

**Grand Lodge
Free & Accepted Masons
Of California
Grand Oration 1892**

**Grand Orator
Reuben Hedley Lloyd**

MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER AND BRETHREN OF THE GRAND LODGE

There have been two Special Communications of this Body, held since the last general session, which I have been unable to attend.

The last, to lay the foundation stone of the City Hall at Woodland. At the time I was in Denver, attending a general assembly of a branch of this Order.

The first, to attend the funeral of Doctor ISAAC S. TITUS, who was Grand Master in 1873. A professional engagement I had entered upon before the funeral was announced, and which I could not abandon or put off, prevented my attendance. I regretted it exceedingly, because Dr. TITUS was a personal friend of mine. He was of a kindly, genial disposition, intelligent and unassuming—a walking encyclopedia of the law and literature of our Order.

Many a time, when in doubt about some proposition, I applied to him for light, and was always gratified by the simple, clear and concise way he disposed of every difficulty. His life was an illustration of true Masonic principles; if an adherence to its dogmas, a strict observance of the rule:

"Do unto man your whole life through,
As thou wouldst have him do to you,"

gains a reward for its votary in the world to come, he has surely won a crown of life. It is one of the duties of my office to address you "on matters appertaining to the Craft." That is a very wide text; under it the origin, history, rise, progress, glories, advantages and beauties of Freemasonry have already been fully dilated upon. I will not attempt to throw light upon fields already swept by the brilliant search lights of the master minds of those who have preceded me, but content myself with calling your attention to a few practical matters which have come under my observation during the many years I have been a member of the Order.

I have been frequently struck with the light attendance at Lodge meetings. Only on very rare and extraordinary occasions do a majority of the members meet at any session. As a general thing, from a seventh to a tenth of those on the roll put in an appearance, and often only just enough to open the Lodge. I have turned over in my mind many a time the question, "What is the cause of this, and what remedy, if any, is there for it?"

When, by the gracious pleasure of our Most Worshipful Grand Master I was installed in this office, I concluded to make an effort to answer the riddle.

My first step was to get a consensus of the opinions of all the Masters in the State, and for that purpose I addressed them a circular inquiring the total membership of each Lodge; an estimate of the average attendance during the year; whether the attendance was increasing or decreasing; if increasing or decreasing, what was the cause; requesting each to give me what, in his opinion, would awaken renewed interest in the meetings and attract the members thereto. In reply I received a large number of very interesting letters. From them it appeared the average attendance in the country was much larger than in the city—running about one-third, though in numerous instances that attendance required the member to travel many miles, frequently at considerable expense, and often accompanied by the loss of a day's work.

Some correspondents attributed the falling off of attendance to the decrease in business in their locality and removal of members; others that business was so brisk, there was no time to attend; others lack of interest, the reason for which they did not understand; others because the officers were not up in their parts, and the manner in which they conferred the degrees was not in accordance with the ritual or entertaining to the hearers; others lack of interest because the officers of the Grand Lodge never visited their localities; others because the dues were too high—they were kept at a standard ruling in the golden days, and in effect debarred membership, and also prevented members of Eastern Lodges, located here, from dimitting and joining in California;

others because the principles of Masonry were not properly observed outside as well as inside the Lodge; others because other societies were more attractive they had socials and parties and friendly gatherings, which we have not; by the rules of the Grand Lodge entertainments were practically prohibited— if any of the members of a Lodge desired to get up a little social, they had to put their hands in their own pockets for it, hence it became an unequal burden on the members; the large majority were in favor of frequently having coffee and cakes and a nice spread; many thought there should be literary entertainments and subjects of discussion to attract the members; a great many appreciated the fact that apathy was spreading over the Lodges, but the cause they could not tell and hoped I would solve it.

Some of my correspondents, I think, touched the key-note of the trouble.

