

**Grand Lodge
Free & Accepted Masons
Of California
Grand Oration 1866**

**Grand Orator
Leonidas E. Pratt**

MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER AND BRETHREN OF THE GRAND LODGE

Once more the revolving years and happy chances of our lives bring us together in counsel, homage, and devotion; and the favor of our esteemed Grand Master has devolved on me the performance of a task, for which riper years and larger experience in the Craft far better might have qualified me. Were this an occasion on which the doctrine of compensations might be legitimately invoked—could I hope that the zeal and devotion of the young enthusiast would be accepted as the equivalent of that wisdom and learning, that eloquence and beauty which ought to adorn the effort of the hour, then might I anticipate a share of your approbation; but only by such substitution; only by some magical transformation of that which falls from the lips to that which is hidden in the heart—of the cold words uttered to the warm sentiment experienced—can I expect to realize your commendation. But enough my brethren, of preface and apology; for it is the distinguishing characteristic of the institution in whose name and interests we are to-day assembled, that it requires on all occasions the existence of merit, and accepts no excuse or apology for its absence. Let us, then, address ourselves to the pleasant and welcome, but no less difficult, task before us.

From time immemorial, and in almost every land, there has existed an association, strange and mysterious to the outer world, but simple, beautiful, and lovely to those who have passed its portals and reveled in the moral and intellectual treasure! hidden within. We wonder not that such associations were organized in the earliest ages, for the Creator had so finished His work as to involve their necessity. Man, by the wisdom of infinite intelligence, was kindly made dependent on his fellow man—endowed with a nature which required, and a disposition which imperatively demanded, the joys and amenities of social life. We wonder not that solemn covenants were made, for God himself had given our fathers the example. We wonder not that in the primal ages, fraternal relations should have been diligently cultivated; for the moral and intellectual element's predominated in man, and these facilities, like the physical powers, must have food and exercise. Neither do we wonder that these associations were select and exclusive; that barriers were set up which turned back the multitude, and over which the few alone could pass; for in the morning of man's existence, as today, not all were worthy of esteem and fellowship. But when we realize only in part the wonders of man's progress from that age to this; when we consider how vast the changes which have transpired, and how varied and wonderful the growth and development of his moral and intellectual nature; when we reflect how empires have risen, flourished, and been overthrown, and nations have been swept from the face of the earth—how all things else have been marked by the finger of decay and desolation—how sects and systems have been broken up and dissipated, and one dispensation followed another in quick succession to the tomb; when we look around upon the world of to-day, and study its institutions and the existing relations of our race to find in them scarcely a fact, feature, or principle which we seem to hold in common with the patriarchal age; when we consider how often and with what terrible effect society has been revolutionized and its foundations broken up and destroyed; we may well wonder that an association then formed should have endured these changes and mutations, and come down to us with its material features as they were when the morning stars? and together, with even its forms and ceremonies unaltered in any essential particular since the time when the first civilization and the lost arts reared those stupendous monuments which are the wonders even of this wonderful age—when the wisest of men distributed to the patient builders the well earned rewards of persistent toil and fidelity to duty. But if we wonder that the association itself should have been thus preserved, simply, how much more must we marvel that in every age, through all the transitions of society and in every stage of its development, in darkness or in light, in progression or retrogression, in civilization or in barbarism, in peace or war, in freedom or in

bondage, it has supplied the wants, administered to the joys, and solaced the sorrows of all who have claimed its patronage, with the same measure of skill and success. .Not only in every age, but in every land and to every race and every rank in life it has been equally available and useful; and more than that, grandly ennobling and instructive. The child of the forest, unskilled either in science or theology, but listening with reverential awe for the whisperings of the Great Spirit; the Hindoo, cultivated in the subtle but sophisticated lore of priest and Brahmin, prostrate at the shrine of the Pagoda; the Parsee, in his false but fascinating worship; the follower of Mahomet, bowing to the east in morning prayer; the son of Judea on the sacred Mount; the Greek Christian, the Latin, the Catholic and the Protestant alike; the descendants of the Northman and the Druids, standing in solemn awe by the hallowed sites of their rude and ancient temples; the listener by the ruins of the Parthenon and Coliseum; the child of the desert, sweeping its burning sands as swift and listless as the winds that fan his brow; the wanderer amid the mouldering obelisks and pillars of Greece, and Rome, and Babylon, and Tyre; all, all, save the fool who hath said in his heart there is no God, have shared its glories and learned its mystic language, observed its covenants, and bowed in cheerful submission to its divine commands. Prince and peasant, priest and layman, the ruler and the ruled, have gazed with the same awe upon its hieroglyphic light, and worn with the same pride and pleasure its pure habiliments and mystic emblems. They have knelt together by the same altar, and, rising with the new light from the refulgent East beaming in upon their souls, have joined hands in the same solemn vows, and kept those vows with the same zeal and fidelity through all the trials and exigencies of their varied lives and experiences. Universal as the universe, and wide spread as humanity itself, its temples are the symbols of the world we inhabit; long as from east to west, wide as between north and south, and covered, as such vastness only can be covered, by the clouded canopy which stretches away to the confines of boundless space. So are the duties it enjoins upon its disciples equally extensive, embracing all the conceivable able relations of humanity. The spiritual edifice is symbolized by the material in all its parts, and the extent of one is the chief beauty and glory of the other. What' then, my brethren, shall be said of the wisdom which could contrive, so far back in the world's history that the earth itself seems to glide from under us, and even tradition slips away from our grasp, an institution which, unchanging in itself, should still be found adapted to the wants of all ages, of every people, to conditions of society which were the very antipodes of each other? Six thousand years, with all their ceaseless changes and requirements, have proved mankind incapable of any conditions or organizations to which this association is not perfectly adapted without the slightest innovation upon its original form or character. Is there a problem more difficult to solve? Can anything more incomprehensible than this be presented to the eye of philosophy? Has aught else, the creation of human intellect and genius, survived? If this be the work of man exclusively, the fruits of his unaided efforts, how has it escaped the tide of destruction which has overwhelmed and swallowed up all else? What power has bid Time stay his ruthless hand—what guardian spirit has held the shield between it and decay and dissolution?

