

While it is not a reformatory, it is a centre of moral and spiritual power, and its power is used, not only to protect the widow and orphan, but also, and still more important, to remove the cause of their woe and need by making men just, gentle, and generous to all their fellow-mortals. Who can measure such a silent, persistent, unresting labour ; who can describe its worth in a world of feud, of bitterness, of sorrow !

No one needs to be told that we are on the eve, if not in the midst, of a most stupendous and bewildering revolution of social and industrial life. It shakes England to-day. It makes France tremble to-morrow. It alarms America next week. Men want shorter hours, higher wages, and better homes—of course they do—but they need, more than these things, to know and love each other ; for the questions in dispute can never be settled in an air of hostility. If they are ever settled at all, and settled right, it must be in an atmosphere of mutual recognition and respect, such as Masonry seeks to create and make prevail. Whether it be a conflict of nations, or a clash of class with class, appeal must be made to intelligence and the moral sense, as befits the dignity of man. Amidst bitterness and strife Masonry brings men of every rank and walk of life together as men, and nothing else, at an altar where they can talk and not fight, discuss and not dispute, and each may learn the point of view of his fellow. Other hope there is none save in this spirit of friendship and fairness, of democracy and the fellowship of man with man. Once this spirit has its way with mankind, it will bring those brave, large reconstructions, those profitable abnegations and brotherly feats of generosity that will yet turn human life into a glad, beautiful, and triumphant co-operation all round this sunlit world.

Surely the way of Masonry is wise. Instead of becoming only one more factor in a world of factional feud, it seeks to remove all hostility which may arise from social, national, or religious differences. It helps to heal the
up a State that will endure the shocks of time ; a nobler structure than ever was wrought of mortar and marble (*The Principles of Freemasonry in the Life of Nations*, by Findel).

haughtiness of the rich and the envy of the poor, and tends to establish peace on earth by allaying all fanaticism and hatred on account of varieties of language, race, creed, and even colour, while striving to make the wisdom of the past available for the culture of men in faith and purity. Not a party, not a sect, not a cult, it is a great order of men selected, initiated, sworn, and trained to make sweet reason and the will of God prevail! Against the ancient enmities and inhumanities of the world it wages eternal war, without vengeance, without violence, but by softening the hearts of men and inducing a better spirit. Apparitions of a day, here for an hour and to-morrow gone, what is our puny warfare against evil and ignorance compared with the warfare which this venerable order has been waging against them for ages, and will continue to wage after we have fallen into dust!

III

Masonry, as it is much more than a political party or a social cult, is also more than a church—unless we use the word “church” as Ruskin used it when he said: “There is a true church wherever one hand meets another helpfully, the only holy or mother church that ever was or ever shall be.” It is true that Masonry is not a religion, but it is Religion, a worship in which all good men may unite, that each may share the faith of all. Often it has been objected that some men leave the Church and enter the Masonic lodge, finding there a religious home. Even so, but that may be the fault, not of Masonry, but of the Church so long defamed by bigotry and distracted by sectarian feud, and which has too often made acceptance of abstract dogmas a test of its fellowship.¹ Naturally,

¹ Not a little confusion has existed, and still exists, in regard to the relation of Masonry to religion. Dr. Mackey said that old Craft-masonry was sectarian (*Symbolism of Masonry*); but it was not more so than Dr. Mackey himself, who held the curious theory that the religion of the Hebrews was genuine and that of the Egyptians spurious. Nor is there any evidence that Craft-masonry was sectarian, but much to the contrary, as has been shown in

many fine minds have been estranged from the Church, not because they were irreligious, but because they were required to believe what it was impossible for them to believe ; and, rather than sacrifice their integrity of soul, they have turned away from the last place from which a man should ever turn away. No part of the ministry of Masonry is more beautiful and wise than its appeal, not for tolerance, but for fraternity ; not for uniformity, but for unity of spirit amidst varieties of outlook and opinion. Instead of criticizing Masonry, let us thank God for one altar where no man is asked to surrender his liberty of thought and become an indistinguishable atom in the mass of sectarian agglomeration. What a witness to the worth of an order that it brings together men of all creeds in behalf of those truths which are greater than all sects, deeper than all doctrines—the glory and the hope of man !

While Masonry is not a church, it has religiously preserved some things of highest importance to the Church—among them the right of each individual soul to its own reference to the invocations in the *Old Charges*. At any rate, if it was ever sectarian, it ceased to be so with the organization of the Grand Lodge of England. Later, some of the chaplains of the order sought to identify Masonry with Christianity, as Hutchinson did—and even Arnold in his chapter on "Christianity and Freemasonry" (*History and Philosophy of Masonry*). All this confusion results from a misunderstanding of what religion is. Religions are many ; religion is one—perhaps we may say one thing, but that one thing includes everything—the life of God in the soul of man, which finds expression in all the forms which life and love and duty take. This conception of religion shakes the poison out of all our wild flowers, and shows us that it is the inspiration of all scientific inquiry, all striving for liberty, all virtue and charity ; the spirit of all thought, the *motif* of all great music, the soul of all sublime literature. The Church has no monopoly of religion, nor did the Bible create it. Instead, it was religion—the natural and simple trust of the soul in a Power above and within it, and its quest of a right relation to that Power—that created the Bible and the Church, and, indeed, all our higher human life. The soul of man is greater than all books, deeper than all dogmas, and more enduring than all institutions. Masonry seeks to free men from a limiting conception of religion, and thus to remove one of the chief causes of sectarianism. It is itself one of the forms of beauty wrought by the human soul under the inspiration of the Eternal Beauty, and as such is religious.

religious faith. Holding aloof from separate sects and creeds, it has taught all of them how to respect and tolerate each other ; asserting a principle broader than any of them—the sanctity of the soul and the duty of every man to revere, or at least to regard with charity, what is sacred to his fellows. It is like the crypts underneath the old cathedrals—a place where men of every creed who long for something deeper and truer, older and newer than they have hitherto known, meet and unite. Having put away childish things, they find themselves made one by a profound and childlike faith, each bringing down into that quiet crypt his own pearl of great price—

the Hindu his innate disbelief in this world, and his unhesitating belief in another world ; the Buddhist his perception of an eternal law, his submission to it, his gentleness, his pity ; the Mohammedan, if nothing else, his sobriety ; the Jew his clinging, through good and evil days, to the one God who loveth righteousness, and whose name is " I AM " ; the Christian, that which is better than all, if those who doubt it would try it—our love of God, call Him what you will, manifested in our love of man, our love of the living, our love of the dead, our living and undying love. Who knows but that the crypt of the past may become the church of the future ?¹

Of no one age, Masonry belongs to all ages ; of no one religion, it finds great truths in all religions. Indeed, it holds that truth which is common to all elevating and benign religions, and is the basis of each ; that faith which underlies all sects and overarches all creeds, like the sky above and the river bed below the flow of mortal years. It does not undertake to explain or dogmatically to settle those questions or solve those dark mysteries which out-top human knowledge. Beyond the facts of faith it does not go. With the subtleties of speculation concerning those truths, and the unworldly envies growing out of them, it has not to do. There divisions begin, and Masonry was not made to divide men, but to unite them, leaving each man free to think his own thought and fashion his own system of ultimate truth. All its emphasis rests

¹ *Hibbert Lectures*, by Max Müller.

upon two extremely simple and profound principles—love of God and love of man. Therefore, all through the ages it has been, and is to-day, a meeting-place of differing minds, and a prophecy of the final union of all reverent and devout souls.

