

235

THE
SPIRIT

OF

FREEMASONRY,

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE

SALUDA LODGE, No. 103, A. F. M.,

EDGEFIELD DIST., S. C., ON ST. JOHN'S DAY, BEING THE
24TH OF JUNE, 1865,

BY REV. J. HAWKINS.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they
are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

—JOHN IV. 1.

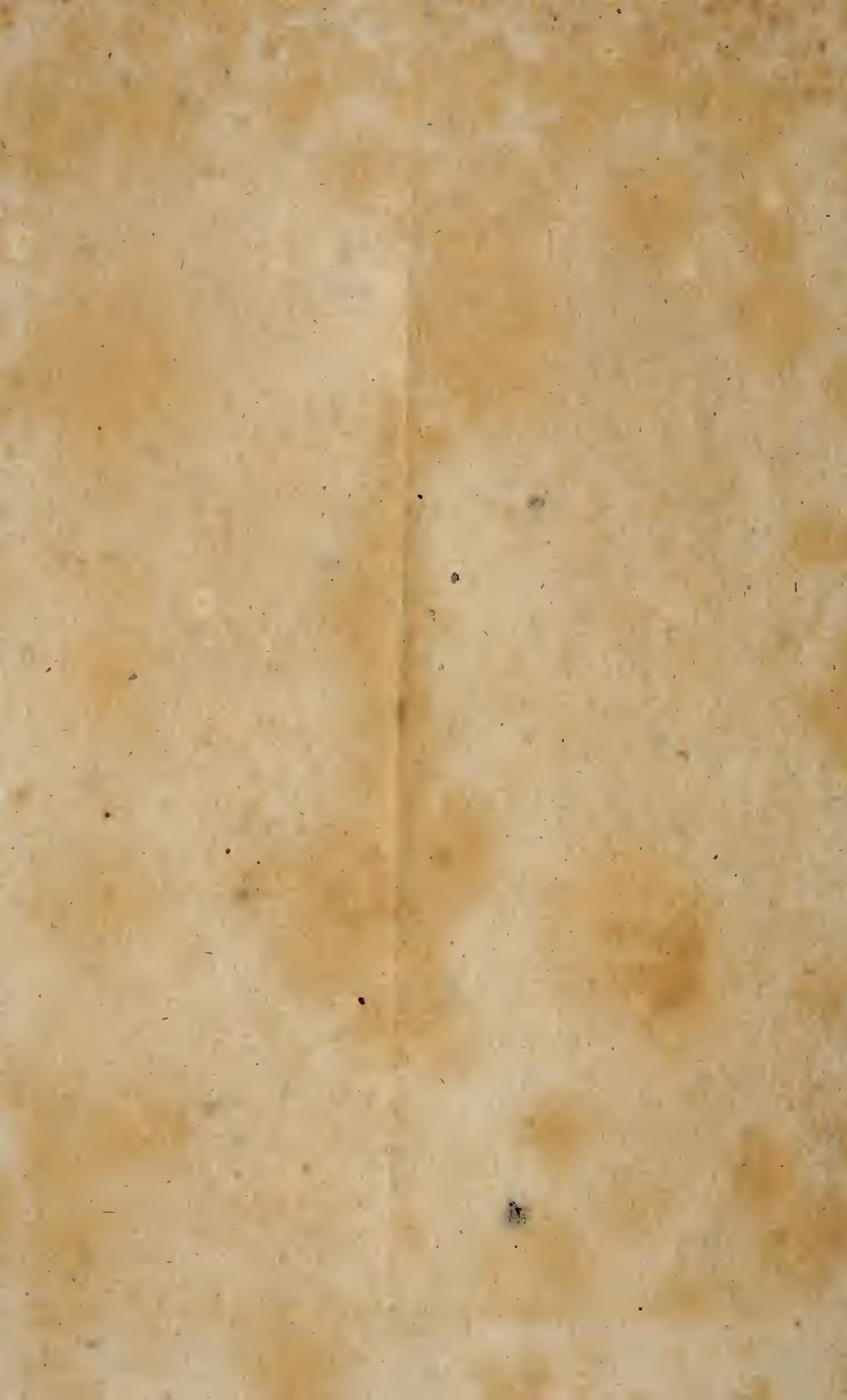
PUBLISHED BY THE LODGE.

