

generally diffusive charity—by the love of his brethren, and by extending to others, who are in need of it, that sympathy which he should wish in like circumstances to be extended to him—to advise, and to rebuke if necessary, to comfort, to relieve, and to guide, form the duty of man to man, without the discharge of which, all our prayers, all our other boasted services are in vain. That all this, my Masonic brethren, is in perfect accordance with the principles of our order, you are aware, and it will, I trust, be generally allowed when I unfold those principles.—But first, I must call on you to reflect on the character of that inspired Mason, whose anniversary you this day celebrate. This will tend to bestow upon all I shall say its proper force, by leading you to the observance of his divine doctrines, and to the imitation of his divine love.

"While all are invited to judge for themselves, all, at the same time, are expected to divest themselves of prejudice. We invite the unprejudiced inquirer—the prejudiced we desire not to address—those, we desire not to be our judges—they we do not call upon even to hear us; but to others we shall propose the adoption of all that is commendable, excellent, pure and of good report, for they can safely judge, and advocate in the best of causes.

"Religion is the first care of a good Mason—the principal object of his attention. The chief practical pursuit with him is piety. He humbly prays, and while he prays, he humbly, yet ardently endeavours that the sacred spirit of piety should pervade and influence all his thoughts, words and actions, add dignity to all his pursuits, and be the Alpha and Omega of each day's work, in his journey through life.

"It is in vain to attempt the formation of any Society, which has for its object the promotion of virtue and beneficence, independently of the belief of the Supreme Being, and without making the love and fear of God its ruling principle—that each member thereof being conscious of the relation which he bears to the Supreme Master Builder, who made him, may daily prove his love of the Great Architect of the universe, by pious reverence, and an habitual practice of good works. He that has the love and fear of God before him, will ever think upon those words, "Thou, God, seest me," and thus be governed in all he does, and in all he thinks—he will endeavour to work by His perfect plans, and consecrate the edifice of his life to His glory and praise, and will never forget that he is a member of the great temple of the universe, and will strive to obey the laws of the Grand Master of all, in whose presence he seeks to be approved. It is incumbent upon all Masons to search God's Holy Word—to endeavour after an understanding of what it contains—and, desiring to profit by its holy instructions, he will thus lay up as a treasure in his mind, right notions of the Deity, feel his dependence upon Him, and study in order to observe his statutes; and making faith and morality the foundation, he will be careful in the choice of the materials with which his edifice is to be reared. If such be the leading principles, and such the grand object in the formation of Societies in general, as it is of Free Masonry in particular, a cement is formed, which will inseparably unite the devout, virtuous and charitable individuals thereof.

"We come now to another ruling principle of our order, namely, philanthropy and extensive benevolence. Masonic liberality is never confined to kindred, neighbours or brethren, it is as extensive as the blue arch of heaven. From feeling his dependence on the Supreme Being, the Mason is reminded of all those tender offices of humanity which unite man with man—which assimilate him to the bountiful Creator—which form the cement of brotherly love. While he is particularly bound to extend the hand of charity to a worthy Mason, his widow and orphans, as far as duty to his own family will allow him, he is taught also, that, as God's love knows no bounds, so should he regard all the children of men, and never cease to remember all who suffer adversity. All this Free Masonry inculcates, and he who forgets these lessons, and practices not those duties, ought to be cast out as unworthy of the name.

"The next principle of Free Masonry to be considered, is dutiful obedience to the laws of our country. A good Mason is always a loyal subject—he always discountenances rebellion, and remembering that he is to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, he looks upon it as a governing principle of the craft to be true to the government under which he lives. 'Whosoever,' we are told, 'would be a true Mason, is to know that by the privileges of his order his obligations as a subject and citizen will not be relaxed, but enforced. He is to be a lover of peace, obedient to the civil powers, which yield him protection, and are set over him in the Lord, where he resides or works; nor can a real craftsman ever be concerned in conspiracies against the State, or be disrespectful to the magistrate, because the welfare of his country is his most happy object.—Every Master of a Lodge, before his installation, amongst other regulations to which he is to signify his submission, has to promise that he will be "a peaceable subject, and cheerfully conform to the laws of the country in which he resides." He has to promise not to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against government, but patiently submit to the chief magistrate.' Lastly, every candidate upon admission, is, amongst other things, thus charged—"In the State you are to be an obedient subject. You are never to countenance disloyalty or rebellion, but yield yourself and encourage in others, a cheerful conformity to the government under which you live."