Time was when one man framed a dogma and declared it to be the eternal truth. Another man did the same thing, with a different dogma; then the two began to hate each other with an unholy hatred, each seeking to impose his dogma upon the other—and that is an epitome of some of the blackest pages of history. Against those old sectarians who substituted intolerance for charity, persecution for friendship, and did not love God because they hated their neighbours, Masonry made eloquent protest, putting their bigotry to shame by its simple insight and the dignity of its golden voice. A vast change of heart is now taking place in the religious world, by reason of an exchange of thought and courtesy and a closer personal touch, and the various sects, so long estranged, are learning to unite upon the things most worth while and the least open to debate. That is to say, they are moving toward the Masonic position, and when they arrive, Masonry will witness a scene which she has prophesied for ages.

At last, in the not distant future, the old feuds of the sects will come to an end, forgotten in the discovery that the just, the brave, the true-hearted are everywhere of one religion, and that when the masks of misunderstanding are taken off they know and love one another. Our little dogmas will have their day and cease to be, lost in the vision of a truth so great that all men are one in their littleness; one also in their assurance of the divinity of the soul and "the kindness of the veiled Father of men." Then men of every name will ask, when they meet—

Not, What is your creed?

But, What is your need?

High above all dogmas that divide, all bigotries that blind, all bitterness that beclouds, will be written the simple words of the one eternal religion—the Fatherhood

of God, the brotherhood of man, the moral law, the golden rule, and the hope of a life everlasting !¹

¹ It has not been deemed necessary to enter here into a discussion of the much-debated question as to the Landmarks of Freemasonry, about which the literature is so much more voluminous than luminous. Whether we say, with Findel, that there are four Landmarks (*The Spirit and Form of Freemasonry*), or with Dr Mackey that there are twenty-five (*Lexicon of Freemasonry*), or with some one else that there are sixty, depends on the point of view from which we regard the craft. Obviously, a Landmark must mean a limit set beyond which Masonry cannot go, some boundary within which it must labour; a line drawn against any innovation subversive of the spirit and purpose of the fraternity. Surely the Landmarks of Freemasonry are its great fundamental principles, not any usage or custom, much less mere details of organization, save in so far as these are identical with and indispensable to the spread of its spirit and the fulfilment of its mission in the world. Too often a tradition or custom of comparatively recent date has been elevated to the rank of a Landmark, and used as a barrier with which to exclude our Brethren—hence the sad spectacle of Masons in one part of the world refusing to recognize their fellows because, forsooth, they do not use exactly the same words. Surely this is a queer outcome of the gracious and free spirit of Masonry, whose genius it is, or should be, to make men friends and fellow-workers. As to the literature of the subject, from a legal point of view there is nothing better than the treatment of Landmarks by Professor Roscoe Pound in his lectures on "Masonic Jurisprudence" (*The Builder*, vol. iii); and in a general way the chapter on this subject in *Speculative Masonry*, by Brother A. S. MacBride, of Lodge Progress, Glasgow, one of the noblest and wisest Masonic teachers of this generation, whose book is one of the gems of our literature.

THE MASONIC PHILOSOPHY

Masonry directs us to divest ourselves of confined and bigoted notions and teaches us that Humanity is the soul of Religion. We never suffer any religious disputes in our Lodges, and, as Masons, we only pursue the universal religion, the Religion of Nature. Worshippers of the God of Mercy, we believe that in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him. All Masons, therefore, whether Christians, Jews, or Mahomedans, who violate not the rule of right, written by the Almighty upon the tables of the heart, who DO fear Him, and WORK righteousness, we are to acknowledge as brethren ; and, though we take different roads, we are not to be angry with, or persecute each other on that account. We mean to travel to the same place ; we know that the end of our journey is the same ; and we affectionately hope to meet in the Lodge of perfect happiness. How lovely is an institution fraught with sentiments like these ! How agreeable must it be to Him who is seated on a throne of Everlasting Mercy, to the God who is no respecter of persons !

WM. HUTCHINSON, *The Spirit of Masonry.*

CHAPTER II

THE MASONIC PHILOSOPHY

"HAST any philosophy in thee, shepherd?"¹ was the question of Touchstone in the Shakespeare play; and that is the question we must always ask ourselves. Long ago Kant said it is the mission of philosophy, not to discover truth, but to set it in order, to seek out the rhythm of things, and their reason for being. Beginning in wonder, it sees the familiar as if it were strange, and its mind is full of the air that plays round every subject. Spacious, humane, eloquent, it is "a blend of science, poetry, religion and logic"²—a softening, enlarging, ennobling influence, giving us a wider and clearer outlook, more air, more room, more light, and more background.

When we look at Masonry in this large and mellow light, it is like a stately old cathedral, gray with age, rich in associations, its steps worn by innumerable feet of the living and the dead—not piteous, but strong and enduring. Entering its doors, we wonder at its lofty spaces, its windows with the dimness and glory of the Infinite behind them, the spring of its pillars, the leap of its arches, and its roof inlaid with stars. Inevitably we ask, whence came this temple of faith and friendship, and what does it mean—rising lightly as a lyric, uplifted by the hunger

¹ *As You Like It* (Act II, sc. ii). Shakespeare makes no reference to any secret society, but some of his allusions suggest that he knew more than he wrote. He describes "The singing Masons building roofs of gold" (*Henry V*, Act I, sc. ii), and compares them to a swarm of bees at work. Did he know what the beehive means in the symbolism of Masonry? (Read an interesting article on "Shakespeare and Freemasonry," *American Freemason*, January 1912.) It reminds one of the passage in the *Complete Angler*, by Izaak Walton, in which the gentle fisherman talks about the meaning of Pillars in language very like that used in the *Old Charges*. But Hawkins in his edition of the *Angler* recalls that Walton was a friend of Elias Ashmole, and may have learned of Masonry from him. (*A Short Masonic History*, by F. Armitage, vol. ii. chap. iii.)

² *Some Problems of Philosophy*, by William James.

for truth and the love for beauty, and exempt from the shock of years and the ravages of decay? What faith builded this home of the soul, what philosophy underlies and upholds it? Truly did Longfellow sing of *The Builders* :—

In the elder years of art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and hidden part,
For the gods see everywhere.

