that occur in the Lodge. They talk too much and too freely of such things, and of matters, too, which they do not understand themselves, when they are in presence of the uninitiated profane, who—thus having their prurient curiosity excited, and gaining a partial knowledge of our doings—form incorrect, and sometimes injurious, opinions of the character and object of our Institution. Very much harm is done in this way, and the practice cannot be too much deprecated or too severely reprobated. The monitors, and various Masonic papers and magazines, set forth our principles, and the published transactions of our Grand Lodges make known all that is necessary to be known of our proceedings. To these all can have access, and beyond this the uninitiated have no right to know anything about us. We seek not the fulsome and meretricious applause of the public, and, therefore, we do not parade our acts or vaunt our charities. Our Institution is founded on the immutable principles of truth and justice, and we need no one to defend or panegyrize it. It has withstood the attacks of ignorance, bigotry and prejudice for ages, and it now stands, as it always will stand, firm and unshaken. Unlike those ephemeral societies and associations which are constantly springing up and making loud pretensions to worthiness, and which drag on a precarious and evanescent existence,

Digitized by Google

until they die out from pure debility and exhaustion, our Institution needs no trumpeters or fuglemen to sound its praises and boast of its merits. Masonry loves quiet and retirement, and she prefers to do her good deeds silently and unostentatiously.

There is nothing in Masonry, not the least word, of which we need to be in the slighest degree ashamed, and which would not triumphantly bear the strictest scrutiny of the most captious. But, for reasons satisfactory to ourselves, we choose to keep our rites and ceremonies and our general business transactions hidden and secret. And, therefore. those brethren are very censurable who incautiously make our Institution and its doings the subject of general conversation, when in the presence of those who have no right to know anything of our mysteries. This practice should be discountenanced and checked, and the offenders brought to condign punishment. We should at all times, and particularly in the presence of the unenlightened profane and the enemies of our Order, practice those truly Masonic virtues, silence and circumspection. Our secrets should be safely locked up within the repository of faithful breasts, and he who willfully or thoughtlessly exposes them, is unworthy of a name and place among us.

And now, brethren, let us consider these things and lay them to heart. We have duties to perform which we cannot honorably refuse to do. Masonry requires nothing of us that will detract from our enjoyments, or mar any of our rational pleasures. They who obey its precepts will find that all its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace. It requires nothing of us, that is impossible for us to do. It requires no service but that for which ample reward is offered. It only re-

Digitized by Google

quires us to be good men, and to live in conformity with those principles, the observance of which will secure us true joy and happiness.

We know our duty, and if we fail to do it, then are our professions false, and our lives are living lies. There is within each of us "a still small voice" that clearly points out the path of duty, but its teachings are sadly neglected and disregarded. How much happier each and every one of us would be if we would do what we feel and know to be our duty, instead of making a compromise with conscience, to purchase the enjoyment of pleasures that pall upon the taste, and are followed by bitter remorse that more than counterbalances the pleasure. Those enjoyments that we gain at the cost of violation of moral principles and known duty, are unsatisfying and delusive—they are "like dead-sea fruits, that tempt the eye, but turn to ashes on the lips." In order to possess ourselves of true and unalloyed happiness, we must necessarily be pure and virtuous, for there is a self-satisfaction, a heart-approval, that follows the performance of good acts and kind deeds, and is the constant attendant upon rectitude of intention, that far exceeds the pleasure derived from any other source.

Let us, then, expand our hearts so as to embrace our fellow-men in the bonds of fraternal sympathy and love. Let us eschew the gross and sensual, and secure the good, the pure, the grand and the noble. In our intercourse with our fellow-men, let us be governed by the strictest honor and integrity. Let us follow virtue, and resist the siren song of sin, that would allure us to our ruin. We can secure true happiness here and hereafter, *only* by living pure and virtuous lives, and by obeying the laws of honesty and morality. Then let us steadily and firmly

Digitized by Google

resist the allurements and seductive persuasions of those pleasures and pursuits which would lead us from the path of duty. And to all appeals that may be made to us, to induce us to forsake the straight-forward path of honor and honesty—to all offers of reward, emolument, or pleasure that Sin may hold forth to us—let our unwavering answer be, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Let us banish from our hearts all that would degrade us; and cultivate those feelings and emotions that tend to exalt our ideas, and make us pure and holy. Let us not be cast down by trials and privations, by opposition, and persecution; but let us press forward in the battle of life, fighting the good fight of Faith, and ever ready to do all in our power to bring human nature nearer to perfection; and while we make good deeds our stepping-stones to heaven, we will make our lives pleasant to ourselves and useful to others.

He who has lived the life of a good Mason, and who has conscientiously and to the best of his abilities, performed the duties that are incumbent upon every Mason —who, by the practice of Charity and Benevolence, has brought comfort to the sorrowing heart and wiped the tears from weeping eyes—who has regarded the cry of the wretched and answered the prayer of the unfortunate —who has fed the hungry and clothed the naked—who has cheered and comforted the disconsolate, and has raised up the soul that was sinking in despair—when such an one has reached a ripe old age, he can complacently look back upon his past life with pleasure and self-satisfaction, and as he stands on the brink of eternity, he can say, with honest Job, "The blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

Digitized by Google

Brethren, it is my earnest desire and heart's prayer, that my feeble words, spoken in weakness and imperfection but with honest intention, may have a good effect upon you. If we would be good men and true Masons, we must carry the principles that we profess into our every day life. We must prove by our lives that we are worthy of our high vocation. If we have erred and come short of our duty—and alas! too many of us must acknowledge that such is the case—let us at once determine that we will do better, and live more consistently in the future, And if we would improve and reform ourselves, the proper time to do so is *now*. The present is all that we can call our own. The past is gone and can never be recalled—we know not how much of the future may remain to us. The young *may* die, the old *must* die, and time admonishes us all to prepare for that summons, which must sooner or later come to all of us, when we will be called to that judgment from which there is no appeal. Then we will receive the rapturous welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of the Lord" —or our hearts will be crushed by the awful mandate, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." We know not how soon this dread summons may come to each of us. We know not how soon our disembodied spirits will leave these earthly tabernacles, and our corporeal frames be clothed in the habiliments of death, and deposited in the narrow house appointed to all living. But we do know that it *may* come at any time—it *must* come at some time, and it were wise and well for us to be fully prepared to meet it, let it come when it may.

"There's a world where all are equal, we are hurrying to it fast;
We shall meet upon the level there—when the gates of death are passed:
We shall stand before the Orient, and our Master will be there
To try the blocks we offer, with his own unerring square."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

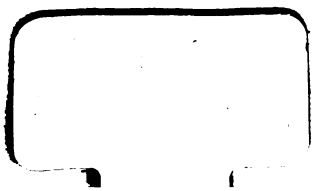
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google





Digitized by Google

Soc 4310.55
The exoteric duties of Free Masons.
Widener Library 004983731
3 2044 088 977 475

Digitized by Google