NEWBERRY, S. C.

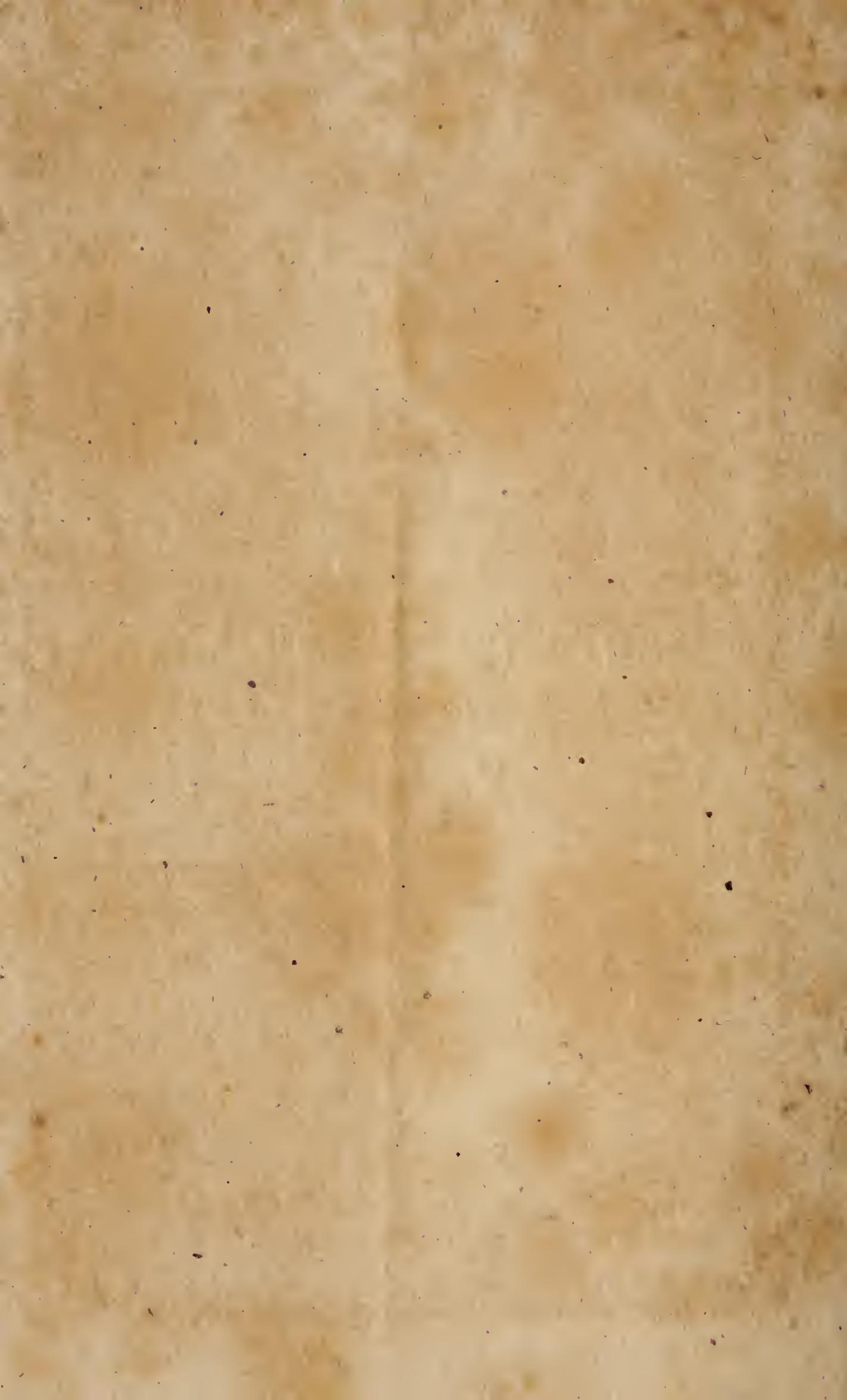
PRINTED BY T. F. & R. H. GRENEKER.

1865

BC
366.1
H 3145



THE
SPIRIT OF FREEMASONRY.
AN ADDRESS,
BY REV. J. HAWKINS.



