



LECTURES ON FREEMASONRY.

The Ethics of Freemasonry.



A LECTURE

DELIVERED AT THE LODGE OF INSTRUCTION,

HELD UNDER THE WARRANT OF

THE VICTORIA LODGE, No. IV.,

DUBLIN,

ON MONDAY, THE 2ND OF MARCH, 1857.

BY

THE REV. S. G. MORRISON,

Past-Master, and Chaplain of the Commercial Lodge, 245, and Chaplain and Honorary
Member of the Duke of Clarence Lodge, 171.



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1857.

TO
J. F. TOWNSEND, ESQ., Q.C., LL.D.,

R.W. DEPUTY GRAND MASTER OF IRELAND,

The following Lecture,

SUGGESTED BY HIM, PREPARED AT HIS REQUEST, AND DELIVERED
UNDER HIS PRESIDENCY,

IS DEDICATED,

AS A TRIFLING EXPRESSION OF ADMIRATION
OF HIS ABILITIES,

RESPECT FOR HIS CHARACTER,

AND AFFECTION FOR HIMSELF,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PARK VIEW, DUBLIN,
March 3, 1857.

THE ETHICS OF FREEMASONRY.

FREEMASONRY is necessarily conservative. What it was from the beginning, it is now, and must continue to be. You may not like it, but you must not mend it. To approach it with our own imaginings of propriety would be a species of moral Vandalism. The position of a pin cannot be altered. Even the pattern of its drapery must not be changed. Its landmarks are fixtures. Its pillars are mightier than pyramids, and firmer than rocks. When men have at any time added to it their own inventions, the square has been applied, the excrescence detected, the maul put in requisition, and the addition removed. You may reform Freemasons, but not Freemasonry. Principles may apply to novelties, but it is in the nature of principles to be immutable. Freemasonry is a system of principles; and, however times and men may change, it altereth not. It is true, it admits of by-laws; and these are capable of alteration. But by-laws are but temporary expedients; they are the statute-enactments of individual Lodges, which may be amended or repealed, as prudence or necessity requires. But Freemasonry is a constitution: as such, it has its common law; and this cannot be touched without revolutionizing and destroying the system.

The morals of Masonry are as determinate as its mysteries. It is the province of no one to legislate concerning what are the maxims of the Craft. The Order has spoken with

unmistakeable plainness in respect to the duties which every brother is bound to perform. The path of Masonic life is an illumined track. Every member is put in possession of the moral map by which his steps are to be guided. The way is as old as it is plain ; it is "the good old way." It is not profaning sacred things to cite the words of Inspiration as applying to every enquirer after duty—"Stand in the way and see: enquire for the old paths, and walk therein." This old and only way is presented to attention in the "Charge" which is delivered to every one at his initiation. The ethics of the Fraternity are therein comprehensively embodied, and affectionately enforced. It sets before us the portraiture of pure Masonic character. It is the mirror before which each one may ascertain how far he has succeeded in his persevering and praiseworthy efforts to become the *alter ego* of the complete Mason. It is scarcely necessary to tell you of the peculiar manner in which the Ethics of Masonry are taught. They are not only taught in plain and choice language, as in the Charge to which I have adverted, but the lessons are rendered as impressive as memorable by the significant emblems in which they are presented. The senses are summoned to the aid of intellect, and amusement is judiciously blended with labour. Few persons have a capacity to apprehend abstract truth. Mathematical study is indebted to diagrams, and philosophical pursuits are aided by apparatus. Morality avails itself of every legitimate appliance, and sees

"Books in the running brooks, sermons in stones."

