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From the Raleigh Star.

ON MASONRY.

Having heard many objections urged against Free Masonry by pious characters, and being convinced that those objections would cease to exist, if our brethren were acquainted with the constitution, principles and design of that order of people, I here present, as a Christian and a Mason, to the public the cause, and show that there is nothing in masonry that will either directly or indirectly infringe the rights of christianity, or in any degree, injure the morality of mankind. In order to prove this to be a fact, I will present you with the leading articles of the constitution of masonry, with regard to God and religion. No man can be received as a member, who does not deny the Bible as the true revelation of God. It is required of him to observe the moral law, which enjoins on him love to God and man. He is admonished to avoid backbiting and evil speaking, evil suspicions and jealousy of brethren; forbidden to cheat or defraud one another; and to abstain from fighting, quarreling and impertinence is strictly forbidden; brotherly love to law with brother; and all manner of hostility against the government of the country is discountenanced. It is required of a mason to labour industriously for his support, and the support of his family. It is the invariable doctrine of the masonic institution, that its members should exercise charity and benevolence to each other, and to all mankind. Although it does not profess to be a church, yet the institution cannot exist without the bible, as the grand foundation. Their meetings are opened and closed by prayer—no swearing, or any species of intemperance or discord is suffered within the walls—all is peace, harmony and mutual concord. There the minister of the gospel is at full liberty to lecture to his brethren, and admonish them to reverence the name of God, to walk in the paths of virtue, and always be ready to perform acts of kindness to his brethren. The principles of masonry are faith, hope and charity—faith in God, hope in immortality, and charity to all mankind. The design of masonry is to improve Society. No man, according to the constitution, can be received as a member who is a profligate, or a man. He must be of fair character, honest in his dealing, sober, discreet and temperate. If he is otherwise, after he is initiated, he subjects himself to be severely punished; and, without reformation, to be expelled. Any man, whose character and conduct are derogatory to the above regulations, upon the strictest principles of masonry, is unworthy to be received as a member; and should be faithfully admonished, if he acts contrary, to these principles, and if he does not reform, should be excluded from all masonic privileges; which is frequently the case. These constitutions, principles and designs are calculated to improve society, and make men better citizens: although human nature is depraved, that man cannot change his heart; yet, by conforming in practice to masonic principles, his actions will be so changed, that his deportment will ever be worthy of imitation. In fact, masonry is a religion, if its principles be attended to, it is the threshold of the church—religion leads them within its inclosure, and unfolds its sublime mystery. But objections are urged against masonry, because it is a secret. Answer. Such is the pride of the human understanding, that it has no great portion of that it cannot fully comprehend. Whatever has any thing of mystery in it, is very likely to be slighted and treated with contempt, though it possesses all the characters of excellence, and all the commendations of utility; yet if it elude investigation, and have some secret qualities, finding out, doubts will be immediately entertained whether it be worthy of all admiration; and opinions, hastily propagated, leading to lessen its characters and diminish its importance. Prejudice is a judgment formed before examination. How unreasonable and unjust must such a judgment be, and an invulnerable bar to all after information! For, if the mind be warped by prepossessions, free inquiry into the full merits of the cause, no matter how good, is prevented. Prejudice restrains all candid interpretations of motives or principles—it colours every object, or represents it in a false light—it leads to a decision equally generous or unfair—for it often presumes to consider the most slight and frivolous circumstances as satisfactory materials for confident assertions and decisive sentence. It is the immediate and copious source of all surmises and unkind suspicions—it gives rise to a cavelling sensoriousness, uncharitable insinuations and sarcastic sneers. Wherever there is a secret bias of mind previously formed, it will catch readily at