"I have gone thus far on this subject, that the futility, I might add the maliciousness, of objectors may be exposed, who have styled our lodges 'hot-beds of sedition,' and have accused Masonry as an order in which plans of disorganization are formed. Ignorance

is to be lamented—perversity often excites our astonishment; but while malice and uncharitableness, when viewed in connexion with the soul's destiny, are objects of grief, when nevertheless, viewed apart from such awful considerations, are (and I am, I think, justified in saying it) to be contemned and disregarded.

"In thus unfolding the principles of Free Masonry, I have occupied more of your time than I originally intended, because, in considering the subject, I found that I had as well to contend against ignorance and prejudice, as to address myself to those who would be inclined to give me a candid and reasonable hearing; and because I considered, that most of the popular objections against the Craft have arisen from both these causes. It is generally and very properly thought that where calumny and malice are discovered as the source of invective, it is the best rule to treat them with that silence which they merit. Yet, lest such silence might be construed into a fear of the exposure of weakness, or a want of ability to vindicate, I have in the first place spoken at large on the principles and rules of our Order. And for the same reasons, I shall as briefly as possible, handle some of the popular objections which have, and still continue to be advanced against Free Masonry.

"The first objection which occurs to me, as one which is so frequently urged, is the secrecy which is observed by Masons on certain points. If, say the objectors, Free Masonry be founded on the principles of general good will, why have any concealment? The answer to this is plain. Masonry would willingly embrace within its fold the whole world, and is ready to admit all whose principles and conduct can bear the strictest examination.—This surely is a wise and prudent precaution. What Society would wish to associate itself with the ignorant and vicious, while they continued such? And what Society would not claim the right of judging for themselves as to the true qualification to be required in all candidates for admission into that body? The same privilege we claim, and hope we shall not be deemed unreasonable in demanding that right, which is assumed by others.—Although, then, we are ready to admit the virtuous and the good to the full participation of all the rights and privileges of Free Masonry, we cannot think of prostituting that which is sacred, by unfolding generally to the vicious, as well as to the good, the secrets of our order. In this I am sure of meeting the approbation and accordance of every candid and well thinking inquirer.

"To tell us that we should make a general and indiscriminate disclosure of the arcana of our order, is equivalent to dictating the dissolving of the Society—because every Society must depend for its existence on the preservation of its distinguishing features from the gaze of the multitude. Far are we from desiring to shut out any from the light of Free Masonry—so far, indeed, that it is the ardent wish of every upright Mason, that every son of Adam were qualified to enjoy it with ourselves. The doors of our Lodges would never be shut against them, and our hearts would be open to extend to them our tenderest sympathies and warmest affections.

"Here, then, I shall leave this objection; and, in the second place, shall answer another, which is advanced against us.—It is advanced, that 'all who are initiated must swear to conceal certain secrets, before they are communicated to them, or they have it in their power to examine their nature and tendency, and that this practice is unlawful.' But, who made the objector a proper judge of what in this case is lawful or unlawful? Truly, he must be a clever, not to say an inspired person. How does he know the nature of the secrets alluded to? How can he decide whether or not our communications are subversive of religious or civil law? Verily if he would get rid of two companions who blind his better judgment—namely, ignorance and prejudice—and qualify himself to become one of us, he would find, that amongst other qualifications, those of religion and obedience to law stand foremost! But the fact is, that what is ignorantly objected to is merely an obligation, to keep inviolable the secrets of the order, as distinguishing the initiated from the rest of the community, and marking his consequence amongst Masons.—Now, may I ask, what is there in this unlawful? What, that can in any way injure society?—Look at what is practiced in the common intercourse of man with man;—and, leaving Societies out of the question, and considering individuals, where is the person, who in any difficulty, or under any circumstances, if he has any thing to communicate, which he desires not to be divulged, will not claim, even from his nearest friend, a pledge of secrecy? The reply to this is, I should imagine, a reply to the objection.

"It is next said that the pledge amongst Masons, to exercise the kindest and most generous feelings towards each other, does not accord with that universal good will which the order boasts of inculcating. How is this, I will ask, subversive of the rule of universal benevolence? Has not a man a right to extend his most generous actions towards, and place his warmest affections upon those with whom he is allied by the strictest bonds of fraternal love,—particularly, where his means are not sufficient for him to extend his good offices to the whole race of his fellow-creatures? Let the Apostle Paul give an answer, whether such preference is subversive of good will towards all mankind. Let him speak for himself—"As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."—So says Masonry—"Let us do good unto all men," especially to those who are our brethren, tied to us by the strictest bonds of fraternal love. Again, Masonry thus speaks to the newly initiated—"There are three great duties, which, as a mason, you are charged to inculcate