The material structures, reared with all the skill and ingenuity of the wisest in the past, and then designed and hoped to be perpetual—the splendid edifice—the massive pile—the brass and marble monuments which commemorated the good or evil deeds of those who reared them—all have perished; and the very dust of their decay, like that of their architects, their founders and projectors, can be no more distinguished from the common mass of common clay. Where, indeed, are the institutions which were coeval with its birth? On the very spot where its infancy was cradled a score of nations have since risen, flourished, and expired; and no morrow's sun shall ever dawn on them, to chase the gloom and darkness of their starless night. By the tomb of Achilles and the palaces of Priam the slavish herdsman tends his flocks; and the wandering Arab, unconscious of the faded glory which has come down to us through the page of history and the glimmer of tradition, pitches his rude tent by the shattered columns of some proud old city of the dead past, and pillows his head on the crumbling fragments of thrones and crowns! " Passing away," has been written on all by the inexorable hand of hard and cruel fate, and the earth we tread seems now but one vast sepulchre, in which lie buried both the works and hopes of all who have gone before us.

In the moral world decay and desolation have been still more triumphant and complete. Governments of every shade, from the Theocracy—from the fearful absolutism of the Turk and Russ—to the pure Democracy of ancient Poland; social, political, and religious associations of

every hue and character; systems, sects, philosophies, dispensations, creeds, and religions themselves; have come forth like vernal leaves, and like them perished in the breath of autumn. In the material universe there is but one parallel in time and duration—the Pyramids of Egypt, which stand alone mocking the consuming rust of centuries; in the moral world there is no vestige of the like endurance. And, as the Pyramids have stood for ages, and must endure for ages yet to come, ever baffling the efforts of science and the mechanic arts to discover the secret of their construction and exemption from decay, so in the moral world this institution, whose most excellent tenets have been transmitted unimpaired through all the ages, shall endure forever; numbering among its patrons more men of lawful age than all the religious sects of the world combined; more potent than kingdoms and principalities, and ever baffling every effort to find in the wisdom of man the capacity to project and complete its organization. I repeat, the wisdom which contrived this association is far beyond the depth and range of our poor humanity. Where, then, shall we look for its origin, except" to Heaven and the giver of all good? As the design of its first material temple was first given by God to its founder, so the wisdom which designed that moral and spiritual edifice, which has survived the destruction of its sanctuary at Jerusalem to bless mankind toy, could; be no less than the wisdom of the Supreme Architect Himself. It has endured because it is the work of Him whose creations cannot be destroyed. It is unchanging, universal, and eternal, because these are the attributes of its author, and the character and qualities of its divine progenitor have been by Him impressed upon His handiwork.

Its fortunes, too, have been as varied as the times in which it has existed. In every age it has been tossed and buffeted over tempestuous seas, lashed into fury by the storms of persecution. On every field of fame its sons have bared their bosoms to the charge and turned the tide of battle for the right. Their arms have been upraised wherever truth has been assailed or human rights imperiled. They have followed honor and sealed their devotion to her with their lives, wherever she has led over seas, across continents and empires, even to the home of the Saviour and the site of the sacred sepulchre. In the dark ages, when its sublime truths were unappreciated, and its glorious purposes unknown and belied, its enemies arose on every hand, numberless as leaves in the forest, or sands by the seashore. Kings and Princes betrayed and persecuted it. The power of empires was wielded with the vengeance and bitterness of offended royalty, to crush and destroy it. Fire and the sword—all the agencies of destruction which malignity could invent, were arrayed against it. Its temples were despoiled and its treasures dissipated. Its children have been robbed, and hunted like wild beasts from the face of the earth. They have been politically proscribed and socially discarded; the channels of commerce have been closed against them; and business even has shunned them as unfit to be the second parties to a simple contract. Reviled and persecuted—the tortures of the rack and inquisition have been invoked, and bigotry, in the name and guise of religion, has pursued them with the remorseless zeal of fanaticism and hate. All the influences of common enmity and rancor—the hope of reward and the fear of punishment and destruction—the threats of power and its blandishments alike have all been unavailing. They have still refused to lay down their faith or abandon their vows, and thus the grand old institution of the patriarchal age has still survived. Few and feeble, they have been driven from its altars to the mountains, the wilderness, and the cave; but returning with deeper faith and devotion, they have rekindled brighter than before its sacred fires. What else, the work of man, has endured so much unbroken, and preserved its power and vitality unimpaired? What, then, my brethren, shall be said of the strength which has supported it through all the years of its trials, and against all the assaults of numberless enemies? Has the power of man alone been adequate to support that which he had not the wisdom to contrive? Can it be less than the Omnipotence of the Infinite which has preserved and sustained it? And may we not justly claim a divine origin for that which divinity seems to have specially cherished and protected?