Our Order has been lauded in song and story; eloquent tongues have pictured its beauties and advantages; it has become a great factor in the world's moral existence; it has gradually spread over the earth and become a power in every land, until at last its greatness is dangerous to itself. When an Order becomes so large that it is universally recognized as one of great influence, immediately it attracts those who seek admittance, not to be guided by its precepts and teach its moral code, but mainly to use its supposed influence for their own selfish purposes and trade upon it for their own personal gains. Look around you, and I am confident you will be able to name many who, after they enter its folds, never study or practice the principles of the Order, but on the contrary violate them every week of their lives.

Who is to blame for this? I answer: The Lodges bring it partially about by the loose way in which they admit members.

In the olden times, it was a difficult thing to get into a Lodge. A man had to be long and favorably known to all the members before he could hope for an affirmative answer to his application. It was unmasonic for any man to solicit his petition. His standing in the country, his moral character, his business, his family ties and social relations, had to be all known and thoroughly understood by every member, before a vote was taken on his application. His appreciation of a moral and upright life, his belief that the teachings of the Order had a favorable effect upon some friend, had to induce him to go and do likewise. He had to be an applicant of his own free will and accord; or in other words, by the voluntary and unaided action of his own inclination. How is it now?

In many Lodges, when the finances run low, or when the officers think they ought to excel their predecessors, by initiating more members than they did or that frequent initiations will stir up an interest in the Lodge, petitions, from any quarter, are but lightly scanned, and almost sure of a favorable consideration. The members are asked to drum up candidates. They go out in the highways and byways, and persuade those of whom they know comparatively little, to join. When successful, the petition is presented, committee appointed. Perhaps only one of that committee really acts, the others, relying upon his judgment, report favorably. The application comes on to a ballot. Out of the many members, how many personally know the stranger?

How many know his family history? How many know how he stands in his trade or calling amongst those who are similarly engaged? How many know whether or not he belongs to any church or what his religious proclivities are? How many know what his real moral character is? How many know whether he is married or single; if married, what kind of a husband or father he is? How many know whether he is a careful and prudent man, or an improvident and reckless one? How many know whether or not they would like him for their daily associate and friend? How many know whether or not he is free from bodily or mental disease, or has within hereditary taints which will end in his lingering destruction, and make him in all probability a burthen on the Lodge? How many know whether or not he is a man they would like to introduce to their wife, or their sons, or their daughters, and have them look up to him as an example?

Not one, perhaps, in that whole Lodge. And yet, they stand ready to vote to make that stranger of whom they are so densely ignorant, what? To make him next to a member's wife, mother or child, the most intimate companion and associate a man can have on earth. They stand ready to obligate themselves to receive and cherish him as a brother; to confide to, and trust him with the dearest secrets of life; to wait on him in sickness; to soothe him in sorrow, and help him in distress; to cherish, protect and defend his good name, and take care of his wife and family, should the Supreme Being call him away.

They stand ready to obligate that stranger, to do the same thing towards themselves and all the members of the Lodge, and yet, for aught they know, he is entirely ignorant as to who a large majority of the members are. In all probability there may be amongst them several with whom it would be impossible for him to keep up the relations his obligations will require.

When he comes to be initiated, not infrequently members say: "If I had known that was the man I would not have voted for him." Does an addition; of that kind add to the strength of the Lodge? Does it add to the glory of Masonry? You must—I must answer both questions in the negative.

This practice, if pursued, will turn the bands stronger than triple steel, which bind this Order together, to a rope of sand.

Are you a man of family? Have you a marriageable son or daughter? If a daughter, and some one seeks her hand, what do you do? Do you not find out thoroughly what manner of man he is? Who his family are; how he was raised—who are his associates? Is he sound bodily and mentally? What kind of an education has he? What are his religious principles? What is his moral standing? Is he an honorable man every way? What are his business capacities? What is his ability to take care of your daughter? Is it probable he can appreciate her in her youth, and love and cherish her in her old days? Will he be always true and steadfast in his promises to love, cherish and protect her? Is he of such a temperament and disposition that they will be likely to agree? Is he a man you would be willing to adopt and cherish as your son?