CORRESPONDENCE.

SALUDA LODGE 103, June 24th, 1865.

REV. J. HAWKINS:—

Dear Brother—Having heard with much pleasure and profit your address, delivered before our Lodge on to-day, and believing that its publication will diffuse light and strengthen the hand of benevolence, we respectfully ask your permission to give it to the public.

A. F. LANGFORD, W. M. }
P. E. WISE, S. W. } Committee.
A. P. WEST, J. W. }

BETH EDEN, S. C., July 5th, 1865.

RESPECTED BRETHREN:—When I prepared my address, I had no thought of its publication, but feeling that your kindness claims my labor, I cannot refuse it. I submit it to your disposal.

J. HAWKINS.

A. F. LANGFORD, }
P. E. WISE, } Committee.
A. P. WEST, }



ADDRESS.

BRETHREN AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:—I am reminded at the out-set of my remarks, and I wish to remind you of the important fact, that "we are members one of another," and "all we are brethren." I deem it, therefore, unnecessary that I should consume your time in offering to the fraternity an apology for the plainness of the remarks I shall make.

Having nothing new to offer, I shall attempt simply to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," and while we hope to be edified, the uninitiated can be instructed. I am reminded also of the fact that we are associated to-day with the uninitiated, and hence it will be necessary to command the tongue, "lest our good be evil spoken of."

As free and accepted Masons, met in the capacity of such, we know no high nor low, no rich nor poor, no bond nor free, no stranger nor alien, but we meet on the common level, and hail each other as brethren. Let us then engage in the festivities of this day with that degree of joy and gladness which surrounding circumstances will allow, thankful to the great Architect of Nature, our Grand Master above, for our preservation, and the bestowment of so many blessings on us, his unworthy servants. And may the same noble impulses, generous affections, and loving and obedient spirit which animated "that disciple whom Jesus loved," our Patron, to whose memory this festival is dedicated, fill, and cheer our hearts and minds.

In obedience to the divine injunctions, "Rejoice always, and again I say rejoice," and "Let your moderation be known to all men," we enter upon the innocent and agreeable pleasure of this day, and in our hours of refreshment as well as those of labor, may the smiles of our Grand Master rest upon us.

Those who are familiar with the doctrines and usages of our Order, are aware that there is nothing in the duties, obligations, enjoyments,

er pleasures of our Institution offensive to the strictest rules of modesty, contrary to the severest laws of morality, or the usages of conventional propriety, or interfering, in the smallest degree, with the most rigid precepts of Christianity. While I reverence the command of our Great Teacher to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness," and bow with the profoundest reverence and adoration before the shrine of Christianity, acknowledging with great humility and unfeigned thanksgiving its superior claims and pre-eminent importance, and reject with proud disdain anything derogatory to its glory, yet I am proud to say I am a Mason—and in saying this I give one evidence, at least, that I am an admirer of the purity, beauty and simplicity of the gospel of the blessed God.

While Free Masonry is not Christianity, and lays no claims to divine origin, it is still a lovely hand-maid to all the christian virtues. No doctrine of our Order conflicts with the precepts of religion. All its teachings are conducive to the elevation and general good of humanity, and accord with those of Christianity. "With religion whose sublime doctrines it cannot increase, whose noble precepts it cannot improve, and whose sanctions it dare not adjudge, Masonry does not interfere. Over it it usurps no control and claims no jurisdiction."

"I have had the honor," is the testimony of an eminent divine, "of being a member of this ancient and honorable society for many years; have sustained many of its officers, and can and do aver, in this sacred place, and before the Grand Architect of the world, that I never could observe aught therein, but what was justifiable and commendable according to the strictest rules of society—this being founded on the precepts of the Gospel—the doing the will of God, and the subduing the passions, and highly conducive to every sacred and social virtue."

