

"MORE LIGHT."

"Is Freemasonry a Religion?"

The question, "Is Freemasonry a Religion," is often asked and variously answered. Before any satisfactory answer can be given, it is necessary that the disputants should mutually adopt some fixed definition of the term "Religion," for to argue in undefined terms is sheer absurdity, and can lead to no definite result.

If by religion we mean sectarianism, then Freemasonry is *not* a religion. If by religion we mean the particular dogmas, or ritual of any one of the hundred warring, jarring, wrangling, antagonistic sects, which divide the world, and which have, time and again, stained the bosom of their mother earth with each other's blood, "in whose habitations are the instruments of cruelty," then Freemasonry is *not* a religion.

If by religion we mean an organized system of mendicancy in which ladies, gentlemen, and children, are employed, with the never ceasing cry of "give, give," "money, money," under the supposed necessity of "converting" the heathens (wise men of the East) to christianity; or of "converting," the members of the so-called "Catholic church," to the faith of some so-called "Protestant church," then Freemasonry is *not* a religion.

If, on the other hand, by religion we mean belief in God, trust in God, reverence for and worship of God; also belief in and reverence for God's will as revealed in the Holy Bible, which is to be found on all our altars, and which is borne, unfolded at all our most solemn processions, even when "man goeth to his long home;" as regards our intercourse with our fellow creatures; if by religion we mean "brotherly love, relief and truth," honesty and uprightness in all our dealings abroad—a universal charity which leads us "to behold in every son of Adam a brother of the dust," which teaches us to cast over the foibles of our brethren "the broad mantle of a Mason's charity;" in short, if by religion we mean man's duty to God and to his fellow creatures, then, most assuredly Freemasonry is *not* a religion—but religion itself.

It is older than any of the sects; its principles are broader and more liberal than those of any of the sects; it is more tolerant and charitable than any of the sects; it is more peaceable and unobtrusive than any of the sects.

Though it has existed from time immemorial, in every condition of human society, under every form of civil Government, in the midst of every form of so-called religion, it has never been aggressive, it has never been intolerant, it has never been persecuting.

It interferes with the rights, customs, usage or faith of no other society; requires no man to give up his belief in any creed or catechism believed in by himself or his father; it seduces no man from his allegiance to his own country, but teaches him to respect and obey the laws and ordinances of any country in which he may reside either temporarily or permanently; it dictates to no man what side he shall take in politics; but it gathers into its fold the good, the wise, the learned, and the mighty, as well as the lowly, of "every kindred and nation and tongue;" and I may add, of every sect and party.

It flourishes most where civilization, enlightenment and liberty flourish, as its proud position and onward march in the United States, Great Britain, and other countries abundantly testify.

No "instruments of cruelty" are in its "habitations;" it does not in its "anger slay a man;" and its object is to build up, and not to "dig down a wall."

Its mission is one of love and charity; and it reiterates the angelic ascription, glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will to man.

Is Freemasonry a Religion? Gentlemen, disputers, agree upon the definition of your terms, and then you will be able to discuss the question intelligibly; and perhaps we may take a very humble part in your discussions.—*Suspension Bridge (N. Y.) Journal.*

A Woman's Lodge.

In another column we give a very full description of the interesting exercises that took place in the Burdett Court's, a lady of high rank and estimable virtues, known almost the world over for her good deeds and Christian philanthropy. We believe it is one of the first if not the first instance when a Lodge has been named after a lady, and while we object to the naming of Masonic Lodges after living persons, we must confess that if there is to be any exception, this is one of the instances where it might properly take place, for the lady by her life and works in true charity and love, has practiced the principle on which our Craft is built, although unable to enjoy its many associations and encouragement.

We are glad to see that our Brethren across the water have considered it a wise movement to invite the ladies to Lodge assemblies, where they can by their culture and refinement rub off the rough edges of the sterner sex, and at the same time make them more thoughtful and better Masons. It is, in our opinion, in accord to the spirit of Freemasonry to thus take our family to the open assemblies of Masons, so that they may become better acquainted and thus promote that real Brotherly love which we all so much admire and ought to practice.

During the presence of the Baroness in that Lodge she took pleasure in calling the attention of the Lodge to the fact that she recognized in its proper place the Bible which she had some years previous presented to the Lodge. Its open pages showed that some in the Lodge studied its precepts, pondered over its laws of life and salvation.

We wish more Lodges were under the patronage of worthy women, for in the place of sickly Lodges that now dot our land here and there, we should have Lodges that by their example and influence could and would do the best of Masonic work, and make the community in which they are located feel their benefiting influence.—*Loomis' Musical and Masonic Journal.*

IMMORTALITY IN A NAME.—"Thirty years ago a young man entered the city of New York in an almost penniless condition, and without a single acquaintance in the great wilderness of houses. To-day his name is known wherever humanity breathes. It is spoken in every city, and is as familiar to the worker in the mines as to his brother in the mills, and wherever language is known and ideas expressed the name of this penniless unknown and uncouth lad of thirty years ago is uttered. It was John Smith."