This mode has a high sanction—it is divine. By means of trees Law was first impressed on the human mind. The cherubim at the east of Eden's garden were the glorious hieroglyph by which Deity exhibited a new way to immortality. The complex character of a world-Redeemer was proclaimed in the bush that burned in unscathed greenness. God was there as a "consuming fire;" man was there as a lowly bramble; yet the bush burned not, for that Humanity was "holy and harmless." And

when a new Teacher visited earth to tell of and teach a higher and holier world than this, His lessons of deepest wisdom were couched in the attractive story, or veiled in the suggestive allegory. The efficiency of this plan is universally admitted. Pictorial representations strike as readily as pleasingly upon the mind. The great Dr. Doddridge received his early religious training through the medium of the tiles of his parents' hearth. On these tiles Scripture characters and incidents were presented in odd-looking sketches. His pious mother conducted his infant intellect amidst the rude mosaics of her rustic hearth; and there "sermons in stones" went far to prepare his mind and heart for those glowing after-sermons which pointed thousands to the skies. The quaint old pictures in the family Bible made first and fadeless impressions of divine things upon the cherubic intellect and seraphic heart of Chalmers. The lesson is all the easier, and the law is all the lovelier, that they come in a pictorial dress, and in a fascinating emblem. Those who are outside the Order cannot discern the import of its symbols. Its jewels are not shining things to gratify the gaze of childhood, or ornaments to set off the person of the wearer; they are significant of corresponding verities; tangible and visible exponents of grave truths and important duties. Its signs are not the meaningless dumb show by which mental vacancy is betrayed; but the pertinent monitions of solemn obligations, and the affectionate expressions of fraternal solicitude. Its passwords are not the chance vocables by which privileges are secured, and Cowans detected; but selected words, big with bright thoughts, each a centre of wisdom from which radiates far-journeying intelligence, making in its march the great circle of all the sciences. Its badges are not playthings: they are implements of industry. Labour is suggested by them all. The brown-handed child of physical toil, the son of science or of song, find in them mementoes that it is by the sweat of the brow, or the toil of the brain, that man eats his bread during his sojourn in the land of his pilgrimage.

The uninitiated can only judge of Freemasonry by what they hear and see of it. The former manner of judging is not correct; hearsay is no evidence. Every report that has been given of the Order by those who are its avowed enemies is untrue. I have read the productions of those who have affected to be possessed of full knowledge of its mysteries, and I have been astonished at the effrontery and pained by the falsity which are so glaring. Masonic arcana are as unguessed at this day as when a far-seeing wisdom systematized an arrangement for their universal application, yet inviolable secrecy. Wondering speculation, prying curiosity, and quick-witted sagacity, are alike at fault, in their natural anxiety to penetrate the secrecy of the mystic Brotherhood. As all fail, therefore, to unravel the inexplicable, they very properly turn for some knowledge of the puzzling system to the conduct of its members. To this you can have no objection. It is a sound principle to judge of systems by their results. Masonry takes no exception to the axiom, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

It cannot be denied that some Masons are not sufficiently cautious in their manner of life. Indeed, it must be admitted that not a few have disgraced themselves, and injured the fame of that Order whose principles they belied, and whose morality they trampled upon. The uninitiated will not take the trouble to distinguish between such as are untrue to their obligations, and those who continue faithful. Did they so, they would be convinced that the true and the tried vastly preponderate, when laid in the balance of an unprejudiced scrutiny. For every one who heedlessly loses sight of his duties and dignity, there are ten whose every attribute of character, whilst it is a reflection of the Order, is an honor to themselves. Let it not be assumed that there is any peculiar inclination to laxity of morals in Masons more than in other men. Were this so, the eccentricities of individuals might be charged upon the system which they seem to represent. Take any number of the most reprehensible brethren, and

their conduct, *on the whole*, shall appear immeasurably to advantage by contrast with that of an equal number of the irreligious in any community. But just in proportion to the pretensions of any man, will be the amount of jealous attention paid to him. He that professes little, raises no envy; but men do like to mark the inconsistencies of those who have taken a high stand among the virtuous of society. The heart is naturally more full of suspicion than of charity; and, hence, he who takes a high walk among his fellows will be exposed to suspicion and to envy. Knowing this, and knowing, too, that Masonry prescribes a code of Ethics borrowed from the Statute-book of Heaven, it becomes all the brethren to take heed lest, by any departure from the path of unswerving rectitude, the ignorant or the malicious might triumph. Masonic life should be an exemplification of Masonic principles. The invisible beauties of the Craft ought to be reflected in the visible beauties of a virtuous course of action among men. From what is seen, what is unseen is generally inferred. The character of the heart is drawn from the character of the life; and hence, popular Masonry is the conduct of Freemasons. The evil of unmasonic conduct might, in great part, be remedied, were brethren more guarded in admitting candidates. It is a heartless duty to oppose a valued brother in his affectionate desire to obtain the honor of initiation for a friend in whom he has taken an interest. Knowledge of, and confidence in, the brother who proposes a gentleman as a candidate, too frequently silence those who otherwise would be indisposed to admit him. Now, we ought to consider the Order before any individual member of it. No private friendship, no respect for a brother's feelings, should for a moment influence conduct, when the interests of the Order are at issue. I can speak strongly on this subject, because I have reason to believe that reliance in my prudence, and respect for my character and feelings, caused the brethren of my Lodge to admit a candidate, who too soon proved himself unworthy, by immoral prac-