Turn, now, from the wisdom which contrived, and the strength which has supported, to the contemplation of that marvelous beauty which adorns the mystic edifice, and behold again how apt and beautiful the analogy; how perfect the harmony and correspondence between the spiritual and the material structures. Study if you please, the ravishing beauty of the first Temple, fitly reared on the sacred spot where the fidelity of the stricken Patriarch had been so severely tested, to commemorate that virtue which he so eminently displayed, and commend its practice to succeeding generations. Contemplate the grandeur and magnificence of that stately edifice its lavish display of wealth ; its gorgeous finish; the splendor of its ornaments and decoration; the

grandest triumph of human art, it stood unrivaled, unapproached and unapproachable; its peerless beauty, the endearing theme of song and inspiration, fitly hallowed by the manifest presence of the Deity Himself—worthy to be his dwelling-place on earth! So the spiritual temple, then organized and then perfected springing from and engrafted upon its material prototype and the operative art which reared it, stands in the moral world without precedent, parallel, or approximation; its moral beauty and adornment unapproached by any association which the skill and ingenuity of man has devised in twice three thousand years. The relation of the first Temple to the now existing association, of the material to the moral structure, is the relation of the mortal body to the immortal soul. As the body is the most wonderful of all the material works of the Creator, so was the Temple the grandest result of human power and ingenuity; as the former grows-in silence and comes we know not whence, so in silence grew the Temple—the mystic creation of the will of its Grand Architect. Our bodies perish and decay: so has the Temple fallen by the ravages of time. But as the human soul, the gem enshrined within, is the far better and nobler part of us, so does the spiritual edifice which dwelt within the Temple on the sacred mount, far exceed in worth and glory the magnificent cradle in which it was nursed into vigor and power; and as the soul shall live forever to praise and honor Him who give it, so shall the spiritual edifice endure till all things else have perished; until Nature in turn herself shall die, and God and His attending angels come to lay her in the tomb.

There, too, on the self same spot, the doom had been lifted from the child of Abraham—death had been stayed and the destroyer vanquished. So the mysteries of the Temple, and its moral counterpart so cherished now, teach as they should, and teach with more emphasis and power than all the eloquence of pulpit and press combined, the lessons of a resurrection and a second life. It is in fact a religious association, and we may marvel much that this character should have ever been denied it; not religious in any narrow or restricted sense; not Christian, nor Jewish, nor Pagan, nor Mahometan, nor Catholic, nor Protestant, but only, simply and purely religious. Religion be it remembered, is of God. Sects, forms, and names are the works of men. It is universal religion which it inculcates; that religion which if deems essential everywhere to the true character of man; that sense of obligation and final responsibility which affords the only security for the faithful observance of its own pure principles and solemn vows. A belief in the existence of a Supreme Being; the certainty and justice of His judgments; and the immortality of the soul; these are the elements of religion which it requires in its votaries, while it heeds not the forms and specific articles of faith, which sects have setup and dignified with the appellation of the only true religion. It has indeed been the sanctuary of this universal religion from its first inception. To preserve the knowledge of the true God from the assaults of Paganism in the dark days when idolatry possessed all the world save the little land of Judea and its chosen people, was the sole purpose and object of its first organization. It was only through the esoteric workings of some such association, that that knowledge could be preserved; and when asked why those sublime truths, so good and commendable, should be veiled within the Temple, we only need remember that for teaching them publicly, even in enlightened Athens, a great and good philosopher was doomed to die. It has preserved that knowledge through those periods, when but for it, that knowledge must surely have been lost. It has faithfully and efficiently performed that high and holy mission. It has come down to our day and generation with the religious feature in its character unimpaired, and it will cease to be the institution which has been transmitted to us, when it ceases to inculcate religion; not indeed the peculiar religion of Paul or Moses, or Calvin or Luther, but that which, commanding and requiring us to recognize and adore a Great First Cause, to look for judgment on our deeds, and invoke the aid of Deity in all our laudable undertakings; which, compelling us to clothe and feed and cherish as our own the friendless and the destitute, to visit the widow and the father-less, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world; yet leaves us within the range of these grand duties and landmarks, to adopt our own forms of worship and peculiar dogmas, to approach the throne of Almighty power as our preferences may suggest, and adore Him under whatever name we choose, be it God, Jehovah, Jove, or Lord. Such is the grand, the beautiful, the broad, the liberal, and comprehensive religion which it inculcates. It embraces all its substance without its forms. It includes the whole duty of man as disclosed by both nature and revelation. It embodies all which has come to us from God himself, and whatever be added thereto is but the invention of man. It is a religion by which man may grandly, nobly, live, and by which he need not fear to die.