every little incident and appearance to increase its own propensity, and turn every current of observation into its own corrupt channel. It perverts and misrepresents the very best things—turns honor into disgrace, merit into mischief, christianity into superstition; and virtue into vice. Cautioned and instructed by our subject, and the remarks which it has suggested, let us not form our opinions either of persons or things too hastily, and never proceed upon surmises and precarious conjectures. There is danger in making up a precipitate judgment. Hasty conclusions are the chief cause of all our mistakes and errors. Let us not forget to examine before we judge, and to understand before we decide. To ridicule things we never took pains to enquire into, would be unfair—to condemn practices, the grounds and foundation of which we never took pains to examine, and know nothing about, would be unjust and cruel. A discreet person will avoid being peremptory in his remarks, and decline hazarding an opinion upon that of which he is totally ignorant, or but partially informed. He follows the prudent counsel of Solomon, the ancient wise man: "Blame not before thou hast examined the truth—understand first, and then rebuke—answer not before thou hast heard the cause, and strive not in a matter which concerneth thee not—he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Hear the apostle's solemn charge: "judge not, that ye be not judged. Who art thou, O man, that judgest another man's servant—to his own master he standeth or falleth." Upon the same principle of equity is that maxim in common law: every man is presumed to be innocent, until he is proved to be guilty. No one is to be arraigned without evidence, nor condemned before he has made a plea of defence. A verdict is never passed upon a cause unheard. It is a good rule in all doubtful matters, to suspend our opinion at least till positive proof is obtained, on which to found it. Until we have fully ascertained the state of a case, let us always be willing to put the fairest construction it will admit, and even to hope the best of a thing, where appearances are against it, and indulge that charity that believeth all things, and covereth a multitude of faults, considering that him that is clear of sin may cast a stone—Where doubt hesitates, let candour prompt, and where justice balances, let mercy prevail. Even where we find ourselves obliged to blame the principles of a certain sect or party, let us not be uncharitable as to confound all its adherents and followers under one general indiscriminate censure. Especially let us charge them with such consequences of their tenets as they disavow. One of the most popular objections urged against masonry, is the profound secrecy observed upon certain parts of the institution. It is inquired, how it is consistent with those principles of good will we profess, to conceal any thing from the world? Answer, that the principles and the privileges of the institution are open to all that are qualified to receive them; but of these qualifications we must reserve the power of judging for ourselves. To the wise and virtuous the mystery, under proper sanctions are freely communicated; but to reveal them to the ignorant and vicious would be prostituting their purpose and profaning their sanctity. To divulge them in common would be to annihilate the society, because they are its distinguishing features, the characteristics of the order, and the means of its preservation. Without them, therefore, it could not subsist. Besides, were all men acquainted with them, without regard to selection or desert, the peculiar obligation to good offices, arising from the institution, would revert back to the general duty of all mankind, and be subject to all those deductions it now meets with in the world at large, and against which it is our endeavour to guard. However, to have secrets, is not peculiar to free masonry—every trade—every art—every occupation—has its secrets, not to be communicated but to such as have become proficient in the science connected with them. Nor then, without proper caution and restriction, & offences under heavy guards and penalties. Charters of incorporation are granted by civil government for their greater security, and parents for their encouragement. Nay, every government, every statesman, and every individual has secrets, which are concealed with prudent care, and confided only in the trusty and true. We only claim a like indulgence—that of conducting ourselves by our own rules, and of admitting to a participation of our secrets and privileges such as choose to apply for them upon our own terms. So far from wishing to deprive any one of the light we enjoy, we sincerely wish all the race of men were qualified to receive; and, if so, our door shall never be shut against them; but our doors, our hearts, our souls shall be open to their reception. The secret is perfectly innocent in its nature, and