tices; and I felt it to be my duty—and I did it—to move the forwarding of a complaint against him to the Grand Lodge of Ireland, by which he was expelled the Order. It was painful to me; but the lesson has been of great importance. Better far to have no additions to our ranks than that disorderly and disobedient persons should prove occasions of sorrow to us, and scoffing to the world. Some persons entertain the idea that Masonry consists in festivity—that it is a kind of beefsteak club; its attractions lie in its viands; membership is suggested as a passport to good eating and drinking; its soups are more savoury than its sermons—turtle than traditions; its hock is preferable to its homilies; champagne sparkles brighter than the corruscations of its most heaven-lit intellects. Knights of the knife have a poor conception of philosophy. Well, they make their way to initiation, fail not in a personal appearance at the summons to dine, but are rarely marked “present” in the muster to labour. They enjoy the name, and have the privileges of the Order, but of Masonry they know but the alphabet; and its A, B, C they lisp as the evidence of their proficiency. Masonry-made-easy is the only volume of their literature, and the abilities of a lodge-room their only conceptions of the grandeur of the system.

Anxious to aid my brethren in their laudable desire to promote the well-being of the Order, I have undertaken the pleasing task of refreshing your minds by a consideration of the duties to which our common obligations bind us.

The Ethics of Masonry originate in the Scriptures of truth. *Its first great light is the Bible.* Let the world know that Freemasonry is in the Bible. The Bible is the indispensable furniture in every lodge-room. No one Masonic act can be done in its absence. Withdraw the Bible, and the keystone of the arch is gone; the foundation of the building is destroyed; wisdom, beauty and strength are departed; and Ichabod may be engraven on its ruins. Bereft of it, Masonry is of a truth bankrupt. Its traditions have no certainty; its

philosophy has no divinity ; its precepts have no sanctions ; its signs have no significancy ; and its very verbiage is without a glossary. But there, and there, and there, it lies. Unclasped, unscreened, wide open, with the effulgence of its Author flooding every page with light, it invites your consideration and your confidence. The first ray of Masonic light, as it fell upon your eyes, turned them, and the intellect to which they are the inlets, to that precious basis of all your heaven-born and immortal hopes.

This fact reveals the secret of the hostility that so many evince towards the Order. Can you wonder why Carlyle and Paine, *et hoc genus omne*, opposed and stigmatized it ? Atheism must ever be its deadliest foe ; cold scepticism would shiver to death rather than derive heat from any luminary that shines by light reflected from that central orb, the Word of God. Every man and every scheme that would close or exclude Revelation from the common eye and the common intelligence, naturally, because necessarily, must condemn Freemasonry.

It might, not inappropriately, be asked, How is it that Masonry is found in countries and among men where the light of divine truth shines not ? How is it that it is found amid the Indians in America, the Mahometans in Turkey and Syria, and the Brahmins on either side of the Ganges ? Its existence proves two things—first, the truth of Masonic tradition ; and, secondly, the antiquity of the Order. Not long since, some of you heard, in this very place, from an intelligent officer recently returned from the East, that he obtained admission into a Lodge of Dervishes in Constantinople, and their customs, traditions, signs, and secrets were identical with our own. Yea, they urged upon him, and through him on British Masons, the advantages this country derived from the East, and particularly from the light of Masonry, as an argument of their claims to be aided in their designs to obtain secular education through the intervention of our Order. In all countries there is mixed up with the superstitions of their religion the faint glimmerings

of truth. Before the dispersion of the human family, all had access to the Law of God; and from sire to son fragments of it passed down the stream of time. The dispersion of the Ten Tribes carried much truth to the countries where Providence conducted them. Jews have made their way to many lands: so that we have several ways to account for the diffusive character of our Order. Without assuming that the Bible was borne to all who are possessed of Masonry, we can readily understand how those portions of it which are the landmarks of the system could be communicated, and then traditionally preserved amongst them.