In that same general sense it is also a political association; not political in the modern and corrupted sense, but only in that pure significance which confines the application of the term to government, while it ignores, abhors party and party influences and interests. Devotion to government it fosters and cultivates with un-tiring zeal; but the presence of party influence would be deemed the most ignoble desecration of its sacred temple. It teaches simply the great duties which man owes at all times to the government under which he lives, whatever be its form or policy to be a peaceful citizen, faithful and obedient to the law; and within the outline thus prescribed it declines to know even, much less to dictate, his particular faith or associations. The leading features of good government-order and obedience-it inculcates more effectually than any existing organization; for that which too often is out theory elsewhere, is constant practice here-the maintenance of perfect discipline being essential to the administration of its own internal affairs. Within itself it is indeed at once a pure democracy and an absolute despotism. It is democratic in placing all upon a common level, and trying all by the same emblem of virtue and morality; in abrogating all distinctions of caste, quality and birth; and making that merit which dwells within and manifests itself by noble deeds and kindly efforts the only passport to preferment. Not one of all the multitude within its fold who is not eligible to the highest honors in the Craft; not one so poor that he would be deemed pretentious in thus aspiring. The ballot placed in every hand, the humblest is as potent as his royal brother can be. Yet, with this the very essence of despotism is blended. It is despotic in the enforcement of its laws and regulations. It is despotic in making the will of the Master the absolute law of the watt, and in exacting prompt and implicit obedience to his decisions and commands whatever they may be, though it imposes no restraint upon his discretion save the moral power of his fraternal relations and the obligations he has taken. Nor are any distinctions there found in the application of discipline and penalties. Nobles, Monarchs, and Princes, have alike been subject to them. The profane or vulgar utterance of the poorest and lowliest in all the Brotherhood would be as promptly punished if it fell from the lips of the King who swayed the scepter over millions. No hesitations, no questions, no murmurings are tolerated, and no remonstrances can be heard. Obedience thus taught and thus enforced becomes, in time, a portion of their very natures, and they cease to know there can be such a thing as resistance to legal authority. The members of a society thus organized and conducted must be better citizens by reason of such associations. They cannot fail to reverence and appreciate the principles of government, and when all mankind have been imbued with the same spirit and subject to a like discipline, the horrors of civil strife and insurrections will come to us no more forever. What wonder that in every age it has received the patronage, the aid, and encouragement of Kings and Cabinets; and the rulers of every land have sought to ally themselves with its potential influences. Look into your own army and navy, the Legislative, Executive, Judicial, and Ministerial Departments of your own most excellent government, and you will find three-fifths of all the leading and official characters chosen from the long-honored association; while the whole number bears to the whole mass of citizens eligible to such positions, the proportion perhaps of less than one to five. Then look abroad. Take in, at one grand review, the whole civilized world. Search the records of those who have held the reins of government, and controlled and decided the fate of empires in the past, and everywhere you will find the same startling disproportion. There can be but one reason assigned for this. It is because the internal government and discipline of the association itself has better fitted and prepared its members for those positions. It is a school in which they are constantly drilled in the duties they owe their country, as well as God and their neighbors; and the influences there exerted, and the lessons there taught, have imparted that force and dignity of character, that reliability, manhood, and integrity, which has commended them to the honors and promotions of the world at large. It is not merely because they are members of the association, but because, through that, they have attained a higher degree of merit. It is that merit, not the fact of membership, which the world at large beholds and appreciates; and it is that merit alone which secures to its possessor his position in society or the State. I repeat, it is more salutary and efficient in its support of government and the peace and good order of society than all-other associations and all the teachings of your secular schools combined; while within itself, and for the management of its own affairs, its peculiar system, its novel blending of democracy and absolutism, is the wisest form of government which has ever been devised by man. Its laws have been framed by the voice of the Fraternity at large, and thus their justice, wisdom, and impartiality have been

secured. But once framed and made known, their execution is entrusted to the hands of one alone, who for that purpose may wield the concentrated power of the whole Brotherhood with the vim and energy of a one-man despotism; and thus the enforcement of their penalties can never be evaded or delayed. In brief, my brethren, its government is the very counterpart of the divine economy, and furnishes an additional evidence of the heavenly origin of the institution. Even so His laws have been conceived in wisdom, and framed in justice and impartiality; while from the penalties of their violation there is no escape for the offender. And finally, as unalterable as are His decrees, are also the landmarks and regulations of this renowned and venerable organization.

But let us pass now from its political and governmental aspects to the contemplation of its other salient features. We have already seen that it is necessarily and inherently a religious association. But, my brethren, it is something more—it is a moral association as well. Religion may, and too often does exist, without morality; and so morality in turn may flourish in the absence of religion. The two are essentially different and in no measure dependent on each other. But here they are blended and combined. Here are works as well as faith—practice as well as theory—the ripened fruit as well as germinating principle; supporting and cooperating with each other, and producing and presenting that complete and perfect character, at which Angels rejoice and the Father Himself is made glad. Here, indeed, we are not only taught our duties toward the Great Author of our existence, but, by influences which can be nowhere else available, we are made quick and diligent in the faithful performance of those duties. We are taught to perform those duties, too, at the prompting of good and noble motives; not to secure to ourselves some future equivalent or reward—not to avoid the vengeance of an offended Deity, but from the very love of doing right—for the pure, unselfish joy of adding to the happiness of those around us. It is a system of ethics which has no rival. More sublime than the wisdom or capacity of man could invent, its lessons are drawn from the volume of Inspiration, and are as pure as the holy fountain whence they spring. To be good and true; to be just toward all without distinction; to be prudent, chaste, and temperate; to walk uprightly in our several stations through life, and so govern our every thought, word, and action, that even the breath of calumny may not dare assail us; these are the lessons we are taught at every step of our progress, from the outer door, until we stand in solemn veneration by that marble monument, so beautiful and touching in its hidden significance, which marks the final resting place of the great architect who chose to lay down life rather than forfeit his integrity. But the distinguishing feature of the association, in this connection, is that it teaches these moral duties and precepts with a power, impressiveness, and effect, which can be nowhere else attained. For this purpose Geometry and the natural sciences are invoked, and the implements of art are called in requisition and applied with a skill and ingenuity which mocks and dwarfs all other systems of teaching. Thus each virtue is symbolized and kept forever present to the outward senses in a form far more attractive than the chilling disquisitions of the worldly schools. Thus are we reminded that our moral duties are to be discharged with the same precision and exactness which characterize the demonstration of a mathematical problem that the relations of cause and effect which prevail so invariably in the material universe, are not lost in the moral world; that evil shall be invariably punished and good shall never go without its reward. There morality is clothed with the attractions of a science, arrayed with a beauty, and surrounded with an interest and charm of which the profane world has no conception; which the teachers of every age have struggled, indeed, but struggled in vain, to attain, and which they never can exercise until they "travel" with us through the gorgeous Temple which so many of them now affect to mock and despise. It is, indeed, God's own Art! beautiful in design—pure and impressive in all its ceremonies—perfect in its adaptation to the accomplishment of the grand and noble purposes it has in view! It is impossible for man to dwell within its hallowed precincts, listen to its rich and lovely lessons perform the duties it enjoins, and yet enter the other world, no wiser, no better no more worthy of the Great Master's commendations, for such experience and discipline. No! The very air itself that gilds the inner temple is rich with good and genial influences and he who only walks and breaths therein will find its inspiration glowing in his heart, and ennobling all his aims and efforts!