affects no person but masons, and is that by which they are known to each other. Nothing more, surdy, need be said in apology for the mystery and concealment free masons profess. I will proceed to another objection, connected with the foregoing, which the lack of information has surmised and prejudice propagated. It is furthermore urged as an objection to the initiations of christians that they venture to take a leap in the dark, and oblige themselves to keep that secret, which, perhaps, is evil in its nature. There would be some force in this objection, were the obligation, in itself immoral, or the communications and requirements incompatible with the great laws of religion or civil society. The very reverse of which is the case. The Masonic obligation is simply a covenant and promise, exacted previously to the divulging the specialties of the order and our means of recognizing each other, that they shall be kept from the knowledge of the world, lest their original intent should be destroyed, and their benevolent purpose prevented. Now, I ask what harm can there be in this? As to taking a leap in the dark, this might be the case, were it not for a few circumstances which I will name: The christian and others can read all masonic books, where they can see the constitution, design, principles and duty of masons. They can discover among them great friendship and benevolence—the evidences of the value of the institution. Moreover, the christian that wishes to become a mason, can find a number of pious brethren, who are members of that society. He can inquire of these characters, is there any evil in the mystery? His brother with whom he has full fellowship, tells him it is entirely innocent and really valuable. How can he, on christian principles, doubt his veracity? Should he do this, would it not be cruel? How does he leap in the dark, when he has the books to read—the good fruits of masonry to behold—the veracity of his brethren pledged? And, as to its being opposed because it is a secret, do you not all, when you have any thing of a private nature, which you are willing to confide in a particular friend, before you tell him what it is, demand a solemn promise of secrecy? And is there not the utmost propriety in knowing whether your friend is determined to conceal your secret before you presume to reveal it? The answer will confute this cavil. It is also frequently argued against Freemasonry, that some of those who belong to it are intemperate, profligate and vicious. But nothing can be more unfair or unjust than to depreciate or condemn any institution, good in itself, on account of the faults of those who pretend to adhere to it. The abuse of a thing is no valid objection to its inherent goodness. Worthless characters are to be found occasionally in the very best christian institutions upon earth. If the unworthiness of a professor casts a reflection upon the profession, it may be inferred, by a parity of reason, that the misconduct of a christian is an argument against christianity. But this is a conclusion which, I presume, no man will allow; and yet it is no more than what he must subscribe who is so unreasonable as to insist on the other. Nor is it any evidence that civil laws and political institutions are hurtful or unserviceable, because they are corrupt citizens and disorderly members of a community. The fact is, the best things may be abused. The bread of Heaven grew corrupt when used indiscreetly by the Israelites. The common blessings of life are turned into curses, if misapplied and abused. When you see base and unworthy men among masons, rest you assured the fault is not in the institution, but in themselves. They have deviated from the principles of the society. They have counteracted their professions, and are as bad masons as men. The greatest precautions are used to prevent the admission of unworthy characters; but if, from the want of proper information, or from too charitable constructions, such are introduced, we deeply regret the mistake, and use every proper method to remedy the evil. Nor do we pretend to say that those only in whom we were deceived bring discredit on the institution. There may be in masonry, as there has been in christianity, a falling away, or a fading in the once famed goodness of many of its members. Some there are, who have been admitted with the best proofs of a good, a faithful, and a well substantiated character. Their name was beauty, and their actions praise—their families were happy, their neighborhood satisfied, and the community honored by their virtues and their worth; and Masonry itself boasted the uprightness, constancy, and integrity with which they were distinguished. But now, alas! all have reasons to lament, that the fine gold has become dross, and the most fine gold changed. Such deductions you must be sensible, are not unfrequent in all societies; for, in this fallen world, societies are formed of men, and men are fallible, imperfect, and frail. But, whether such

disasters, such apostasy, should reasonably disgrace the institution, or be thought proofs of its immorality, "judge ye, but judge with righteous judgment." We do not hesitate to appeal to the world, in justification of the purity of our moral system. Our constitutions are well known—we have submitted them freely to public investigation, and if there should be any who have not read them, it is because they have not tried to obtain them. Therefore, let no man condemn before he reads. We solemnly avouch them as the principles by which we are governed, the foundation on which we build, and the rules by which we work. We challenge the most severe critic—the most precise moralist—the most perfect christian—to point out any thing in them inconsistent with good manners, fair morals or pure religion. We feel assured that every one who will take pains to consult the book, must be convinced that the institution is friendly to the interests of mankind, well calculated to meliorate the disposition and improve the character, and to adorn its faithful adherents with every natural, social, and moral virtue. Lastly, we will show what Freemasonry really is. It is a moral order of enlightened men, founded on a sublime, rational, and manly piety, and pure and active virtue, with the praise-worthy design of recalling to our remembrance the most interesting truths in the midst of the most social and innocent enjoyments, and of promoting, without austere austerities or hope of reward, the most diffusive benevolence, the most generous and extensive philanthropy, and the most warm and affectionate brotherly love, that nature can acquire. The members are united together by bonds of the strongest friendship, and acquainted with a language, which has been preserved with inviolable secrecy from remotest ages. They were originally adopted in order to distinguish one another with ease and certainty from the rest of the world, that impostors might not intrude upon their confidence and brotherly affection, nor intercept the fruits of their beneficence. They became an universal language, which, notwithstanding the confusion of foreign tongues, and the forbidding alienation of custom, draws from the heart of a stranger, the acknowledgment of a brother, with all its attending endearments. It collects men of all nations and opinions into one amiable and permanent human association, and binds them, by new and irreparable obligation, to the discharge of every relative and moral duty; and thus becomes an effectual support and bright ornament of social life, and opens a wide channel for the current of benevolent affection, and a new source to human happiness. Its laws are reason and equity; its principles, benevolence and love; its aim is purity and truth; its intention is peace on earth, and its disposition, good will towards men. The society keeps their poor from the parish while every other permits them to be an encumbrance to the state. This band of benevolent brethren will pity the indigent brother on his way, and alleviate his griefs, while feigned christianity will let him groop his way in the dark and pass unperceived. Can this be the unfruitful works of darkness? Why should a christian object to such laws and regulations? Why should he fear to trust his brother christian among this people—this benevolent people? Is there any ground, on which lawful jealousy can be founded? The christian can trust his brother to travel day and night among all kinds of people, barter and trade with fellow-men, sworn and act as jurors, join agricultural, philanthropic and dialectic societies, enter into copartnership with the unconverted in merchandise, and into covenant with the unconverted in marriage, and such like things, without breaking christian fellowship; but if he becomes a member with the Free Masons, he is censured. Ask the offended, why his feelings are injured, his answer is, because he has joined the masons. Ask what harm he has done, he cannot tell, only he has joined the masons. Has he forsaken the Church, or the duties of religion? No. Has he committed any open sin? No. Has he altered any part of his christian conduct? No. Do you know what masonry is? No. Then, why do you condemn him because he is a mason? Can you prove he has violated the law of God? No, not without I know what masonry is. Strange, my christian friends, that you should suffer your feelings to be injured with a brother, unless you can prove him guilty of a crime. Let me beseech you, for the sake of religion, good sense and decency, to desist from hardness towards those brethren against whom you cannot bring a well founded charge; but rather encourage every institution that is calculated to improve society, and alleviate the distresses of the indigent. This will add to the dignity of your character, to the peace and harmony of society in general, and endear you to the hearts of your brethren, whom you have grieved by unlawful censure.