I am not to be interpreted as affirming that Masonry is an equivalent for Christianity, or that it is a synonym for Religion. I consider no man religious who is not the subject of gracious influence. Masonry puts forth no pretensions to a religious character, as though it were a sect. Its most enthusiastic admirers and adherents claim for it no warrant of inspiration, no possession of infallibility. The Bible sends no man to Masonry; but Masonry does send thousands to the Bible: and whilst it professes not to teach religion directly, it is indirectly the instrumentality by which many have been guided into the way of peace. It is far from being the rival of Revelation. Temperance societies are not opposed to or inconsistent with Religion, although Religion does inculcate sobriety. Benevolent societies are not opposed to or inconsistent with religion, although religion does teach "good will to men." Good men may and do unite to give prominence to some peculiar grace or virtue of religion. What harm, then, in men banding together to educate each other in intellect and heart—to assuage as much of mortal woe as they can—to pluck as many thorns as possible from the pillows on which rests the head of humanity—to strew all the flowers they can gather along the path of man's pilgrimage? What apology is necessary for uniting to soothe the widow's sorrows and dry the orphan's tears? Will men be angry that we would

see smiles on every face, and happiness in every home? Our laws place upon us the blessed and beautiful necessity to "bear each other's burdens—to weep with those who weep;"—where help is needed, to help with the liberal hand, and, when we cannot do so, to help with a loving heart, in the contribution of an honest sympathy.

This, then, Brethren, is the first great moral of Masonry. Read and study your Bible. Approach your conscience, intellect, and heart to its hallowing influences. Let no flickering taper of earth be palmed upon you for its steady light. Should men hold up the rushlight of their own conceits to illumine your journey heavenwards, say to them, as Diogenes said to Alexander, "Get out of my light!" Let down your whole soul to the depth of its mysteries. In the noble independency of thought which it breeds and fosters, journey to its farthest boundaries; examine into its sublimest speculations; expatiate amidst its most glorious revelations; dare the boldest flights; dig into its unvisited mines of golden truth; constantly read, prayerfully study, and perseveringly practise its inestimable contents.

Masonry adopts, as its text of Ethics, the Scripture's own comprehensive abridgment of its contents—Love to God and love to man. The stereotyped code of Masonic moral principles is an apposite comment on the text. That exposition reveals the fact that the true Mason is *no blasphemer*. If ever you hear dishonor done to the Sacred Name by any brother, he has been surprised into an inconsistency, or is shamefully guilty of a crime. Few things in the Order gratify me more than the reverence entertained for the Blessed Name. This is as it should be. The awful name JEHOVAH was never pronounced by the lips of a true Israelite. But once a year was it spoken, and that by the High Priest, when on the day of annual expiation he issued from the presence of the SHEKINAH, and pronounced the annual benediction upon the worshipping and waiting assembly. When the great Name

occurred in writing, the Hebrews used another name, and for the sublime *Ye-ho-wah* used the less awful *Adonai*. That amiable philosopher, Robert Boyle, never mentioned one of the designations of the Deity that he did not lift his hat, if he had been covered, or pause solemnly, if bare-headed. Masons surely will not lose sight of this precept, which is so honouring to their Maker, and so becoming to themselves:—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

And, however it may sound in the ears of some, it is an indisputable fact, that the true Mason *is a man of prayer*. However unhappily lost sight of, prayer has its place in the morals of your system. You are taught to "implore His aid on all your lawful undertakings, and to look up to Him in every emergency, for comfort and support." The religious ritual of Masonry is, in my humble judgment, unexceptionably orthodox, and scripturally catholic. Its liturgy is simple, brief, and beautiful. No Lodge can commence or terminate its labors without prayer for the Divine presence and blessing. All its works are hallowed to Him, and all its rewards are from Him sought. Perhaps there is no consideration that ought to exercise such a holy and wholesome influence on your conduct, as that you profess, in your circulated exposition of morality, to be actuated by the religious principle. Of all the anomalies that exist, none is more striking—painfully striking—than indecorous conduct associated with the ceremony of prayer. That it is ever so, is matter of regret; that it shall not be so, should be the purpose of every brother.