I

If we examine the foundations of Masonry, we find that it rests upon the most fundamental of all truths, the first truth and the last, the sovereign and supreme Reality. Upon the threshold of its Lodges every man, whether prince or peasant, is asked to confess his faith in God the Father Almighty, the Architect and Master-builder of the Universe.¹ That is not a mere form of words, but

¹ In 1877 the Grand Orient of France removed the Bible from its altar and erased from its ritual all reference to Deity; and for so doing it was disfellowshipped by nearly every Grand Lodge in the world. The writer of the article on "Masonry" in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* recalls this fact with emphasis; but he is much fairer to the Grand Orient than many Masonic writers have been. He understands that this does not mean that the Masons of France are atheistic, as that word is ordinarily used, but that *they do not believe that there exist Atheists in the absolute sense of the word*; and he quotes the words of Albert Pike: "A man who has a higher conception of God than those about him, and who denies that their conception *is* God, is very likely to be called an Atheist by men who are really far less believers in God than he" (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 643). Thus, as Pike goes on to say, the early Christians, who said the heathen idols were no gods, were accounted Atheists, and accordingly put to death. We need not hold a brief for the Grand Orient, but it behoves us to understand its position and point of view, lest we be found guilty of a petty bigotry in regard to a word when the *reality* is a common treasure. First, it was felt that France needed the aid of every man who was an enemy of Latin ecclesiasticism, in order to bring about a separation of Church and State; hence the attitude of the Grand Orient. Second, the Masons of France agree with Plutarch that no conception of God at all is better than a dark, distorted superstition which

the deepest and almost solemn affirmation that human lips can make. To be indifferent to God is to be indifferent to the greatest of all realities, that upon which the aspiration of humanity rests for its uprising passion of desire. No institution that is dumb concerning the meaning of life and the character of the universe can last. It is a house built upon the sand, doomed to fall when the winds blow and floods beat upon it, lacking a sure foundation. No human fraternity that has not its inspiration in the Fatherhood of God, confessed or unconfessed, can long endure; it is a rope of sand, weak as water, and its fine sentiment quickly evaporates. Life leads, if we follow its meanings and think in the drift of its deeper conclusions, to one God as the ground of the world, and upon that ground Masonry lays her corner-stone. Therefore, it endures and grows, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it!

While Masonry is theocratic in its faith and philosophy,¹ it does not limit its conception of the Divine, much less insist upon any other name for "the Nameless One of a hundred names." Indeed, no feature of Masonry is more fascinating than its age-long quest of the Lost Word,² the Ineffable Name; a quest that never tires, never tarries, knowing the while that every name is inadequate, and all words are but symbols of a Truth too great for words—every letter of the alphabet, in fact, having been evolved from some primæval sign or signal of the faith and hope of humanity. Thus Masonry, so far from limiting the thought of God, is evermore in search of a more satisfying and revealing vision of the meaning of the universe,

wraps men in terror; and they erased a word which, for many, was associated with an unworthy faith—the better to seek a unity of effort in behalf of thought and a loftier faith. (*The Religion of Plutarch*, by Oakesmith; also the Bacon essay on *Superstition*.) We may deem this unwise, but we ought at least to understand its spirit and purpose.

¹ *Theocratic Philosophy of Freemasonry*, by Oliver.

² "History of the Lost Word," by J. F. Garrison, appendix to *Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry*, by G. F. Fort—one of the most brilliant Masonic books, both in scholarship and literary style.

now luminous and lovely, now dark and terrible; and it invites all men to unite in the quest—

One in the freedom of the Truth,
 One in the joy of paths untrod,
 One in the soul's perennial Youth,
 One in the larger thought of God.

Truly, the human consciousness of fellowship with the Eternal, under whatever name, may well hush all words, still more hush argument and anathema. Possession, not recognition, is the only thing important; and if it is not recognized, the fault must surely be, in large part, our own. Given the one great experience, and before long kindred spirits will join in the *Universal Prayer* of Alexander Pope, himself a Mason:—

Father of all! in every age,
 In every clime adored,
 By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage,
 Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

With eloquent unanimity our Masonic thinkers proclaim the unity and love of God—whence their vision of the ultimate unity and love of mankind—to be the great truth of the Masonic philosophy; the unity of God and the immortality of the soul.¹ Amidst polytheisms, dualisms,

¹ *Symbolism of Masonry*, by Dr. Mackey (chap. i), and other books too many to name. It need hardly be said that the truth of the Trinity, whereof the triangle is an emblem—though with Pythagoras it was a symbol of holiness, of health—was never meant to contradict the unity of God, but to make it more vivid. As too often interpreted, it is little more than a crude tri-theism, but at its best it is not so. "God thrice, not three Gods," was the word of St. Augustine (*Essay on the Trinity*), meaning three aspects of God—not the mathematics of His nature, but its manifoldness, its variety in unity. The late W. N. Clarke—who put more common sense into theology than any other man of his day—pointed out that, in our time, the old debate about the Trinity is as dead as Cæsar; the truth of God as a Father having taken up into itself the warmth, colour, and tenderness of the truth of the Trinity—which, as said on an earlier page, was a vision of God through the family (*Christian Doctrine of God*).

and endless confusions, they hold it to have been the great mission of Masonry to preserve these precious truths, beside which, in the long result of thought and faith, all else fades and grows dim. Of this there is no doubt; and science has come at last to vindicate this wise insight, by unveiling the unity of the universe with overwhelming emphasis. Unquestionably the universe is an inexhaustible wonder. Still, it is a wonder, not a contradiction, and we can never find its rhythm save in the truth of the unity of all things in God. Other clue there is none. Down to this deep foundation Masonry digs for a basis of its temple, and builds securely. If this be false or unstable, then is

The pillar'd firmament rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.

Upon the altar of Masonry lies the open Bible, which, despite the changes and advances of the ages, remains the Greatest Modern Book—the moral manual of civilization.¹ All through its pages, through the smoke of Sinai, through “the forest of the Psalms,” through proverbs and parables, along the dreamy ways of prophecy, in gospels and epistles, is heard the everlasting truth of one God who is Love, and who requires of men that they love one another, do justly, be merciful, keep themselves unspotted by evil, and walk humbly before Him in whose great hand they stand. There we read of the Man of Galilee who taught that, in the far distances of the divine Fatherhood, all men were conceived in love, and so are akin—united in origin, duty, and destiny. Therefore we are to relieve the distressed, put the wanderer into his way, and divide our bread with the hungry, which is but the way of doing good to ourselves; for we are all members of one great family, and the hurt of one means the injury of all.

This profound and reverent faith, from which, as from

¹ *The Bible the Great Source of Masonic Secrets and Observances*, by Dr. Oliver. No Mason need be told what a large place the Bible has in the symbolism, ritual, and teaching of the order, and it has an equally large place in its literature.

a never-failing spring, flow heroic devotedness, moral self-respect, authentic sentiments of fraternity, inflexible fidelity in life and effectual consolation in death, Masonry has at all times religiously taught. Perseveringly it has propagated it through the centuries, and never more zealously than in our age. Scarcely a Masonic discourse is pronounced, or a Masonic lesson read, by the highest officer or the humblest lecturer, that does not earnestly teach this one true religion which is the very soul of Masonry, its basis and apex, its light and power. Upon that faith it rests; in that faith it lives and labours; and by that faith it will conquer at last, when the noises and confusions of to-day have followed the tangled feet that made them.