If he does not fill all these requisites, you decline his offer.

If these precautions are adopted before you accept a son-in-law, why should you not be equally careful about permitting a man to become a member of that other family—your Lodge—whose members are bound to you and you to them, by ties which are next in rank to those of flesh and blood?

It is frequently an argument for admission, "He is a rich man and will pay his dues promptly." The man who only pays his due and does nothing to advance the Order, is a positive detriment instead of an advantage. The prosperity of the Order depends far more upon the example of its members, than the prompt payment of the paltry sum necessary to defray its expenses.

This Order can only advance by having on its rolls those alone who preach and practice its precepts in their daily lives.

Men who in the Lodge laud all its doctrines, and outside forget them, are like church members who, on Sunday repeat the Ten Commandments with zealous joy, and on the week days pave their way to prosperity and pleasure by trampling them under foot.

The one retards the cause of Masonry, and the other brings religion into contempt.

What is the chief cause, you ask, which has brought this condition of things about? The answer appears plain to me.

Because we have of late years been drifting away from the ideas and principles upon which this Order was founded.

The sages who created the institution had an object to accomplish. It was the moral and social good of mankind. They had pursued the same line of thought as the Athenian philosopher. They realized that the greatest study of mankind was man. They had mastered the subject, and concluded the only true way to advance mankind, was to cultivate and enlarge his moral and social nature. They collected and formulated a system of ethics and morals, the grandest the world has ever produced.

Of what use was the system which defined man's duty in respect to himself and the rights of others?

Of what avail rules of right conduct and guides for private and social duties, unless there were subjects to act upon?

They would alone be idle theories, mere abstract propositions, and their worth or use as undemonstrable as the proposition of astronomers of the present day, as to whether or not any of the brilliant spheres which surround us, are, or are not inhabited.

So they came to the conclusion to found an Order with a social system for a basis, and their principles of ethics and morals as the rule and guide of conduct.

When the old patriarchal system came into existence, it had not any human design about it, as we understand that term—it came naturally into being by the force of circumstances. The man

who founded a family was the head of it. There were no laws or rules for his guidance—he made his own. In the slow course of time, families increased and became clans and tribes, and clans and tribes increased and became nations. The family rules gradually enlarged to suit the necessities of the occasion, and became systems of laws.

But, as the families grew to tribes, and tribes to nations, the ties of affinity became weaker and weaker, and men became strangers to each other. The bonds of kindred, affection and association, which made them respect the rights of relations and friends, disappeared; they were only held in restraint by the cold rules of law; the rules of morals and ethics were pushed aside.

To correct this was the object of the founders of our Order. Their aim was to create a tie as strong, if not stronger, than that of blood and kin, and make it in all respects its equivalent and as lasting, no matter how large the Order, or where it spread, and add to it, with renewed force and vigor, the ameliorating and elevating influences of the moral and social relations.

Was it possible to make a bond as strong as that of blood and kin? What is popularly known as the bond of blood and kin is a mere idea. When you analyze the relation which most strongly binds men together, you find it arises because they are congenial in disposition, have a common purpose in life, have grown up in constant association, have received their thoughts, ideas and education from a common source, breathed the same air, enjoyed the same pleasures, and wept over the same sorrows. And so, from day to day, from year to year, their thoughts, feelings and sentiments have gradually grown, mingled and intertwined together. When they look back in life, every page, whether bright or dark, is filled with the familiar form of their associate. Each has become insensibly interested in everything affecting the other; hears with satisfaction of his success, listens with pleasure to his praise, feels sad at his sorrows, and when he is traduced, rushes with indignation to his defense. Example after example shows you can take two boys or girls of even disposition, bring them up together as constant associates, and they will be bound as firmly to each other through life as if the ties of blood and kin existed.