Again, my brethren, it is most preeminently a social institution. Literally indeed, there could be no union, no association in the absence of the social qualities in its constituent parts. But we mean here something more than this narrow sense implies. We mean that both the design and

the tendency and effect of the association, is to enlarge and promote that true sociality, that kindness of heart that, courtesy and hospitality, which so much improve and adorn the character, and the absence of which is the chief vice of savage life. The influences exerted in this direction cannot be over estimated. There, around the same altar where all have bowed the knee and assumed identical obligations, again, and again, and again, until the sands of life are exhausted, meet the brethren of every business and profession of every sect and opinion, gathered in from all the walks of life. The high and low' rich and poor, learned and unlearned, King and subject, walk together, arm in arm' on the same level untrammelled by the artificial and too often invidious distinctions of what the world is pleased to call society. It is the free and generous intercourse of those who are in perfect accord, whose tongues and hearts ever unite in promoting each other's welfare and rejoicing at each other's prosperity. It is the attrition of soul against soul, mind against mind receiving, imparting, blending, and commingling There the unlearned gathers knowledge from the lips of his more favored brother; and even the collegiate professor and master of philosophies may someone draw wisdom from the native sense and vigorous intellect of his uncultivated associate. In the interchange of views and opinions all may participate without restraint. There is no fear of scoff or ridicule, of jeers or sarcasm, for all are brethren, animated by the same spirit of kindness and fellowship; while, beyond their faithful breasts, not a word there uttered can ever pass. There are no leaders, favorites, or orators. The same deference is extended, the same freedom tolerated, and the same rules of intercourse are applied to all. The heart, too, as well as mind, is busy. The sorrows and distresses of the absent are presented, sympathy is kindled, and the finest feelings are awakened to activity. They vie with each other only in relieving the distressed; they emulate each other in contributions to the rational enjoyment of all. Thus the nobler parts of man, the mind and heart, are cultivated, strengthened and' expanded by constant exercise. The soul is filled with kinder sentiments', with higher hopes and nobler aspirations, and man is advanced in the scale of being towards the status of that Supreme Intelligence, after whose image he was formed.

And yet again, my brethren, it is a scientific association. Who has passed the Middle Chamber without feeling more keenly than ever before the weakness of uncultivated intellect—without resolving henceforth to apply his powers with renewed vigor to the mastery of the arts and sciences? What a rich and boundless field for study and reflection is there opened up! With what new charms are the wonderful Arcana of nature clothed and exhibited! Long years before, with patient toil, per-haps he may have mastered and admired the elements of geometry; but where else had he been taught to apply its principles to the culture of morality? Where else had this wonderful use—this additional charm—been given to that practical science? So too, in other schools, he may have studied and admired the science of architecture. But where else had its implements been presented as the emblems of virtue, and the marvelous beauty of their hidden-significance revealed? Where else has he been taught that, as a proper application of the rules of those sciences in the material world would result in the production of those structures which have been the wonder and admiration of all time, so in the moral world the observance of their analogies would clothe our characters with that moral beauty which shall open up to us the joys of that silent land which lies, in eternal peace and sunshine, over the River of Death. Ah! beautiful! beautiful! indeed, as amoral science, stands the proud old souvenir of the primeval world, and sterile is the heart on which its sunshine falls without effect. Cold and senseless as mortal clay must be the immortal spirit which sees no added charm in art and science, when they are thus made the ministers of our future joys, the lights which guide us to the haven of eternal rest.

And still, again, my brethren, proud and prominent among the many noble features of this association stands that priceless virtue which shall cover many sins—is Charity. That charity which leads to alms-giving and the practice of benevolence in our daily lives; that spirit which bids us stoop and bind the strangers' wounds when Priest and Levite have come, and gazed, and passed by on the other side—these, the noblest elements of human character, it fosters with especial zeal and care. And here, again, it is the pride and glory of the Order that it teaches these lessons, as it does general morality, with a power and efficiency which all the teachers of the universe, from Christ and his disciples down, have ever failed to exercise. Enter the temple, traverse its ground floor only with attentive mind, and there learn that the prophets and poets of the olden time were but feeble masters of the parable and symbol—children only in the art of teaching. What could be more effective and impressive than the earnest demand, so startling to