II

Out of this simple faith grows, by inevitable logic, the philosophy which Masonry teaches in signs and symbols, in pictures and parables. Stated briefly, stated vividly, it is that behind the pageant of nature, in it and over it, there is a Supreme Mind which initiates, impels, and controls all. That behind the life of man and its pathetic story in history, in it and over it, there is a righteous Will, the intelligent Conscience of the Most High. In short, that the first and last thing in the universe is mind, that the highest and deepest thing is conscience, and that the final reality is the absoluteness of love. Higher than that faith cannot fly; deeper than that thought cannot dig.

No deep is deep enough to show
 The springs whence being starts to flow.
 No fastness of the soul reveals
 Life's subtlest impulse and appeals.
 We seem to come, we seem to go;
 But whence or whither who can know?
 Unemptiable, unfillable,
 It's all in that one syllable—
 God! Only God. God first, God last.
 God, infinitesimally vast;
 God who is love, love which is God,
 The rootless, everflowering rod!

There is but one real alternative to this philosophy. It is not atheism—which is seldom more than a revulsion from superstition—because the adherents of absolute atheism are so few, if any, and its intellectual position is too precarious ever to be a menace. An atheist, if such there be, is an orphan, a waif wandering the midnight streets of time, homeless and alone. Nor is the alternative agnosticism, which in the nature of things can be only a passing mood of thought, when, indeed, it is not a confession of intellectual bankruptcy, or a labour-saving device to escape the toil and fatigue of high thinking. It trembles in perpetual hesitation, like a donkey equidistant between two bundles of hay, starving to death but unable to make up its mind. No; the real alternative is materialism, which played so large a part in philosophy fifty years ago, and which, defeated there, has betaken itself to the field of practical affairs. This is the dread alternative of a denial of the great faith of humanity, a blight which would apply a sponge to all the high aspirations and ideals of the race. According to this dogma, the first and last things in the universe are atoms, their number, dance, combinations, and growth. All mind, all will, all emotion, all character, all love is incidental, transitory, vain. The sovereign fact is mud, the final reality is dirt, and the decree of destiny is “dust unto dust”!

Against this ultimate horror, it need hardly be said that in every age Masonry has stood as a witness for the life of the spirit. In the war of the soul against dust, in the choice between dirt and Deity, it has allied itself on the side of the great idealisms and optimisms of humanity. It takes the spiritual view of life and the world as being most in accord with the facts of experience, the promptings of right reason, and the voice of conscience. In other words, it dares to read the meaning of the universe through what is highest in man, not through what is lower, asserting that the soul is akin to the Eternal Spirit, and that by a life of righteousness its eternal quality is revealed.¹

¹ Read the great argument of Plato in *The Republic* (Book VI). The present writer does not wish to impose upon Masonry any dogma of technical Idealism, subjective, objective, or otherwise.

Upon this philosophy Masonry rests, and finds a rock beneath :—

On Him, this corner-stone we build,
 On Him, this edifice erect ;
 And still, until this work's fulfilled,
 May He the workman's ways direct.

Now, consider ! All our human thinking, whether it be in science, philosophy, or religion, rests for its validity upon faith in the kinship of man with God. If that faith be false, the temple of human thought falls to wreck, and behold ! we know not anything and have no way of learning. But the fact that the universe is intelligible, that we can follow its forces, trace its laws, and make a map of it, finding the infinite even in the infinitesimal, shows that the mind of man is akin to the Mind that made it. Also, there are two aspects of the nature of man which lift him above the brute and bespeak his divine heredity. They are reason and conscience, both of which are of more than sense and time, having their source, satisfaction, and authority in an unseen, eternal world. That is to say, man is a being who, if not actually immortal, is called by the very law and necessity of his being to live as if he were immortal. Unless life be utterly abortive, having neither rhyme nor reason, the soul of man is itself the one sure proof and prophet of its own high faith.

Consider, too, what it means to say that this mighty

No more than others does he hold to a static universe which unrolls in time a plan made out before, but to a world of wonders where life has the risk and zest of adventure. He rejoices in the New Idealism of Rudolf Eucken, with its gospel of "an independent spiritual life"—independent, that is, of vicissitude—and its insistence upon the fact that the meaning of life depends upon our "building up within ourselves a life that is not of time" (*Life's Basis and Life's Ideal*). But the intent of these pages is, rather, to emphasize the spiritual view of life and the world as the philosophy underlying Masonry, and upon which it builds—the reality of the ideal, its sovereignty over our fragile human life, and the immutable necessity of loyalty to it, if we are to build for eternity. After all, as Plotinus said, philosophy "serves to point the way and guide the traveller ; the vision is for him who will see it." But the direction means much to those who are seeking the truth to know it.

soul of man is akin to the Eternal Soul of all things. It means that we are not shapes of mud placed here by chance, but sons of the Most High, citizens of eternity, deathless as God our Father is deathless; and that there is laid upon us an abiding obligation to live in a manner befitting the dignity of the soul. It means that what a man thinks, the purity of his feeling, the character of his activity and career, are of vital and ceaseless concern to the Eternal. Here is a philosophy which lights up the universe like a sunrise, confirming the dim, dumb certainties of the soul, evolving meaning out of mystery, and hope out of what would else be despair. It brings out the colours of human life, investing our fleeting mortal years—brief at their longest, broken at their best—with enduring significance and beauty. It gives to each of us, however humble and obscure, a place and a part in the stupendous historical enterprise; makes us fellow-workers with the Eternal in His redemptive making of humanity, and binds us to do His will upon earth as it is done in heaven. It subdues the intellect; it softens the heart; it begets in the will that sense of self-respect without which high and heroic living cannot be. Such is the philosophy upon which Masonry builds; and from it flow, as from the rock smitten in the wilderness, those bright streams that wander through and water this human world of ours.

III

Because this is so; because the human soul is akin to God, and is endowed with powers to which no one may set a limit, it is and of right ought to be free. Thus, by the logic of its philosophy, not less than the inspiration of its faith, Masonry has been impelled to make its historic demand for liberty of conscience, for the freedom of the intellect and for the right of all men to stand erect, unfettered and unafraid, equal before God and the law, each respecting the rights of his fellows. What we have to remember is, that before this truth was advocated by any order, or embodied in any political constitution, it was embedded in the will of God and the constitution of

the human soul. Nor will Masonry ever swerve one jot or tittle from its ancient and eloquent demand till all men, everywhere, are free in body, mind, and soul. As it is, Lowell was right when he wrote :—

We are not free : Freedom doth not consist
 In musing with our faces toward the Past
 While petty cares and crawling interests twist
 Their spider threads about us, which at last
 Grow strong as iron chains and cramp and bind
 In formal narrowness heart, soul, and mind.
 Freedom is recreated year by year,
 In hearts wide open on the Godward side,
 In souls calm-cadenced as the whirling sphere,
 In minds that sway the future like a tide.
 No broadest creeds can hold her, and no codes ;
 She chooses men for her august abodes,
 Building them fair and fronting to the dawn.