Brotherly love is, in a high sense, the beautiful precept of the Order. Selfishness, the weed that grows luxuriantly in the soil of the human heart, is sought to be eradicated from the heart of every Mason. Selfishness is a sin, love is a virtue; yea, the parent of all the virtues. The principle of selfishness is contraction; the principle of love is expansion—that, like a vortex, channels every stream to its own fulness; this, like a perennial spring, welling up, and running over,

carries refreshing and fertilizing influences along every bank its waters lave, and every field its supplies irrigate. Selfishness is the centre of its own world; the end of its own existence. Love lives but to bless, and in blessing others has its chiefest joy. Masonry is a school for the affections. Those who are worthy of regard are found within its ranks; those whose regards are of real value are numbered among its votaries. This duty is emblematically exhibited in the *Square*. The use of this instrument in operative masonry is familiar to every one. With us it is the symbol of moral rectitude. It gives visibility and impressiveness to the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In the formation of character it is ever needed, and constantly to be applied. In our initiation, it is assumed that we aim at the attainment of Masonic completeness. Modestly plastic, we would be shaped after the pure Masonic model. Interstices we would have filled up; excrescences removed; and, having the life, we would seek to possess both the face and form of the Fraternity. It is a lesson to watch the builder, so careful in applying his square to every corner of the wall he raises, yea, to every stone he fixes. Improve upon it. Not only to the labours of a day, but to the acts, and words, and thoughts of every moment, lay the square of "doing to others what you would they should do unto you," and you will raise an edifice more stately, more durable, more precious than lordly hall or princely palace; for infinitely more glorious is

"The living temple of the heart of man
Than Rome's sky-mocking vault, or many-spined Milan."

Our laws detail our duties to our neighbour. We are taught to "render him every kind office in our power, which justice or mercy may require; by relieving his distresses, soothing his afflictions, and by always doing to him as we would he should do to us." Now, the phrase, "*every kind office in our power*," is a very comprehensive one.

Many men seem to forget that principle is as much involved in trifling things as in great things. Integrity is as much compromised in stealing a pin as a purse. Truth is offended, whether the falsehood is little or great. The power and wisdom of God are as much seen in the microscope as in the telescope. The latter brings distant worlds of wonderful magnificence within the grasp of finite intelligence; while the former exalts the veriest nothings of existence into objects of amazement. The principle of gravitation is as much operative in moulding a tear into a pearl of sensibility, as when restraining within their orbits the central suns of the grandest systems. The same power that is seen scooping ocean's bed into a sublime concavity, drills a human hair into a perfect tube. The same power that adorns the horizon with braids of gold, and fringes morning's clouds with orient glory, is at work in the exquisite pencilling of leaves and colouring of flowers. The power that paints in matchless hues yonder bright bow of promise which spans the vast concave of heaven, sets forth in brighter than prismatic hues the wing of the emancipated chrysalis. I wish to make this thought impressive, for it is in trifles that men fail in duty; and it is in matters seemingly trivial that service can be rendered to our fellow-men. Who would not go even out of his way to extricate a brother from an emergency? Why, common manhood would take monster strides to hasten to a brother in distress. The intelligence of a friend's calamity would open up instinctively the sluices of fraternal sympathy! Sublime morals are rarely neglected; little duties are most lost sight of. I am not the advocate of exclusive dealing. The common-sense dictate of every man is to buy in the cheapest market. No man is bound to allow himself to be imposed on. But this I do say, that the law of the Order obliges every member to give *preference* to a brother. If you can procure any necessary of life on equally advantageous terms from a Mason as from another man, you are bound to your course of action. "Every kind

office in your power," leaves you no option. The simple question is, shortly, Will he benefit by this? An answer from conscience in the affirmative obliges you to supply yourself with all you require in the marts of brethren. The commodity needed may be a trifle; but I have shown you that principle is no trifle. If stealing a pennyworth involves the principle of honesty, buying a pennyworth involves the principle of benevolence.