The founders of our Order fully appreciated that a common purpose to subserve, a similarity of disposition, and constant association, were what principally created lasting friendships; and upon friendship, as the main foundation stone, must the Order they contemplated be founded. And so, what I may call a family society, with the Master as the representative of the father and head, was organized. Into its circle none but congenial spirits were permitted to enter.

They brought men together whose interests in life were, as nearly as possible, mutual; whose society was pleasant to each other, and who, from frequent intercourse, from interchange of views and sentiments, from a fostering of social relations, gradually grew to like and respect each other, and feel a common interest in each other's welfare. As in a family, at the dinner table, the questions of interest to the little community were talked over, and plans were laid for the future. So around the social board in the Lodge-room, in loose communion, they discussed the matters of interest to the Society, the prospects of each member and his hopes for the future. They all understood that nothing so rapidly draws men together as to sit down at the social board and have a friendly chat. There, in an hour or so, men get better acquainted with each other than they possibly could in the cold, worldly intercourse of a year; and so in the Lodge-room, every meeting was a little social festival which made its members nearer and dearer to each other. They carefully provided officers charged with the duty of furnishing refreshments to the brethren.

The novice, who was entering its portals, had the formal part of each degree conferred upon him in ceremonious style; then the Lodge was called from labor to refreshment, which call was not an ideal, but a reality. Around the family table, while mingling with the members of the Lodge in social accord and partaking of its repast, he had explained and illustrated to him, in a pleasant and intelligent way, the mysteries of the degree he was receiving; and there he drank in, in a lasting and most agreeable manner the theories and ideas which were to guide him in his future life. (These olden explanations have in the Lodge-room of to-day crystallized down to what we call lectures and charges.) He became immediately on friendly terms with all the members and they with him, and the foundation was laid between them for a future and enduring friendship.

Under this system the Order grew rapidly and spread over the earth. Its teachings were illustrated in the daily conduct of its members.

In England, I am informed by a bright and intelligent member of one of the wealthiest Lodges in London, this plan of Lodge proceeding is still practiced. They meet but once a month; at every meeting there is a banquet prepared by the Stewards, which office, by the way, was

principally created for that purpose. When the Lodge is called from labor to refreshment it is not an idle ceremony, but means what is announced. The members sit around the tables, and there all the business and affairs of the Lodge are discussed and transacted. Annually a collection is taken up for charitable purposes. At the last annual dinner the subscriptions were over \$100,000. He assured me amongst its members the strongest personal friendship exists; the well being of every one of them is cherished and guarded by the others with the kindest care.

On our continent, in the slow progress of time, moralists of a higher plane have gradually taken possession of the Order. Under their guidance the social feature has gradually and slowly been expunged. No more are social dinners or festivals permitted at the expense of the Lodge. No more do the Stewards perform their olden duty; they go through a recital of what their duties are, but the main duty, which brought them into existence, is now considered but rudimentary and useless, and when the Lodge is called from labor to refreshment, the word "refreshment" is a misnomer.

The idealists have declared the moral principles are too pure to be mingled or debased by fellowship with the sentiments of the stomach. They do not believe the feast of reason or flow of soul, brought into play around the dining table is anything but an indication of the gratification of the animal part, and, they cry, cannot at all tend to uphold, cement or strengthen any idea of morality.

They declare the funds of the Lodge shall not be used for Lodge expenses, if such expenses include any refreshments, however frugal those refreshments may be that such things have generally a demoralizing effect, and should not be favored, but if countenanced at all, the members alone who desire them must pay the caterer.

They believe a recitation of the tenets and principles of the Order, as found in the ritual, and the grand descriptive and explanatory addresses, should have attractive force enough to draw men from pursuits of pleasure or business to listen to their repetition fifty-two times a year, and that, too, though these same men may have heard the same thing over a hundred times, delivered with all the grace and charm which an eloquent and instructive speaker could give it.

They in effect declare all that is necessary to make men fast friends is to bring them together in the Lodge-room, while the sublime principles of our Order are being announced, for the gratification of the hearers and the mystification of the candidate.