Another distinguished clergyman has said: "Masonry inspires its members with the most exalted ideas of God, and leads to the exercise of the most pure and sublime piety. A reverence for the Supreme Being, the Grand Architect of Nature, is the elemental life, the pri-mordial source of all its principles, the very spring and fountain of all its virtues. It co-operates with our blessed Religion in regulating the tempers, restraining the passions, sweetening the dispositions and harmonizing the discordant interests of man. It breathes a spirit of

love and universal benevolence, and adds one thread more to the silken cord of evangelical charity, which binds man to man, and seeks to entwine the cardinal virtues and the christian graces in the web of the affections and the drapery of the conduct." I admire the Institution, because I love virtue; because I love morality; because I love piety; and my religious feelings are strengthened and intensified by a practice of the precepts of Masonry. Its noble teachings act as a prompter urging to the practice of the sublime precepts of the Bible.

Its advantages in this respect lie in the superior purity and sublimity of its symbols, mysteries and ceremonies. Our Grand Master has seen fit in former ages to instruct rational man through types, symbols and figures. Thus it is in our Order; the sublimest truths are presented in the most beautiful ceremonies. To any one fond of ceremony, here is a ritual beautiful, beyond anything of which the uninitiated can conceive. These rites are all of the most perfect models—grand, sublime and beautiful in the highest degree. And like the science of Geometry, upon which it is based, the farther you advance the more interesting and sublime they become. I have sat and looked at these beautiful ceremonies revealing, as they progressed, the most useful and glorious truths, until I have been made to believe there is a beauty, a fascination, a charm in Truth, beyond anything the imagination can conceive, and I have resolved again and again to live according to its sublime teachings. Everything connected with the Order, is elevating, refining and purifying.

There is an equality also recognized by the brethren of the Fraternity, which endears it to their hearts, and recommends it to the favorable notice of others. It is just such an equality, and such a social intercourse as our nature requires. Man is naturally a social being. He seeks society as naturally as the lion seeks his solitude. There is in man an instinctive desire for company, for friendly intercourse, for mutual sympathy, which nothing else will satisfy. No substitute can be found for the instincts of nature. But like every other desire of fallen beings, it needs a limiting and a regulating influence. When that fondness for society is indulged without limitation, it grows into a culpable extravagance. Where there is no regulating power, unreasonableness is the natural consequence.

"When the affections are diffused indiscriminately, they become languid; when confined to an individual object, they become straightened

and contracted. Like the rays of light, if widely diverged, they are scattered and lost; if concentrated in a very small focus, they are too intense. Their real use is in a due medium, where they are collected so as to warm, vivify and cheer." Free Masonry professes to be that medium. Here we meet with selected friends, and here we exercise the social feelings and the social virtues upon those, and those only whom we have selected from the great mass of mankind, and have made confidential friends. While associated together as Masons, we recognize no station in civil or social life, but all meet as brethren upon the common *level*. King Solomon, in his day, meet Hiram, King of Tyre, and the humble peasant of his kingdom upon the same level. And while Solomon and Hiram laid aside their regal robes, and the peasant his tattered garments, the Kings rejoice in the exercise of their social and benevolent feelings, and the peasant felt elevated and encouraged by the warm grasp of his sovereign's hand, and the kind words of friendship and love he received. And St. John, and many of the sovereigns of Europe, and Shakespeare, and Gen. Washington, and a host of the greatest scholars and statesmen, and able divines have met, in the Lodge, the humble but honorable poor around them, and have derived pleasure and happiness from the thought that "all they were brethren." "At present, and in every former age over which Masonry has spread its principles, it constituted the affectionate and indissoluble alliance which unites man in warm cordiality with man. It forms the most liberal and extensive connections. No private prepossessions nor national predilections, no civil policy nor ecclesiastical tyranny, no party spirit nor dissocial passion is suffered to prevent the engagement, nor interfere with the free exercise of that brotherly love, relief and fidelity it fails not to produce."

Every where and in all classes of society, we find petty distinctions, partial considerations, irrational prejudices, contracted sentiments and selfish motives, obstructing the friendly intercourse of mankind.—Each one seeking his own good and intent upon his own aggrandizement—forgets and neglects his neighbor's good. Masonry breaks down these formidable barriers, and levels these unnatural and un-social distinctions. In its solemn assembly, at its social altar meet the inhabitants of different countries, and though influenced by their callings and intercourse with the outer world, by various and often conflicting interests, they hail each other with benignant looks of

esteem, and words of unfeigned friendship. Around distant lands Masonry casts "Philanthropy's connecting zone, and binds together in the same sympathies the whole family of earth."