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Now, this is not "mercy;" it is justice. We *owe* to our brother every kind office in our power. And if, in the light of duty, as here described, his conduct would be considered reprehensible who would pass by a brother in the every-day dealings of life, what shall be said of a professing Mason who *defrauds*? Reverses of fortune are incident to trade. In the battle of life there are many falls and fortunes. Sympathy is truly felt for one who, despite all his diligence, is constrained to yield under the pressure of misfortune. But where there is an imprudent course of action, living beyond means possessed, rash and reckless speculation, neglect of business, or a love of pleasure—where there is the betrayal of confidence, the entangling of a brother in one's perplexities—we have no language to describe the criminality; no power of words to paint the sin. Let the truth be made known—give it bold relief upon the ground of Ethical Masonry, that he who wittingly defrauds, who knowingly involves a brother in his own wreck, is no Freemason! He has forfeited the confidence, excited the disgust, and betrayed the honour of his brethren!

While on the subject of the duty we owe to our brethren, it may not be out of place to say a few words upon a matter connected with it. It has forcibly pressed upon my mind that brethren interpret with too great latitude the saving provision which our laws make for their absence from lodge-meetings. Every brother is, or ought to be, a *bonâ fide* member of a Lodge. Obedience to the Master's summons is a *sine qua non* in Masonic fidelity. Very distinctly the circumstances are stated

which are regarded as sufficiently apologetic for absence. But these saving clauses, like every precept, are to be interpreted in their spirit. Distance is an apology; but if, notwithstanding distance, the summons could be obeyed without inconvenience, I submit it to conscience if mere respect for the literality of a precept ought to conceal its real spirit? It is also worth while to enquire how far any mere incidental occurrence ought to be regarded as sanctioning absence from Lodge. It will be apparent that no engagement should be made, or invitation accepted, that could interfere with the ordinary lodge-meeting. The man who prefers the festive board of private hospitality to the instructive meeting of a well-regulated Lodge has his counterpart in the tradesman who apologizes for his absence from work by saying that he was dining with a friend. *Regularity* in attending the meetings of the Lodge, and *punctuality* in observing the hour of meeting, must commend themselves to every brother, who remembers that he has appropriated the designation of a class with which these virtues are matters of necessity. Laugh not at the man who runs with his letters when the mail is closed; who bustles to the wharf as the gangway is withdrawn; who arrives at the terminus as the "whistle" announces departure. Pity the spirit that is so forgetful of punctuality, and determine that the Tyler shall have a sinecure, so far as disturbing the business of the Lodge on your account can be avoided.

"*Mercy*" has its calls and claims upon Masonic activities. This is but a modification of that love which is the soul of the Fraternity. It sympathizes with affliction, pities distress, and speeds to assist. Does a brother sorrow? We weep with him who weeps. Is he in suffering? We divide the endurance by a generous sympathy. Is he overtaken by adversity? The warm heart speaks eloquently to the ready hand; and the ready hand, as if galvanized by its electric contact with the excited heart, presses the spring of the purses; and though cold, calculating prudence may whisper her own grudgings, the donation is but restricted to ability, and generously proportioned

to the emergency. Every brother's head must rest upon a pillow softened by a God-honouring brotherly love. Deep must be the distress which the cord of love cannot fathom ; intricate must be the labyrinth that love cannot thread ! Her quick eye can penetrate the anguished heart, though proudly it would hide its sorrows behind a smiling brow. Masonry has not till now abstained from rearing her monuments to Mercy. Your committees of charity can testify to what extent the wants of needy brethren have been supplied ; and how many widows have been made grateful for the existence of the Order. Behold yonder monument to Mercy, wherein the orphans of your brethren have an asylum and a home. What heart rejoices not in passing along its corridors, in visiting its dormitories, in glancing at its larder, in looking on the smiling faces, the lovely indices of happy hearts ; in listening to the touching words uttered in accents of sweetest song, in which they are taught to tell their gratitude, and send their thanks to Heaven ? "In scenes like these" may your principles be ever manifest, and your honours ever found !