the neophyte in his poverty and destitution, that lie comply with the immemorial custom of the Fraternity? Could the lessons of charity be more forcibly presented? That beautiful illustration of the grandest of virtues can never be forgotten. Years may pass and the ceaseless changes of time bury all else in oblivion, but the remembrance of that will still remain. The good or evil fortunes of life may gladden or depress; joy or sorrow, hope or despair, prosperity or adversity, may be his companions; but the pleasing memories of that hour still linger in the mind and rise up on every hand to soften the heart whenever want and affliction are presented for solace and relief. Who could pass that ordeal without a keener sense of his own dependence on his fellow man and a higher appreciation of his own binding obligations as a member of the great social compact? Its remembrance comes back to him through all the after years, by day and by night, in the busy haunts of men, in the seclusion of the chamber or the studio—ever reminding him of the nakedness and destitution with which he came into the world, of the vanity of wealth and power, and of the fraternal assistance which he owes his fellow man. It sends him out into the dark spots of the world on the divine mission of benevolence and love. It bids him alleviate human suffering wherever it is found, bind up the broken heart, and point the erring to that blissful realm beyond the grave, where tears are wiped from all eyes, and pain and sorrow cannot enter. By the sick bed and at the grave, in the homes of the bereaved and desolate, wherever there is a tear to dry or a want to be supplied—there this association finds its appropriate sphere of action—there it ever hastens to perform its ministries of love. Danger cannot daunt—death and pestilence cannot deter it frenzied passion dare not violate its solemn obligations. On the field of battle—amid the strife and carnage of contending toes—when all else has failed to stay the flood of passion—the uplifted arm has fallen and the thirsting sword returned unstained to its scabbard, when the mystic signal has warned the warrior that a prostrate enemy was a brother. Oh! divine spirit of brotherhood! emanating from the throne of the Infinite and crowding the soul with benevolence, charity, and love; filling and opening the purer fountains of the heart; softening the asperities of our sterner natures; gilding and hallowing poor humanity with the nobler attributes of divinity itself! Where, in God's unbounded universe, is the heart so cold and callous—so wrapped in self—so tortured by ambition—so careless of the agonies of the great world around—so skeptical of joys and rewards in the world to come—so insensible to the pleading cry of suffering humanity—that it would not rejoice to have participated in a work like this? Who, indeed, so great—so noble—so honored—so independent that he may not be justly proud in saying: "I, too, have contributed to these noble objects; my voice has been raised, my hand has been opened, my heart has been touched, and my name has gone up to the throne of the Infinite from the lips of the widow and fatherless, the weary and desolate, on the sweet incense of prayer and praise." But, my brethren, the charity which this association fosters and inculcates with such sedulous care is something more even than all this. It is also that broader and more comprehensive sentiment, so beautifully define! by one of old, which "suffereth long and is kind." It is the generous spirit which fills the soul with kindness and good will, benevolence and love toward all mankind. It is that which uproots and destroys those evil genii—malice, envy, and hate—which makes, us courteous, affable, and forbearing to our inferiors as to our equals, extending to all that indulgence we are so often compelled to ask for ourselves. It is that which makes us tolerant of all the differences which exist among mankind, and of the adverse opinions, faith, and convictions of those who surround us. It is that which bids us rejoice at the prosperity and preferment of our associates as at our own— which prompts us to assign for the conduct of others, at all times, worthy and ennobling motives. It is that which makes us slow to anger and ready to forgive— which closes the ear to the voice of calumny and reproach, and sends up the fervent petition to the throne of grace for mercy on the faults and follies of our fellow man, be he "of the household of faith" or of the world at large. This, I repeat, is the charity—that broad and comprehensive charity, embracing within itself all other virtues which this association is so eager and diligent in fostering in its own household, so zealous to implant in the breasts of all mankind. Beautiful, indeed, is this, the regal mistress of all other virtues; lovely are her works; her ways are pleasantness and her paths are peace. And when this spirit shall dwell in purity and power in every heart and dictate to the wills of men, then the millennium morning will indeed have dawned on earth, and the mission of our noble Brotherhood will have been fully accomplished. To hasten this consummation is the great work of the present hour. Let us be faithful laborers in that field.

And finally, my brethren, it is a literary association, in every sense of the expression. The proudest authors of antiquity, the classic writers of every land and age, may be searched ever so diligently; but nowhere will be found literary art in greater purity and excellence. In elegance of diction, in clearness, power and conciseness, in depth of thought and vigor of expression, the lectures and charges of the association are unsurpassed and unsurpassable. There, indeed, the student of literature finds his rarest feast and richest treasure. Where else has the vigor of the Western and beauty of the Eastern languages been so harmoniously combined? There is the clearness, terseness, and precision of the modern tongues embellished by the glowing imagery of illustrations and symbols, which nature supplied so bounteously when words were few and language weak-. It is the logic of mathematics, clothed in the rhetoric of nature, and adorned with all the poetry of the Oriental World. One by one the masters whom we have admired arise before us, but their finest efforts are far excelled by the unwritten lore of our newfound sages and philosophers. Search the secret lectures through, as tradition has given them to us, and not a word is there which could be stricken from the text without impairing its force and symmetry; not one could be added which would improve or adorn it. They are as perfect as the art of man can make them above and far beyond the shafts of criticism. There is the tenderness and simplicity which enchains the attention the wealth of philosophy and illustration which forces conviction. There is strength without violence, beauty without tinsel, wisdom without mystery, art without affectation, nature without rudeness, and a pathos which moves and melts the heart without offending the sensibilities. We linger by these pleasant places, and turn again and again to drink from the refreshing fount. The thirsting soul never wearies and the senses never pall. From the first entrance to the Temple until the last farewell is taken, they fall unceasingly on the ear; but each succeeding repetition discloses some new beauty, and the venerable father in the Order listens to them, as he walks the down grade of life, with pleasure intensified rather than impaired.