Some day, when the cloud of prejudice has been dispelled by the searchlight of truth, the world will honour Masonry for its service to freedom of thought and the liberty of faith. No part of its history has been more noble, no principle of its teaching has been more precious, than its age-long demand for the right and duty of every soul to seek that light by which no man was ever injured, and that truth which makes man free. Down through the centuries—often in times when the highest crime was not murder, but thinking, and the human conscience was a captive dragged at the wheel of the ecclesiastical chariot—always and everywhere Masonry has stood for the right of the soul to know the truth, and to look up unhindered from the lap of earth into the face of God. Not freedom from faith, but freedom of faith, has been its watchword, on the ground that as despotism is the mother of anarchy, so bigoted dogmatism is the prolific source of scepticism—knowing, also, that our race has made its most rapid advance in those fields where it has been free the longest. Against those who would fetter thought in order to perpetuate an effete authority, who would give the skinny hand of the past a sceptre to rule the aspiring and prophetic present and seal the lips of living scholars with the dicta

of dead scholastics, Masonry will never ground arms! Her plea is for government without tyranny and religion without superstition, and as surely as suns rise and set her fight will be crowned with victory. Defeat is impossible, the more so because she fights not with force, still less with intrigue, but with the power of truth, the persuasions of reason, and the might of gentleness, seeking not to destroy her enemies, but to win them to the liberty of the truth and the fellowship of love.

Not only does Masonry plead for that liberty of faith which permits a man to hold what seems to him true, but also, and with equal emphasis, for the liberty which faith gives to the soul, emancipating it from the despotism of doubt and the fetters of fear. Therefore, by every art of spiritual culture, it seeks to keep alive in the hearts of men a great and simple trust in the goodness of God, in the worth of life, and the divinity of the soul—a trust so apt to be crushed by the tramp of heavy years. Help a man to a firm faith in what Stevenson called “the ultimate decency of things,” in an Infinite Pity at the heart of this dark world, and from how many fears is he free! Once a temple of terror, haunted by shadows, his heart becomes “a cathedral of serenity and gladness,” and his life is enlarged and unfolded into richness of character and service. Nor is there any tyranny like the tyranny of time. Give a man a day to live, and he is like a bird in a cage beating against its bars. Give him a year in which to move to and fro with his thoughts and plans, his purposes and hopes, and you have liberated him from the despotism of a day. Enlarge the scope of his life to fifty years, and he has a moral dignity of attitude and a sweep of power impossible hitherto. But give him a sense of Eternity; let him know that he plans and works in an ageless time; that above his blunders and sins there hovers and waits the infinite—then he is free!

Nevertheless, if life on earth be worthless, so is immortality. The real question, after all, is not as to the quantity of life, but its quality—its depth, its purity, its fortitude, its fineness of spirit and gesture of soul. Hence the insistent emphasis of Masonry upon the building of

after reading their endless essays, that the symbols of Masonry were loved and preserved by all the world—*except by the Masons themselves*. Often these writers imply, if they do not actually assert, that our order begged, borrowed, or cribbed its emblems from Kabbalists or Rosicrucians, whereas the truth is exactly the other way round—those impalpable fraternities, whose vague, fantastic thought was always seeking a local habitation and a body, making use of the symbols of Masonry the better to reach the minds of men. Why all this unnecessary mystery—not to say mystification—when the facts are so plain, written in records and carved in stone? While Kabbalists were contriving their curious cosmogonies, the Masons went about their work, leaving record of their symbols in deeds, not in creeds, albeit holding always to their simple faith, and hope, and duty—as in the lines left on an old brass Square, found in an ancient bridge near Limerick, bearing date of 1517:—

Strive to live with love and care
Upon the Level, by the Square.

Some of our Masonic writers —more than one likes to

¹ When, for example, Albert Pike, in his letter, "Touching Masonic Symbolism," speaks of the "poor, rude, unlettered, uncultivated working Stone-masons," who attended the Assemblies, he is obviously confounding Free-masons with the rough Stone-masons of the Guilds. Over against these words, read a brilliant article in the *Contemporary Review*, October 1913, by L. M. Phillips, entitled "The Two Ways of Building," showing how the Free-masons, instead of working under architects outside the order, chose the finer minds among them as leaders and created the different styles of architecture in Europe. "Such," he adds, "was the high limit of talent and intelligence which the creative spirit fostered among workmen. . . . The entire body being trained and educated in the same principles and ideas, the most backward and inefficient, as they worked at the vaults which their own skilful brethren had planned, might feel the glow of satisfaction arising from the conscious realization of their own aspirations. Thus the whole body of constructive knowledge maintained its unity. . . . Thus it was by free associations of workmen training their own leaders that the great Gothic edifices of the mediæval ages were constructed. . . . A style so imaginative and so spiritual might almost be the dream of a poet or the vision of a saint. Really it

admit—have erred by confusing Freemasonry with Guild-masonry, to the discredit of the former. Even Oliver once concluded that the secrets of the working Masons of the Middle Ages were none other than the laws of Geometry—hence the letter *G*; forgetting, it would seem, that Geometry had mystical meanings for them long since lost to us. As well say that the philosophy of Pythagoras was repeating the Multiplication Table! Albert Pike held that we are “not warranted in assuming that, among Masons generally—in the *body* of Masonry—the symbolism of Freemasonry is of earlier date than 1717.”¹ Surely that is to err. If we had only the Masons’ Marks that have come down to us, nothing else would be needed to prove it an error. Of course, for deeper minds all emblems have deeper meanings, and there may have been many Masons who did not fathom the symbolism of the order. No more do we; but the symbolism itself, of hoar antiquity, was certainly the common inheritance and treasure of the working Masons of the Lodges in England and Scotland before, indeed centuries before, the year 1717.

II

Therefore it is not strange that men of note and learning, attracted by the wealth of symbolism in Masonry, as well as by its spirit of fraternity—perhaps, also, by its secrecy—began at an early date to ask to be accepted as members of the order: hence *Accepted Masons*.² How far back the custom of admitting such men to the Lodges goes is not clear, but hints of it are discernible in the oldest documents

is the creation of the sweat and labour of working men, and every iota of the boldness, dexterity, and knowledge which it embodies was drawn out of the practical experience and experiments of manual labour.” This describes the Comacine Masters, but not the poor, rude, unlettered Stone-masons whom Pike had in mind.

¹ Letter “Touching Masonic Symbolism.”

² Some Lodges, however, would never admit such members. As late as April 24, 1786, two brothers were proposed as members of Domatic Lodge, No. 177, London, and were rejected because they were not Operative Masons (*History Lion and Lamb Lodge*, 192, London, by Abbott).

behind us—a dream that is dreamt, a thing that is no more. O Death,

Thou hast destroyed it,
 The beautiful world,
 With powerful fist :
 In ruin 'tis hurled,
 By the blow of a demigod shattered !
 The scattered
 Fragments into the void we carry,
 Deploring
 The beauty perished beyond restoring.
 Mightier
 For the children of men,
 Brightlier
 Build it again,
 In thine own bosom build it anew !