But the Ethics of Masonry respect *ourselves*. Duty to one's-self is never to be neglected. The emblem of this law is the pair of *Compasses*. This is a mathematical instrument for describing circles and measuring lines. Its symbolic use is to confine the appetites within legitimate bounds. The proper radius is to be scripturally ascertained. One branch is fixed in the heart, and the other extended to sweep a circumference within which is found the area of personal gratifications. Outside that circle passions or interests must not be permitted to betray you.

Freemasonry is friendly, rather than opposed to enjoyment. In this its rules harmonize with Revelation. Hypocrisy has its own code and key of interpretation. It travesties Christianity. It sees every man and every thing in the obscurity of its own dark heart. It has no sympathy with gladness. The genial warmth of honesty it hates. Smiles frighten it ; a ringing laugh,

the instinctive outbreak of a spirit brimful of joy, is as the knell of a ruined soul. But real, divine religion, makes the heart good, and then invites to present joy. "Rejoice evermore," is its oft-repeated call. "Be happy," is the golden thread inwoven with the whole texture of Christianity. Are we, then, to be precluded from social pleasures? Are we, in misanthropic churlishness, to exist as cyphers in creation? Retirement from social intercourse can never effect the purpose of existence—

"God never made a solitary man,
'Twould mar the harm'ny of His general plan."

And again—

"He who a hermit is resolved to dwell,
And bid this social life a long farewell,
Is impious."

Cultivate society as much as you can. Associate with the true and good among your fellow-men. Walk with the wise, and you shall become wiser. Be a companion of the cheerful, and you will be the happier still. But avoid excess. There is a word, often used in speaking of gratification, that is very objectionable; it is the word *passion*. Now, passion and emotion are distinguishable. The simple emotion is lawful; since, for every natural appetite our Maker has provided a corresponding gratification. But passion implies suffering, and is sinful. The emotion of pleasure is legitimate; when it is sought after, so as to become a passion, it is wrong. All passions, being intemperance, are forbidden. All around the circle within which emotions are confined, "Beware of passion," is legible to a brother's eye.

If there appear any evil tendencies in our mode of festivity, they are easily remedied and avoided. How? By respecting Masonic law. Look at that important officer, the Junior Warden. What is his business? "To call the brethren from labour to

refreshment, and from refreshment to labour." Refreshment is a department of Masonic duty. The festive board is under official supervision. The habit, if it be one, of closing the Lodge, and then retiring to refreshment, is unconstitutional. Were the rules properly observed, the brethren having discreetly partaken of the good things of life—having enjoyed "the feast of reason and the flow of soul"—the Junior Warden, at the opportune moment, would, at the command of the Worshipful Master in the chair, call from "refreshment to labour." Profit, as well as pleasure, would invariably be realized. A return to usages in keeping with the spirit and letter of the institution, will go far to remedy the only evil which exists in practical Freemasonry. Then, at an hour not too late, every brother will be where duty calls and inclination guides—at his own fireside—to reflect upon a happy home the virtues of his Craft. The affections, schooled in the Lodge, are directed to their proper objects, the family circle; for—

"With all the faults and follies of the race,
Old home-bred virtues hold their not unhonoured place."

The cultivation of the mind is presented as the proper employment of the brethren. A Lodge masonically managed is a school of philosophy. We have no sympathy with German *Illuminism*—the invention of designing men, who would have made genuine Masonry the tool of their own ends. But wisdom we profess to teach—the wisdom that fits for life, and that ensures happiness. It is impossible for a Mason to be inquiring and not intelligent. Tracing the progress, and looking to the origin of the Order, will bear us back along the stream of history, and bring the mind in contact with the principal events of the world. The origin and progress of the Order is not now before us. I only refer to it as an illustration of the ancillary relation of Masonic research to polite education. Masonic Lodges, in some foreign countries, are styled Academies. The Order was the depôt of learning in the dark or middle ages; and yet, in some countries, Masonry is synonymous with Geometry. It derives its very name