Is this not asking too much of human nature? Is it not expecting too much of the average mortal!

Suppose we were to select a speaker in all respects the equal of BEECHER or SPURGEON, two of the most eloquent divines who have appeared on the earth during the present century, and such speaker should announce he had selected three of the best considered sermons which had ever been written, and those sermons he would deliver at a given place, once a week every week during the year, on condition that only the same audience should be permitted to attend on each and every occasion.

After the first two or three deliveries how many do you suppose would be in the audience? Would it not materially diminish, and before the year was over would not the attendance for sparseness put you in mind of the average attendance at an ordinary Lodge meeting?

Yet on this plan are the Lodges being conducted to-day.

At each meeting the casual routine of opening the Lodge is gone through with, a degree is conferred, and then, in the same routine way, the Lodge is closed and the members are dismissed. Each member can almost repeat by heart exactly what will be said and done before he goes there. There is nothing new, nothing novel, nothing interesting, except a repetition of the morals and dogma of the Order, all of which he had heard oftener and is more familiar with than he is with his catechism.

Perhaps between the opening and the closing a member from some other Lodge is introduced. How is he received? Welcomed by the Master, who says he is glad to see him; hopes that he will honor them with a visit as often as he remains in the city, and requests that he be seated with the brethren. That done, the business goes on. The stranger does take a seat, and there he remains until the close. Perhaps one or two members may speak to him—only that and nothing more; when the end comes he walks out into the dark-ness and the world, knowing as little about the members of the Lodge as any stranger he meets upon the street.

This, I say, is the usual manner in which strangers are received.

Suppose you were sitting around your family circle, and some friend comes in and says, "I have a friend I would like to introduce to you; he is my friend, a nice gentleman and a good fellow, and I want you to know him."

What do you do? You say, "Bring him in." Of course you get up, are introduced and shake him by the hand, give him the best seat in the house, engage in social chat with the new comer, trying to make him at home as much as possible, make him feel as you feel, that you are glad to see him, like to have him with you; impress upon him that he is amongst friends. When he goes away he has a smile in his heart, and a bright spot in his memory for the pleasant time passed at your fireside.

If this is the way you receive a mere stranger, who has a friendly introduction in your family, why should you not receive a brother of mystic tie in as kindly and fraternal a way? Why not call off your Lodge and have him introduced all around to the members and make him feel at home? Make him realize that there is something in Masonry beyond the mere form and ceremony. Make him feel as he grasps the hand of each brother, an electrical thrill of friendship, which tells him they are not strangers, but friends; that he is looking into the eyes of men who will be all to him that that word means, if he needs them; that his hand is clasped by one who will be to him one of the dearest and best things God has given us on this earth to cherish and enjoy—a true and manly friend.

Well, what remedy do you propose? you say. Do you wish to turn the Lodges over to wine bibbers, gourmands and revelers, and spend its funds in dissipation? By no means. Nothing is further from my thoughts. No one, I take it, will accuse me of such a desire. I can say, what perhaps few here can, that I never took a drink of wine or liquor, or used tobacco in any shape; and that, too, though in this country in my early youth, indulgence in the use of both were part of the customs of the people, and a man was considered odd who used neither. Yet I am not an advocate of total abstinence. I believe in moderation in all things. I know I am approaching dangerous ground—in a measure calling in question what is possibly deemed an established and unalterable rule governing the body in this State. No, I will not say unalterable rule; every rule unless it can stand the test of criticism and come up to the measure of usefulness and expediency, should be changeable.

I am pleased to know from his address delivered yesterday, our Grand Master is in favor of a relaxation or modification of the "no refreshment" rule. Everywhere he made an official visit, he told us, the crowning feature of the occasion culminated in a banquet, around which were more firmly cemented, the mystic ties, binding the participants to each other—and to him.