Where is his partner, Mr. Jones?

Bro. John Suffrins, one of the old pioneers of Masonry in Wayne county, Indiana, who was made a Master Mason in the year 1816, died at Richmond, Indiana, on the 8th of last month. For many years he was an active worker in the Lodge, Chapter and Council, and was also a member of Richmond commandery, No. 8, Knights Templars.—*Masonic Advocate.*

The Wilmington Evening Review Messrs. James and Price, proprietors, will make its appearance this week.

At The Last.

Three little words within my brain
Beat back and forth their one refrain—
Three little words, whose dull distress
Means everything, and nothingness:
Unbidden move my lips instead
Of other utterance: She is dead!

Here, lingering, we talked of late
Beside the hedge-grown garden gate;
Till, smiling, ere the twilight fell
She bade me take a last farewell.
Those were the final words she said—
But yesterday—and she is dead!

I see the very gown she wore,
The color I had praised before;
The swaying length, where she would pass,
Made a light rustle on the grass:
There in the porch she turned her head
For one last smile—and she is dead!

Could I have known what was to come,
Those hours had not been blind and dumb!
I would have followed close with Death,
Have striven for every glance and breath!
But now—the final word is said,
The last look taken—she is dead!

We were not lovers—such as they
Who pledge a faith to last for aye;
Yet seems the universe to me
A riddle now without a key;
What means the sunshine overhead,
The bloom below—now she is dead?

So new my grief, its sudden haze
Bewilders my accustomed ways;
And yet so old, it seems my heart
Was never from its pain apart:
What was and is and shall be, wed
With that one sentence—She is dead!

St. John's Day.

This day — years ago St. John the Baptist first saw the light, hence the distinctive St. John's day. It is, or used to be, a day of queer observances among the superstitious Christians of Europe. In the seventeenth century, in England, the people were accustomed to go into woods the evening preceding—midsummer eve—and break off branches of trees, carry them home and hang them over their doors amid lively demonstrations of joy, to carry out the scriptural prophecy of the Baptist that many should rejoice over his birth.

In the towns of Great Britain it used to be the custom to keep a midsummer night watch. Every citizen was expected to join in and tramp about the town at night or send a substitute, all wearing garlands of leaves and flowers about their heads and carrying torches. This custom arose from a superstition which prevails among certain of the Irish to this day. They fancied that the souls of all who slept on St. John's eve left their bodies and wandered away to the land of death. As no one was inclined to allow his soul to make this dreary pilgrimage, the custom of stirring about to keep awake was the result.

Another superstition was that if one sat up fasting all night in a church porch, he would see the spirits of those who were to die in the parish during the ensuing year come and knock at the door in the order and succession in which they were to die.

It was also believed that if one could possess himself with the seed of fern, gathering it after nightfall, he could render himself invisible, the seed being so small as to make it extremely difficult to detect. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* St. John's Wort, and other and various poems by British and German poets, are rife with allusions to these and other superstitious fancies. In St. John's Wort these lines occur, as descriptive of a maiden proving the identity of her future husband by a moss rose:

'I must gather the mystic St. John's wort to-night
The wonderful herb whose leaf will decide
If the coming year shall make me a bride.'

The Warrenton Gazette has the following feeling appeal touching the Oxford Orphan Asylum:

We regret to learn that this institution is in need of immediate assistance, to enable it to supply the wants of the orphans. There is no institution or charity in the State which so strongly appeals to the hearts of the people as this. Shall it be sustained, and made the means of training the orphan children of the State for lives of morality and usefulness, or be permitted to fall and these children to be turned loose to grow up in ignorance and vice? The question must be answered by the men and women of the State, and must be answered at once. It will be a burning shame if its doors are allowed to be closed for the want of the means necessary to carry it on. The money expended for whiskey would feed all the orphans in the State. Yes, the amount fed to and destroyed by the worthless dogs in North Carolina, would feed, clothe and educate the orphans.

We have no doubt but there are many people in the country who would willingly contribute if the matter were brought to their attention, and that is our object in writing this. Provision, clothing or anything you can spare, if delivered upon the railroad and marked to the Orphan Asylum, Oxford will reach its destination. Who that reads this will at once send a barrel of flour, or corn or a hundred pounds of bacon?

The Grand Council of Indiana will meet in Indianapolis on Tuesday, October 19, at 2 o'clock P. M. The Grand Chapter meets on the day following, Wednesday, Oct. 20.

Royal Superstition.

King Kalakaua is reported quite ill in a letter from Honolulu. There is an old superstition among the Sandwich Islanders that the appearance of a shoal of red fish in the waters near the city is a sure precursor of the death of a royal person, and as a shoal has just appeared the King is much affected by it.

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