My regard for our ancient and honorable Order, is greatly augmented too, when I remember its unfeigned *charity*, and disinterested *benevolence*. We speak of these things, not for vain-glory, but to make known our principles and to encourage all in the performance of these sacred duties. The Institution has been defined, by a worthy minister of the gospel, and one dearly loved by the Fraternity, to be, "A moral order of enlightened men, founded on a sublime, rational and manly piety, and a pure and active virtue, with the praiseworthy design of recalling to our remembrance the most interesting truths, in the midst of the most sociable and innocent pleasure; and of promoting, without ostentation or hope of reward, the most diffusive benevolence, the most generous and extensive philanthropy, and the most warm and affectionate brotherly love." One of the old Constitutions has a sentence in it, which still governs every true Mason, and one to which every genuine brother here to-day, will give a hearty and a responsive amen, viz: "To afford succor to the distressed, to divide our bread with the industrious poor, and to put the misguided traveller into the way, are duties of the craft, suitable to its dignity and expressive of its usefulness." This, my hearers, is one of the ancient landmarks of the Order, and from it the true Mason never deviates. Founded as it is on the most liberal and extensive plan, its charities and its benevolence extend to the whole human race. Its Lodges are open to the sons of Virtue, the sons of Freedom, and the sons of Peace—the honorable, the upright, the good, and the true. And it takes these from among men and connects them, by vows of eternal amity, and pledges inviolable, in the most tender, intimate and endeared alliance—binding them by the threefold cord of Friendship, Charity and Faith, into a union broad as the world, pure as gold, and stronger than death.

And when fortune smiles, and the industrious laborers are rewarded by the benignities of their Grand Master above, they rejoice together and part in love—sharing the rewards of their honest toil with the needy more remote. Families in distress have shared their bounties, and thus "the blessing of those ready to perish has come upon them." Institutions of learning have risen through their benevolent efforts—

and light and knowledge have been shed abroad by their unselfish generosity.

Sweet indeed are its offices of love and benevolence in the days of prosperity and peace. Pleasant indeed are these warm greetings when we meet and feel that "all we are brethren," and heart responds to heart in tender sympathy and endearing love.

"Our souls, by love together knit,
Cemented, mixed in one;
One hope, one heart; one mind, one voice,
'Tis heaven on earth begun."

But sweet—far more sweet are its uses in the days of adversity. "A friend," says Solomon, loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." There are times which come to all when the offices of general philanthropy will not reach us. There are times when our share in its benefits and blessings is inadequate to our need—times when the offices of love are not exercised to that extent we desire, or our necessities demand—times when afflictions chastening rod is laid upon us, and troubles come in like a flood, and cares oppress and disturb us—then it is that Free Masonry, triumphs in the exercise of its lovely charities and calls into requisition its noble offices. "The noblest sphere of its operation is in redressing the calamities of neglected, injured merit; investigating the wants and supplying the need of indigence; relieving pain, pitying and softening infirmity, and admiring and fostering virtue." The true Mason, is indeed, a brother born for adversity. When his means will allow, he renders substantial aid, but if he can do no more, he will watch by the bedside of sickness and pain. He will support the drooping head; he will catch the last expiring breath, and close the eyes of his dying brother with the last sad offices of brotherly affection. He will commend the departing soul into the hands of Him who gave it, and deposite the body he loved in the silent grave with solemn dignity and becoming rites. He will perfume the grave with sweet flowers, and encircle it with affectionate remembrances. But his love is stronger than death, and is not limited by the tomb—it descends as the heritage of affliction and sorrow. It has a tear of sympathy for the bereaved, a word of comfort for the sorrowful, and a helping hand for the necessitous. The law which governs us in this respect is this: "*No worthy Mason's*

family shall ever suffer, while it is in our power to relieve their wants."

These, my hearers, are some of the beauties and blessings of our noble Institution, but like the wisdom and glory of King Solomon, our ancient Patron—"the half has not been told."

I stand, to-day, upon the threshold of the noble edifice, with my taper in my hand, pointing within, and a *taboo* upon my lips. Within this Masonic "Holy of Holies," the uninitiated are not allowed to enter. If you would behold its real glories, and learn its sublime wisdom, you must, like the Queen of Sheba, visit the Temple, and hear the words of the Grand Master himself. Then, like her, you will be constrained to say, "It was a true report that I heard of thy acts and of thy wisdom; and behold the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom."