NOTICE.
THE Copartnership between the Subscribers being this day dissolved by mutual consent, all persons having demands against them, will present them for payment to JAMES E. BETTNER; and all persons indebted to them are hereby required to settle their accounts previous to the first day of June next, as all accounts due on that day will be indiscriminately placed in suit.
JAMES E. BETTNER,
STEPHEN B. FORBES.
Newbern, March 1st, 1825.

James E. Bettner,
CONTINUES to transact business at his Store on Pollok-street, and offers for sale, a general assortment of Foreign and Domestic DRY GOODS, GROCERIES, &c. &c.
March 5th—'63.

John Harvey, Jr. & Co.
HAVING this day dissolved by mutual consent, request all those indebted to said firm, to make immediate payment; and those having claims, to present them to JOHN HARVEY, Jr. for settlement—Who offers for sale the remainder of the Stock on hand.
JOHN HARVEY, Jr.
JOHN HARVEY.
Newbern, March 21st, 1825—'66.

JUST PUBLISHED,
And for sale at the Book-stores of T. WATSON and S. HALL, price 50 Cents,
A Manual of Electricity,
Containing among other interesting matter, some general observations on LIGHTNING RODS; where those who feel interested in protecting their lives and property against Lightning, will find the best directions for their formation, the cheapest method of erecting them, and satisfactory reasons given for their usefulness. Also, for the best manner of erecting Conductors to ships and other vessels. The present formation of Lightning rods presents obstacles (that is, their extra useless expense,) that deters many from attending to their erection. In these directions, economy, and to give them the most attractive power, has been particularly attended to.
May 7th, 1825.

FOR SALE,
500 bushels SEED OATS,
An excellent MILCH COW,
Several PIGS, of the Byfield breed.
Wanted to Purchase,
A NEGRO GIRL, 14 or 15 years of age—who can be recommended for good character.
E. SMALLWOOD.
Feb. 5th, 1825—'59.

TEN ACRES
OF very valuable LAND for sale near Newbern, being part of the town patent; situate on the south side of Trent Road. The Subscriber expects to visit Newbern shortly, to have it laid off, and to give an indubitable title to the purchaser, on receiving a fair price in Cash for the same. Further information may be had by applying to John Burgwyn, Esq.
BENJ. SMITH.
Smithville, March 30, 1825—'68.

New Spring & Summer GOODS
DIXON & KENT, Merchant Tailors, have just received from New-York, their Spring and Summer assortment of GOODS; which embrace all the variety of elegance and fashion. They have also received, a handsome assortment of fashionable Cloths, Cassimeres, Vestings, &c; all of which they will dispose of on accommodating terms.
All kinds of TAILORING executed in the most fashionable style, and at the shortest notice.
April 15th, 1825—'69.

FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.
RANAWAY from the Subscriber, on the 26th of April, an Apprentice boy by the name of John Brock; about five feet two inches high, dark complexion, pale countenance—took with him two homespun shirts, one white, the other checked, a mixt coat and blue short jacket, with bone buttons. I will give the above reward to any person that will apprehend said boy and deliver him to me in Carteret County, about five miles from Swansboro. All persons are forewarned from harbouring or employing him, under the penalty of the law.
JESSE WEEKS.
April 30, 1825—7273.

PHILO PACIFICUS.