These, then, my brethren, are the features and elements which make up its wondrous beauty. Its literature is of the highest order; its science unsurpassed; its social qualities without reproach; its religion the universal will of Deity; its morality the practice of the precepts inculcated by the Divine Master Himself; its government a living exemplification of law, order, and obedience to existing authority; its charity and benevolence universal as the sun's light, and as varied as the ever changing wants of humanity.

What, then, shall be said of the beauty which adorns the antique association; could it be the offspring of human power and ingenuity alone? No! As the grandeur and magnificence of its first material temple, were the fruits of an inspiration from on high so the moral beauty which gilds the spiritual edifice could be no less than the work of the same Almighty Artist! The wisdom that contrived, the strength which has supported, and the beauty which adorns it, I repeat, are not the works of man They are beyond there human conception; more exalted and sublime than aught man has ever produced; they surpass his finite powers; they mock and defy his unaided efforts. They stamp the association with the impress of omniscience; they prove its origin divine. It is the sole surviving relic of the days and fruits of Theocracy. It has come down to us the immediate work of God Himself; instituted and established by Him in that distant age when He communed in person with the prophets of His chosen people when He was the immediate temporal ruler of mankind. It has been preserved by His infinite arm through all the changes and vicissitudes of the old dispensation and the new in the midst of convulsions from shocks and assaults which, leveled at any institution merely human, would have scattered it in fragments to the winds of Heaven. It has braved the dungeon and survived the flame. Bolts and chains could not imprison—the elements could not destroy it. It has welcomed exile and dared the inquisition and the rack. It has borne the anathema of Kings and the curse of democratic mobs. It has endured the maledictions of the churches around the circuit, from Rome to Geneva, but still survives—its wisdom incorrupt, its strength unbroken and its beauty unimpaired! Calm and serene amid the storms of passion and the imprecations of maddened foes; unmindful of their scorn, invective, and reproach; remembering and imitating only the example of that illustrious One, who, when enduring the agonies of the crucifix, could still pray in behalf of his executioners: " Father, forgive them; they know not what they do;" it has moved gently forward in the path of peaceful conquest, to outlive the rage and command at last the homage of its bitterest enemies! Why, my brethren, has it been vouchsafed this marvelous salvation? What but its divinity should preserve it when all else perished, and for what important mission in the unknown future has it been thus favored? We

know, indeed, that in the future, as in the past, it shall go on doing good to all—teaching virtue and enforcing its practice—showering its golden blessings like the gentle dews of Heaven, unseen and unfelt, save in the general joy and freshness everywhere imparted. Let us hope, my brethren, that in that future it may have no other mission to perform; yet the thought will sometimes arise that possibly that other experience of the past may yet be repeated. We have already seen that within this association alone, for many years, was the knowledge of the true God preserved from the ravages of Paganism; that but for it Idolatry would have been universal, and, in the absence of new revelations from Heaven, perpetual also. How vast, indeed, the debt of gratitude which civilization owes it now! for whatever is great and good in the science of government, whatever is commendable in the practices of private life, whatever has elevated and improved the character of man, whatever is promotive of knowledge and virtue here and calculated to secure peace and joy in the great hereafter, has gone hand in hand with true religion around the earth, following wherever she has led, and halting wherever she has paused. By preserving the one, it has secured to us the other. May it be suggested now, with painful apprehensions, that somewhere in the future the pall of barbarism may again enshroud the world—the corruption of life again eventuate in Idolatry—and the kindly offices of this organization be once more required to preserve through another period of darkness the mysteries it so fondly and persistently cherished heretofore. May it be asked then if this was indeed the design and purpose of its Divine Author is the beginning—the reason of its wonderful preservation by His interposition, through all the perils which environed and assailed it?

What, my brethren, is this association, so divine in its character, so marvelous in its organization, so unchanging and enduring in all its features, so useful in the daily walks of life, so fruitful of eternal good to those who obey its lessons, so beautiful and lovely without, so instructive and enchanting within? Who has failed to recognize the association thus presented? You, indeed, who have shared its honors and enjoyed its blessings, who have stood within its sacred portals, enraptured by its beauty and glorified in its spiritual presence, might be expected to respond with one accord. But, my brethren, you needed not that discipline or experience; you needed not to have entered the holy of holies, traversed the middle chamber, nor even to have knelt on the ground floor of its gorgeous temple, to enable you to answer. The mass of men, the ignorant, the rejected, the profane, they who have never gaze I upon the light which Craftsmen only may behold, know that in all the vast world around us, with all its wonders and achievements, there is but one institution which can fill these outlines, and it is called FREEMASONRY. I say, with studied care, that these elements, these virtues and features, when thus combined, are called Freemasonry; but they do not constitute that art. The promotion of every virtue the improvement of character, the practice of morality and the relief of distress, these are the fruits, the effects of Masonry. The secret work, its rituals, lectures, forms, ceremonies, signs, and symbols—these are but the habiliments in which it is clothed. They are the visible body. Masonry itself is the invisible soul within which pervades and animates, adorns and deifies that body. Alas! that so many, even of our own household, should mistake what we technically call the work of Masonry, for Masonry—the outward clothing for the vital, active principle within. Its outward apparel, its material temples, and all its tangible features are indeed lovely and beautiful beyond conception. They speak to the outward senses with a charm and precision which no other language can possess; yet they are but the drapery which adorns the goddess—the simple medii through which her sons are known and recognized in the outer world. We marvel at, we study and admire them. While their meaning is yet concealed, we are delighted even at what often seems but empty form, because of the method and propriety, the grace and dignity, the order and solemnity which accompany every step of the mysterious process. But when the strange and novel ceremonies are ended, and the senses are no longer occupied with crowding forms and symbols, we return to the East, and heart and mind alone are there addressed. Then, from the chair of the ancient King, the wisest man and first Grand Master, the instructive tongue pours out its rich, exhaustless treasure. The reason of each ceremony is then revealed. Step by step, with the care and precision of natural science, the hidden significance of every act is disclosed, every form and symbol is interpreted. We are lost in wonder at the artistic skill which clothes the virtues in such gorgeous drapery, which makes the frigid and repulsive lessons of the worldly schools a beautiful and enchanting science. Then, indeed, the conception of poetry is realized—then vice is in truth presented, as