O Youth, for whom these lines are written, fear not ; fear not to believe that the soul is as eternal as the moral order that obtains in it, wherefore you shall forever pursue that divine beauty which has here so touched and transfigured you ; for that is the faith of humanity, your race, and those who are fairest in its records. Let us lay it to heart, love it, and act upon it, that we may learn its deep meaning as regards others—our dear dead whom we think of, perhaps, every day—and find it easier to be brave and hopeful, even when we are sad. It is not a faith to be taken lightly, but deeply and in the quiet of the soul, if so that we may grow into its high meanings for ourselves, as life grows or declines.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
 As the swift seasons roll !
 Leave thy low-vaulted past !
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
 Till thou at length art free,
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea !

NOTE.—Here lies the meaning of the three grips whereby Masons know one another in the dark as well as in the light. (1) Science, assuming that the seat of the soul is in the brain, lays bare the skull, dissects its hemispheres, traces its convolutions and nerves.

Then it subjects the brain of a dog to the same tests, and finds that it and the brain of man are alike ; obtains from both the same elements, found everywhere. Science, so far from proving the immortality of the soul, lays aside its instruments unable to prove that there is a soul. Not by that grip can man be raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular. (2) Logic then tries to demonstrate that the soul, in its nature, is indivisible, indestructible, and so immortal. Plato, Cicero, and the rest formulated this argument ; but if they convinced others they did not convince themselves. Doubts returned ; for at the most critical point upon which the conclusion depended, there was a juggling of words. Not by that grip can man be raised to walk in newness of life. (3) There remains the strong grip of Faith—the profound, ineffaceable intuition of the soul itself ; the voice of God speaking within ; the Divine Word abiding in the heart. How else has God ever revealed truth to man ? How else could He ? Once we know that the soul is akin to God—man a little brother of Him whom he seeks—we have a reach and grasp and power of faith whereby we are lifted out of shadow into the light. (MS. *Lessons in Masonry*, by Albert Pike. House of the Temple, Washington, D.C.)

How many Masons fail to grasp the master truth of the Master Degree ! And yet the candidate is not altogether to blame, since the historical lecture does not even mention it, much less expound it. That lecture only reminds the candidate that Masonry cherishes the hope of a glorious immortality—that is all. Whereas in the Degree itself immortality is not a vague hope to be cherished here and realized hereafter. It is a present reality into which the candidate is symbolically initiated ; a fact to be realized here and now. If our ritual does not convey this truth, it behoves us to see that it does, first by laying hold of the truth ourselves, and second by so shaping our ceremony, or at least by so explaining it, as to make the truth unmistakable. Manifestly, if we are immortal at all, we are immortal now, and to know that fact is the one great human experience.

THE SPIRIT OF MASONRY

*The crest and crowning of all good,
Life's final star, is Brotherhood ;
For it will bring again to Earth
Her long-lost Poesy and Mirth ;
Will send new light on every face,
A kingly power upon the race.
And till it comes we men are slaves,
And travel downward to the dust of graves.*

*Come, clear the way, then, clear the way ;
Blind creeds and kings have had their day.
Break the dead branches from the path :
Our hope is in the aftermath—
Our hope is in heroic men,
Star-led to build the world again.
To this event the ages ran ;
Make way for Brotherhood—make way for Man.*

EDWIN MARKHAM, *Poems.*

CHAPTER III

THE SPIRIT OF MASONRY

I

OUTSIDE of the home and the house of God there is nothing in this world more beautiful than the Spirit of Masonry. Gentle, gracious, and wise, its mission is to form mankind into a great redemptive brotherhood, a league of noble and free men enlisted in the radiant enterprise of working out in time the love and will of the Eternal. Who is sufficient to describe a spirit so benign? With what words may one ever hope to capture and detain that which belongs of right to the genius of poetry and song, by whose magic those elusive and impalpable realities find embodiment and voice?

With picture, parable, and stately drama, Masonry appeals to lovers of beauty, bringing poetry and symbol to the aid of philosophy and art to the service of character. Broad and tolerant in its teaching, it appeals to men of intellect, equally by the depth of its faith and its plea for liberty of thought—helping them to think things through to a more satisfying and hopeful vision of the meaning of life and the mystery of the world. But its profoundest appeal, more eloquent than all others, is to the deep heart of man, out of which are the issues of life and destiny. When all is said, it is as a man thinketh in his heart whether life be worth while or not, and whether he be a help or a curse to his race.

Here lies the tragedy of our race :
Not that men are poor ;
All men know something of poverty.
Not that men are wicked ;
Who can claim to be good ?
Not that men are ignorant ;
Who can boast that he is wise ?
But that men are strangers !

Masonry is Friendship—friendship, first, with the great Companion, of whom our own hearts tell us, who is always

nearer to us than we are to ourselves, and whose inspiration and help is the greatest fact of human experience. To be in harmony with His purposes, to be open to His suggestions, to be conscious of fellowship with Him—this is Masonry on its Godward side. Then, turning manward, friendship sums it all up. To be friends with all men, however they may differ from us in creed, colour, or condition; to fill every human relation with the spirit of friendship; is there anything more or better than this that the wisest and best of men can hope to do? ¹ Such is the spirit of Masonry; such is its ideal, and if to realize it all at once is denied us, surely it means much to see it, love it, and labour to make it come true.

Nor is this Spirit of Friendship a mere sentiment held by a sympathetic, and therefore unstable, fraternity, which would dissolve the concrete features of humanity into a vague blur of misty emotion. No; it has its roots in a profound philosophy which sees that the universe is friendly, and that men must learn to be friends if they would live as befits the world in which they live, as well as their own origin and destiny. For, since God is the life of all that was, is, and is to be; and since we are all born into the world by one high wisdom and one vast love, we are brothers to the last man of us, forever! For better

¹ Suggested by a noble passage in the *Recollections* of Washington Gladden; and the great preacher goes on to say: "If the church could accept this truth—that Religion is Friendship—and build its own life upon it, and make it central and organic in all its teachings, should we not have a great revival of religion?" Indeed, yes; and of the right kind of religion, too! Walt Whitman found the basis of all philosophy, all religion, in "the dear love of man for his comrade, the attraction of friend to friend" (*The Base of All Metaphysics*). As for Masonic literature, it is one perpetual pæan in praise of the practice of friendship, from earliest time to our own day. Take, for example, the *Illustrations of Masonry*, by Preston (first book, sect. i-x); and Arnold, as we have seen, defined Masonry as Friendship, as did Hutchinson (*The Spirit of Masonry*, Lectures XI, XII). These are but two notes of a mighty anthem whose chorus is never hushed in the temple of Masonry. Of course, there are those who say that the finer forces of life are frail and foolish, but the influence of the cynic in the advance of the race is—nothing!

for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, and even after death us do part, all men are held together by ties of spiritual kinship, sons of one eternal Friend. Upon this fact human fraternity rests, and it is the basis of the plea of Masonry, not only for freedom, but for friendship among men.