I believe Masonry is comprehensive enough to take in all classes of men who truly desire to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them. That being the case, its doors must be opened to the average man, who makes as a class the majority of human kind, whom its principles and practices will strengthen, educate, elevate and ennoble.

To do all this takes time. You must first get him within your folds; then study and understand, as far as possible, his disposition and wants, his likes and dislikes, what will attract and what will repel him, comprehending this you must make the place attractive enough to retain him, while you gradually educate him up to the standard necessary to make "the practice of Masonic doctrines not only a duty, but a pleasure and a habit, a part of his very self.

Now, how are you going to retain him after you get him in the Lodge? By calling him from all the outside attractions and allurements to attend your meetings, where he is to sit like a bump on a log and listen to the dry recitals of the same Masonic morals four times a month. If it gets a little tedious to him and he whispers somewhat loud to his neighbor, he is promptly called to order by the Master, and reminded it is necessary he should give silent attention to the proceedings going on before him. You all must realize such a thing cannot be very entertaining to him. After a few experiences of that kind, his attendance slackens off and ends in his coming only semi-occasionally; in fact, so rarely that many of the members, when he does come, ask "Who is that?" "not recognizing him as a member.

You surely will not claim, under these circumstances, there exists a close, friendly relationship between the transient attendant and the other members of the Lodge. If you will ask him, he will tell you he knows but few of the members by sight, might pass almost any of them in the street without recognition and in total ignorance that the man going by was bound to him by the mystic tie. Ask him why he does not go to the Lodge meetings. He will say, "Oh, well, I did go

several times, but it became tiresome and I was otherwise engaged." In time, about the only member of the Lodge he knows is the collector who comes for his dues. He remains a member of the Craft and that's about all. He may have some dim recollection of what he heard in the Lodge about Masonic rites and duties, but they are so faint they have little or no influence on his conduct towards his fellow man.

Will that man propagate the Masonic faith, or add to its glory or renown? Will he, by his good Masonic works, attract worthy members to the fold? Will he fulfill the obligations of his Lodge when his interests clash with those of other Masons? Answer those questions from your own observation. Mine has led me to believe, in a great many instances I am sorry to say, his obligations are forgotten. And why is it? Because they are not grounded upon nor bound by fee social tie.

You never can make morality practical as long as you keep it ideal. That, in my judgment, is the reason the churches of to-day have BO little influence. There is really no social tie amongst their members. There is nothing but the ethereal one of religious sentiment, which is polished up a little once in every seven days, and encroached upon or absolutely forgotten during the remaining six, whenever it conflicts with personal interests.

Well, you say, what can the Lodge do about it? How can the Lodge help it?

I answer, as at present hampered by regulations, nothing—it cannot help it. But it could have helped it if it had had a little freedom to act. If the Lodge had been at liberty to make its meetings attractive to its members, had little socials, friendly discussions on interesting topics, and now and then some simple repast—all mere pretexts in themselves, but sufficient to amuse and attract the average man and bring him into social and friendly relations with the other members, gradually making them better acquainted with each other, and insensibly but surely planting in his breast a liking for his fellow-members, a desire to come again and be with them and talk over the business and affairs of each other, the prospects of the country, etc., slowly but surely making the bond of friendship stronger and stronger between them, till after a time he looks forward with pleasure to the meetings which draw him away from the cares and perplexities of the world, away from the cold and selfish crowd who would care but little if he dropped by the wayside, and perhaps consider only that he was another obstacle out of their pathway in the mad rush after wealth and power.

In his Lodge he knows he is with his friends, with those who feel an interest in him, who will stand by him when the hour of trouble comes, and rejoice at his success.

Will he not also feel the same way towards them, and as far as they are concerned will he not be ready to fulfill his duties as a Mason? When he gets thus far he is in the frame of mind to look with proper consideration to the duties he owes to members of the fraternity at large; by the good effects wrought on him through the relationship with the members of his own Lodge his eyes are opened to the benefits which will accrue to mankind when the same relationship shall be established amongst all the members of the Order, and they will feel and act towards each other as he feels and acts towards his own little band of brethren.