from scientific architecture. For want of some knowledge of its history, the dignity of the Order is lost sight of. The trade of a mason, though useful and honourable, is not the origin of our name. It is from our Order that a man who is engaged in building a stone wall is called a mason. It is a mistake to cite the French word *maçon* as the source of the term. Barbarous Latin has been consulted, and *machio*, a machinist, is given as its derivation; because machines were necessary in raising ponderous stones to their allotted place in the edifice. I have met with another theory. *Maceria* is the name of long fence-walls which enclose vineyards; and hence it is said, *Mason est maceriarum constructor*—a mason is a builder of fence-walls. An old word for house is *mas*; with some plausibility, therefore, it is said, a mason is one who builds *masses*, or houses. Perhaps the brethren would wish me to express my own opinion. Then it is this:—The word is derived from the secrecy and exclusiveness observed in our Lodges. Every Lodge is guarded by a Tyler. It is supposed that he is armed. Formerly his protective weapon was a *club*. The old Latin for this was *maça*; it is the word yet in Spain. The meaning of *maca* is club, or *mace*—the club borne by corporate bodies. Because, therefore, bodies of architects, including all trades necessary for effecting or carrying out their plans, preserved their secrets by deliberating within a closed and guarded Lodge—a Lodge guarded by the *maçon*—*Mason* was the designation of every brother, and *Masonry* the name of the noble system. At what time persons not masons by profession sought admission into the Order, I cannot tell; but it must have been at an early date. The records of a Lodge at Warrington, so old as 1648, note the admission of Colonel Mainwaring and the great antiquary, Mr. Ashmole. Charles I., Charles II., and James II., were initiated. All such were “*accepted*,” hence, “accepted Masons;” and, as a mark of respect and confidence, were admitted to all the privileges of the Craft, and hence, “free.” From this, then, we have the designation, “free and accepted Masons.”

I might give you many illustrations of the facilities afforded by the Order to impart instruction, but I must not be tedious. Anxious to encourage and assist my brethren in this Lodge of Instruction—sympathizing with the purpose of our amiable and talented Deputy Grand Master, to revive the Order to all its wonted moral grandeur—I have responded to his call, and submit to your consideration these views of the Morals of Freemasonry. I wish I could have done this duty better, for your sake and the sake of the cause; but I have done my best, under all circumstances, and make no apology.

Brethren, the character of the Order is in your hands. Its principles are beautiful, as you know. Illustrate them in your whole lives. As the picture is more elegant when it is elegantly framed, and as the diamond is more beautiful when it is beautifully set, so let the principles of Masonry become attractive by the blamelessness of your lives, the consistency of your conduct, and fidelity to your obligations. Let not your resolves evaporate in sentiment. Duty is before you. Opportunity is given to you. Great is your mission! Ambition can have no holier end than yours! Oh! live not uselessly, that you may not eventually regret, with bitterness—all the more bitter that the regret is useless—that your life has been misspent:—

“’Tis a mournful story,

Thus in the ear of pensive Eve to tell
Of Morning’s firm resolve the vanished glory,
Hope’s honey left within the withering bell,
And plants of mercy dead, that might have bloomed so well.”

We meet upon the level and we part upon the square—
What words of precious meaning those words Masonic are !
Come let us contemplate them—they are worthy of a thought—
With the highest and the lowest and the rarest they are fraught.

We meet upon the level, tho' from every station come,
The king from out his palace, and the poor man from his home—
For the one must leave his diadem outside the Mason's door,
And the other finds his true respect upon the checkered floor.

We part upon the square—for the whole world must have its due,
We mingle with its multitude, a cold, unfriendly crew ;
But the influence of our gatherings in memory is green,
And we long upon the level to renew the happy scene.

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

We shall meet upon the level there ; but never thence depart ;
There's a mansion—'tis all ready for each trusting, faithful heart ;
There's a mansion and a welcome, and a multitude is there,
Who have met upon the level and been tried upon the square.

Let us meet upon the level, then, while labouring patient here,
Let us meet, and let us labour, tho' the labour be severe ;
Already in the western sky the signs bid us prepare
To gather up our working tools and be tried upon the square.

Hands round, ye faithful Masons all, the bright fraternal chain ;
Ye part upon the square below to meet in heaven again.
Oh ! what words of precious meaning those words Masonic are,
We meet upon the level and we part upon the square !