Thus friendship, so far from being a mush of concessions, is in fact the constructive genius of the universe. Love is ever the Builder, and those who have done most to establish the City of God on earth have been the men who loved their fellow-men. Once let this spirit prevail, and the wrangling sects will be lost in a great league of those who love in the service of those who suffer. No man will then revile the faith in which his neighbour finds help for to-day and hope for the morrow; pity will smite him mute, and love will teach him that God is found in many ways, by those who seek Him with honest hearts. Once let this spirit rule in the realm of trade, and the law of the jungle will cease, and men will strive to build a social order in which all men may have opportunity "to live, and to live well," as Aristotle defined the purpose of society. Here is the basis of that magical stability aimed at by the earliest artists when they sought to build for eternity, by imitating on earth the House of God.

II

Our human history, saturated with blood and blistered with tears, is the story of man making friends with man. Society has evolved from a feud into a friendship by the slow growth of love and the welding of man, first to his kin and then to his kind.¹ The first men who walked in the red dawn of time lived every man for himself, his heart a sanctuary of suspicions, every man feeling that every other man was his foe, and therefore his prey. So there were war, strife, and bloodshed. Slowly there came to the savage a gleam of the truth that it is better to help than to hurt, and he organized clans and tribes. But

¹ *The Neighbour*, by N. S. Shaler.

tribes were divided by rivers and mountains, and the men on one side of the river felt that the men on the other side were their enemies. Again there were war, pillage, and sorrow. Great empires arose and met in the shock of conflict, leaving trails of skeletons across the earth. Then came the great roads, reaching out with their stony clutch and bringing the ends of the earth together. Men met, mingled, passed and repassed, and learned that human nature is much the same everywhere, with hopes and fears in common. Still there were many things to divide and estrange men from each other, and the earth was full of bitterness. Not satisfied with natural barriers, men erected high walls of sect and caste, to exclude their fellows, and the men of one sect were sure that the men of all other sects were wrong—and doomed to be lost. Thus, when real mountains no longer separated man from man, mountains were made out of molehills—mountains of immemorial misunderstanding not yet moved into the sea!

Barriers of race, of creed, of caste, of habit, of training and interest separate men to-day, as if some malign genius were bent on keeping man from his fellows, begetting suspicion, uncharitableness, and hate. Still there are war, waste, and woe! Yet all the while men have been unfriendly, and, therefore, unjust and cruel, only because they are unacquainted. Amidst feud, faction, and folly, Masonry, the oldest and most widely spread order, toils in behalf of friendship, uniting men upon the only basis upon which they can ever meet with dignity. Each Lodge is an oasis of equality and goodwill in a desert of strife, working to weld mankind into a great league of sympathy and service, which, by the terms of our definition, it seeks to exhibit even now on a small scale. At its altar men meet as man to man, without vanity and without pretence, without fear and without reproach, as tourists crossing the Alps tie themselves together, so that if one slip all may hold him up. No tongue can tell the meaning of such a ministry, no pen can trace its influence in melting the hardness of the world into pity and gladness.

The Spirit of Masonry! He who would describe that spirit must be a poet, a musician, and a seer—a master of

melodies, echoes, and long, far-sounding cadences. Now, as always, it toils to make man better, to refine his thought and purify his sympathy, to broaden his outlook, to lift his altitude, to establish in amplitude and resoluteness his life in all its relations. All its great history, its vast accumulations of tradition, its simple faith and its solemn rites, its freedom and its friendship are dedicated to a high moral ideal, seeking to tame the tiger in man and bring his wild passions into obedience to the will of God. It has no other mission than to exalt and ennoble humanity, to bring light out of darkness, beauty out of angularity; to make every hard-won inheritance more secure, every sanctuary more sacred, every hope more radiant!*

The Spirit of Masonry! Ay, when that spirit has its way upon earth, as at last it surely will, society will be a vast communion of kindness and justice, business a system of human service, law a rule of beneficence; the home will be more holy, the laughter of childhood more joyous, and the temple of prayer mortised and tenoned in simple faith. Evil, injustice, bigotry, greed, and every vile and slimy thing that defiles and defames humanity will skulk into the dark, unable to bear the light of a juster, wiser, more merciful order. Industry will be upright, education prophetic, and religion not a shadow, but a Real Presence, when man has become acquainted with man and has learned to worship God by serving his fellows. When Masonry is victorious every tyranny will fall, every bastille

* If Masons often fall far below their high ideal, it is because they share in their degree the infirmity of mankind. He is a poor craftsman who glibly recites the teachings of the order and quickly forgets the lessons they convey; who wears its honourable dress to conceal a self-seeking spirit; or to whom its great and simple symbols bring only an outward thrill, and no inward urge toward the highest of all good. Apart from what they symbolize, all symbols are empty; they speak only to such as have ears to hear. At the same time, we have always to remember—what has been so often and so sadly forgotten—that the most sacred shrine on earth is the soul of man; and that the temple and its offices are not ends in themselves, but only beautiful means to the end that every human heart may be a temple of peace, of purity, of power, of pity, and of hope!

crumble, and man will be not only unfettered in mind and hand, but free of heart to walk erect in the light and liberty of the truth.

Toward a great friendship, long foreseen by Masonic faith, the world is slowly moving, amid difficulties and delays, reactions and reconstructions. Of that day which will surely arrive, though long deferred, when nations will be reverent in the use of freedom, just in the exercise of power, humane in the practice of wisdom; when no man will ride over the rights of his fellows; when no woman will be made forlorn, no little child wretched, by bigotry or greed, Masonry has ever been a prophet. Nor will she ever be content until all the threads of human fellowship are woven into one mystic cord of friendship, encircling the earth and holding the race in unity of spirit and the bonds of peace, as in the will of God it is one in the origin and end. Having outlived empires and philosophies, having seen generations appear and vanish, it will yet live to see the travail of its soul, and be satisfied—

When the war-drum throbs no longer,
And the battle flags are furled;
In the parliament of man,
The federation of the world.