"A monster of such frightful mien,
That to be hated, needs but to be seen."

There the virtues which we have been constrained, unwillingly, perhaps, to practice, are clothed and garnished with a beauty and adornment which makes their faithful observance a luxury and charm. With pleasure we pursue the study until the work of Masonry is all acquired; and, perfect in every detail and particular, we are prepared to serve with honor and precision in any position, from the Grand East to the outer door. We turn our attention then to its jurisprudence—that grand old monument of the wisdom of the early fathers; more ancient, more replete with the learning and philosophy of law than the works of all the jurists and lawgivers of the profane world combined. It is the very eclecticism of all other systems; it is the perfection of human reason, pervaded by the unerring justice of heaven. We explore and master all its details; we make ourselves living digests of Masonic law. We are ready on the instant to solve with certainty all questions of discipline and administration. No difficulty can arise, so complex in its character that we do not point at once the appropriate remedy and guide the inquirer in the way to justice. We study, next, its history and traditions; devour its written volumes and treasure up in the storehouse of memory all that can be known of the venerable institution. We attend with scrupulous punctuality the stated convocations of the Craft; we pay our monthly dues with careful promptitude; and we contribute to the wants of those around us whenever their miseries are presented at our doors. All this accomplished, in the technical language of the Fraternity, we are pronounced "bright Masons."

Let us not, my brethren, thus deceive ourselves. How mean, how vile, how hollow and contemptible is the Masonic character, which extends no farther, and embraces no more than the cold, constrained and formal discharge of these obligations. Masonry itself is something more than ceremonies, forms, and symbols. It is a spirit—the spirit of God manifesting itself in purity and power, through the beautiful language and material emblems, devised by man with His Almighty aid and counsel. We may know its history and traditions, its achievements and jurisprudence; we may wander through its mysterious chambers, understanding and interpreting its symbolism; we may be learned in its lectures and masters of its secret work, and yet the volume of Masonry be to us a sealed and silent book. We may know its requirements and disregard them—understand the duties it enjoins, and not observe them. We may admire its spirit, and refuse that spirit a dwelling place within our souls; its lessons may have fallen on our hearts like grateful rains upon the vast Sahara—producing no fruits, but leaving behind only the desolate waste of former years. We may have appreciated and admired the beauty, symmetry, and perfection of its ceremonies, its lectures, and its law, but if we have failed to observe that these are but the avenues which lead us up to the moral edifice beyond, that they are only emblems of the like qualities in the spiritual structure—Masonry itself—then, indeed, our lessons and our toils have been in vain. But the kindly spirit, the sentiment, the charity, the emotion of heart which leads us up with pity, tenderness, and love, and prompts and commands us to do good for the love of doing it and of being just and generous the power which imbues with the essence of divinity which expands and purifies, elevates, and ennobles the soul and fills it with the presence of the Infinite—which lifts us upward and onward, and assimilates our natures to the spiritual character of the Heavenly Master, and fits and prepares us for the society of angels—THIS IS MASONRY; all else are but the agencies through which it toils. This is the divinity which dwells within your temples and if it dwell not also in your hearts, then you are but whited sepulchers, bearing the name, but mocking the spirit and purpose of your fraternity.

Let us, then, my brethren, apply ourselves with diligence to the acquisition of useful knowledge; let us apply that knowledge to the discharge of our several duties to God, our neighbor and ourselves. Let us struggle patiently to attain just and adequate conception of our noble art. Let us invite its spirit within our hearts and keep it there, so guiding and directing all our thoughts and acts that the world shall be compelled to acknowledge the sincerity and truthfulness of our professions. Let us ever cherish and cultivate that spirit, improving our own hearts and minds while we do good to those around; thus accomplishing the twofold purposes of the royal art. Let us hail and welcome to our hearts the peerless queen of all virtue and all science! Child of the Gods! Eternal spirit! May peace henceforth pervade thy boundless empire; blessings and

benedictions crown thy children! May there be no more decay, no more leading into captivity! May truth nourish and righteousness prevail within thy temples everywhere! And, in the far off future when we, who are gathered here today, shall have been gathered to the celestial Lodge above when our children's children shall rise up to fill the places we may occupy no more, may thy pure spirit still guide and animate them, and all who follow, even to the end of time! Thou radiant orb and most resplendent star in virtue's constellation, shine on! Shine on in beauty ever, approved and hallowed by the smiles of God!