But you say if this plan is carried out the funds of the Lodge will be dissipated and no money will be left to carry out its benevolent views. It is not my idea the Lodges should have unlimited sway in such matters. Give them a reasonable discretion. There are conservative and sensible members enough in every Lodge to keep such matters within proper bounds.

The surroundings of nearly every one are different, and will require a different plan of action from its neighbor. The Master has control and can be relied on not to let anything be done which would throw discredit on the Lodge or the Order. In some places it might be undesirable to have any wine or liquor at a refreshment, for fear some member might take too much. The brethren should always remember an intoxicated Mason not only disgraces himself, but also casts a stain on his associates.

If discussions on any subject are invited, there may be some prosy member, you say, who by the unreasonable length of his speech may tire the others. The officers of the Lodge will always have enough tact to prevent such a thing and suit their attractions to their surroundings.

If the small sums these entertainments would cost would result in drawing the members together in closer friendly union, then I say the money will be well spent, the cause of Masonry advanced, the membership of the Lodge increased by the addition of practical Masons, and its treasury more than replenished by the healthy growth.

Another order, which sprang into existence during this century, and, no doubt patterned after ours and intended to be a sort of an improvement upon it has been conducting its affairs on the same exclusive plan with the same unfavorable result in attendance of the members. Discussion after discussion was carried on as to what was the cause and what the remedy. At last the great temperance jurisdiction of Massachusetts introduced in the Supreme Body a resolution that the Lodges be allowed five per cent of their income for incidental Lodge expenses. After much consideration the motion was adopted.

But some old members will say: " Do you wish this Ancient Order to pattern after a mere stripling, a mere offgrowth? "I answer in the language of the poet;

" Seize truth wherever found,
On Christian or on heathen ground,
Amongst your friends, amongst your foes ;
The plant's divine where'er it grows."

There is no one within the sound of my voice who cannot be taught something which he never knew by any ten-year-old schoolboy. He who will refuse to profit by the experience of others only stands in his own light and is a drag on human progress.

The subjects which I have touched upon might be amplified and enlarged, but it would make my address much longer than the business of this Grand Lodge will permit.

The points I desire to call to the members' attention are these, namely:

In order to build up the Masonic fraternity, you should first carefully select men whose inherent qualities 'incline them to do justice to their fellow - men and duly consider and respect the rights of others. Then establish amongst them a close and friendly relationship. These are the mudsills for the foundation stones of the Masonic Temple. You must not permit any member to be elected to your Lodge for revenue only. You must constantly keep in mind that to you are delegated the right to make a Mason, who shall not alone be a member of your Lodge, but also a brother in the bonds of fellowship with a million of men. You are charged with the solemn duty of seeing that none are permitted, to come within our fold for mercenary or selfish purposes; that no one shall be permitted to call himself a Mason, unless he will in his life be an example of the benefits which a proper observance of its principles will be to mankind, in elevating the moral standing of the community, in establishing a proper respect for the rights of others, in advancing the cause of education and good government, fostering a sincere love for human liberty, and lastly, and above all, a profound reverence for the Deity.

The conclusions I have reached are;

1.

The true basis for Masonic faith is the building up and establishing a close, friendly relation between the members of the Lodge.

2.

To accomplish this an intimate social communion must be established amongst the members.

3.

To bring the latter event about, the meetings of the Lodges must be made both pleasant and attractive to all the members; and

LASTLY.

None should be admitted but those whose society would be likely to be agreeable, to the other members of the Lodge, who of their own volition seek admission, and are naturally inclined to favorably receive Masonic doctrines, desiring membership alone because they are ambitious to do their share towards humanizing and elevating their race.

Take these propositions home with you, study them well, and I think you will come to the conclusion that when they are strictly adhered to, you will have full Lodge meetings, and when they are violated, you will open to empty benches.