III

Manifestly, since love is the law of life, if men are to be won from hate to love, if those who doubt and deny are to be wooed to faith, if the race is ever to be led and lifted into a life of service, it must be by the fine art of Friendship. Inasmuch as this is the purpose of Masonry, its mission determines the method not less than the spirit of its labour. Earnestly it endeavours to bring men—first the individual man, and then, so far as possible, those who are united with him—to love one another, while holding aloft, in picture and dream, that temple of character which it is the noblest labour of life to build in the midst of the years, and which will outlast time and death. Thus it seeks to reach the lonely inner life of man where the real battles

are fought, and where the issues of destiny are decided, now with shouts of victory, now with sobs of defeat. What a ministry to a young man who enters its temple in the morning of life, when the dew of heaven is upon his days and the birds are singing in his heart! ¹

From the wise lore of the East, Max Müller translated a parable which tells how the gods, having stolen from man his divinity, met in council to discuss where they should hide it. One suggested that it be carried to the other side of the earth and buried; but it was pointed out that man is a great wanderer, and that he might find the lost treasure on the other side of the earth. Another proposed that it be dropped into the depths of the sea; but the same fear was expressed—that man, in his insatiable curiosity, might dive deep enough to find it even there. Finally, after a space of silence, the oldest and wisest of the gods said: "Hide it in man himself, as that is the last place he will ever think to look for it!" And it was so agreed, all seeing at once the subtle and wise strategy. Man did wander over the earth, for ages, seeking in all places high and low, far and near, before he thought to look within himself for the divinity he sought. At last, slowly, dimly, he began to realize that what he thought was far off, hidden in "the pathos of distance," is nearer than the breath he breathes, even in his own heart.

Here lies the great secret of Masonry—that it makes a man aware of that divinity within him, wherefrom his whole life takes its beauty and meaning, and inspires him to follow and obey it. Once a man learns this deep secret, life is new, and the old world is a valley all dewy to the dawn with a lark-song over it. There never was a truer saying than that the religion of a man is the chief fact concerning him.² By religion is meant not the creed

¹ Read the noble words of Arnold on the value of Masonry to the young as a restraint, a refinement, and a conservator of virtue, throwing about youth the mantle of a great friendship and the consecration of a great ideal (*History and Philosophy of Masonry*, chap. xix).

² *Heroes and Hero-worship*, by Thomas Carlyle, Lecture I.

to which a man will subscribe, or otherwise give his assent ; not that necessarily ; often not that at all—since we see men of all degrees of worth and worthlessness signing all kinds of creeds. No ; the religion of a man is that which he practically believes, lays to heart, acts upon, and thereby knows concerning this mysterious universe and his duty and destiny in it. That is in all cases the primary thing in him, and creatively determines all the rest ; that is his religion. It is, then, of vital importance what faith, what vision, what conception of life a man lays to heart and acts upon.

At bottom, a man is what his thinking is, thoughts being the artists who give colour to our days. Optimists and pessimists live in the same world, walk under the same sky, and observe the same facts. Sceptics and believers look up at the same great stars—the stars that shone in Eden and will flash again in Paradise. Clearly the difference between them is a difference not of fact, but of faith—of insight, outlook, and point of view—a difference of inner attitude and habit of thought with regard to the worth and use of life. By the same token, any influence which reaches and alters that inner habit and bias of mind, and changes it from doubt to faith, from fear to courage, from despair to sunburst hope, has wrought the most benign ministry which a mortal may enjoy. Every man has a train of thought on which he rides when he is alone ; and the worth of his life to himself and others, as well as its happiness, depends upon the direction in which that train is going, the baggage it carries, and the country through which it travels. If, then, Masonry can put that inner train of thought on the right track, freight it with precious treasure, and start it on the way to the City of God, what other or higher ministry can it render to a man ? And that is what it does for any man who will listen to it, love it, and lay its truth to heart.

High, fine, ineffably rich and beautiful are the faith and vision which Masonry gives to those who foregather at its altar, bringing to them in picture, parable, and symbol the lofty and pure truth wrought out through ages of experience, tested by time, and found to be valid for the

conduct of life. By such teaching, if they have the heart to heed it, men become wise, learning how to be both brave and gentle, faithful and free; how to renounce superstition and yet retain faith; how to keep a fine poise of reason between the falsehood of extremes; how to accept the joys of life with glee, and endure its ills with patient valour; how to look upon the folly of man and not forget his nobility—in short, how to live cleanly, kindly, calmly, open-eyed and unafraid, in a sane world, sweet of heart and full of hope. Whoso lays this lucid and profound wisdom to heart, and lives by it, will have little to regret, and nothing to fear, when the evening shadows fall. Happy the young man who in the morning of his years makes it his guide, philosopher, and friend.¹

Such is the ideal of Masonry, and fidelity to all that is holy demands that we give ourselves to it, trusting the power of truth, the reality of love, and the sovereign worth of character. For only as we incarnate that ideal in actual life and activity does it become real, tangible, and effective. God works for man through man, and seldom, if at all, in any other way. He asks for our voices to speak His truth, for our hands to do His work here below—sweet voices and clean hands to make liberty and love prevail over injustice and hate. Not all of us can be learned or famous, but each

¹ If the influence of Masonry upon youth is here emphasized, it is not to forget that the most dangerous period of life is not youth, with its turmoil of storm and stress, but between forty and sixty. When the enthusiasms of youth have cooled, and its rosy glamour has faded into the light of common day, there is apt to be a letting down of ideals, a hardening of heart, when cynicism takes the place of idealism. If the judgments of the young are austere and need to be softened by charity, the middle years of life need still more the reinforcement of spiritual influence and the inspiration of a holy atmosphere. Also, Albert Pike used to urge upon old men the study of Masonry, the better to help them gather up the scattered thoughts about life and build them into a firm faith; and because Masonry offers to every man a great hope and consolation. Indeed, its ministry to every period of life is benign. Studying Masonry is like looking at a sunset; each man who looks is filled with the beauty and wonder of it, but the glory is not diminished. (See two addresses by the author, entitled *The Patriarchs* and *Albert Pike, a Master Genius of Masonry*.)

of us can be loyal and true at heart, undefiled by evil, undaunted by error, faithful and helpful to our fellow-souls. Life is a capacity for the highest things. Let us make it a pursuit of the highest—an eager, incessant quest of truth; a noble utility, a lofty honour, a wise freedom, a genuine service—that through us the Spirit of Masonry may grow and be glorified.

When is a man a Mason? When he can look out over the rivers, the hills, and the far horizon with a profound sense of his own littleness in the vast scheme of things, and yet have faith, hope, and courage—which is the root of every virtue. When he knows that down in his heart every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic, and as lonely as himself, and seeks to know, to forgive, and to love his fellow-man. When he knows how to sympathize with men in their sorrows, yea, even in their sins—knowing that each man fights a hard fight against many odds. When he has learned how to make friends and to keep them, and above all how to keep friends with himself. When he loves flowers, can hunt the birds without a gun, and feels the thrill of an old forgotten joy when he hears the laugh of a little child. When he can be happy and high-minded amid the meaner drudgeries of life. When star-crowned trees, and the glint of sunlight on flowing waters, subdue him like the thought of one much loved and long dead. When no voice of distress reaches his ears in vain, and no hand seeks his aid without response. When he finds good in every faith that helps any man to lay hold of divine things and sees majestic meanings in life, whatever the name of that faith may be. When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something beyond mud, and into the face of the most forlorn fellow-mortal and see something beyond sin. When he knows how to pray, how to love, how to hope. When he has kept faith with himself, with his fellow-man, with his God; in his hand a sword for evil, in his heart a bit of a song—glad to live, but not afraid to die! Such a man has found the only real secret of Masonry, and the one which it is trying to give to all the world.

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