None but the true and the good ought to enter here. That knowledge so desirable is there, but it is *hid*, to be revealed only to the worthy.

But moral as are our precepts, impartial and world-wide as is our benevolence, beneficial as is our knowledge, sublime as are our teachings, and glorious as are our rewards, many abuse and ridicule us. "Our good is evil spoken of."

Without attempting to answer the old and stale objections urged against the Order, and which have been answered successfully a thousand times already, I simply remark that the same objections have been urged with as much show of success against every moral and religious institution on earth. The church of the Redeemer, which is as pure as the throne of Jehovah, has been made the butt of ridicule and contempt for ages, and how shall we escape the same ridicule and contumely?

As John Randolph once said of the Bible, so we say of Masonry: "If its advocates cannot defend it against all the attacks of infidelity brought against it, *let it go.*" Like Christianity, every attempt to destroy it, will only drive its defenders the more closely to it, and create the more anxiety to be connected with it. It is, however, unfriendly and unfair in any one to judge harshly and hastily of that which, from the very nature of things, he can know nothing about.

We persuade no one to enter our secrets against his will, and his just convictions of duty, and no one can know until he does enter. And no man can say with truth, that we hold or teach aught conflicting with our duties as neighbors, citizens or Christians.

We are the Son's of Peace, and the advocates of law and good order—subject always to the powers that be—believing they are “ordained of God,” and striving at all times to “render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

A few words, in conclusion, to the Fraternity :

Brethren of Saluda Lodge—Permit me to congratulate you heartily upon your success and prosperity in this community. You commenced the good work here but a few years ago, in the most trying times, and under the most discouraging circumstances. Ever since that day, you have labored under serious difficulties. Cut off in a great measure from the outer world, and even from your brethren at home, you were compelled to labor alone and almost entirely unaided. Some of your most intelligent and active co-laborers have been called to rest, and your facilities have been inadequate to your need. But, by your perseverance and exemplary conduct, both in and out of the Lodge, you have overcome all obstacles and triumphed over all opposition. You now have a name, and an honorable name, known far and wide; and your extensive procession to-day, and this multitude of anxious faces, attest your zeal in the cause in which you have embarked. Continue faithful and laborious. “Be not weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not.” Let none be drones in the great Masonic hive, but let each add his share to the profit and pleasure of all. Be punctual in your attendance upon the communications that you may learn your duty, and be encouraged to perform it. Be not so much interested in adding largely to your numbers, as in making good Masons of those you have.

Use great discretion in the selection of your candidates, for upon this depends your standing among your brethren around you, and in the community. For want of caution, we sometimes receive those among us who never make Masons, and prove an injury to us. The man who blasphemes God's holy name, or is intemperate, or defrauds his neighbor, or acts immorally in any way, is not a true Mason. Remember that others will look at your conduct and judge the cause by you. Let morality, friendship and truth adorn your lives, and

“thus fulfill the whole law of love.” By so doing you will secure the “blessing of those ready to perish,” accompanied by the Divine approbation, and the reward of the Grand Master above. By practising the duties enjoined on you, in the Lodge, and by walking worthy of the high vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, adorning the doctrine of God your Savior in all things, you will “be able to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” And when, in that awful day which he has appointed, the Grand Master comes to make up his jewels—when the secrets of all hearts, and all societies shall be known, “the gazing multitude, who have anxiously enquired our secret, shall be astonished to learn that the *profoundest deep of Masonic secrecy lay in the unpublished act of doing good.*” And these memorials of your benevolence, sprinkled with atoning blood, and sealed by the Divine approbation, will prove your passport to those blissful seats in that “Grand Temple,” “not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.”

“Pure are the joys above the sky,
 And all the region peace ;
 No wanton lips, nor envious eye,
 Can see or taste the bliss.
 Those holy gates forever bar
 Pollution, sin and shame :
 None shall obtain admittance there
 But followers of the Lamb.”

Then, Brethren, in that Grand Lodge above, presided over by the Grand Master of all Lodges, we will spend an eternity in investigating, admiring, and praising the inexhaustible mysteries of knowledge and truth.

