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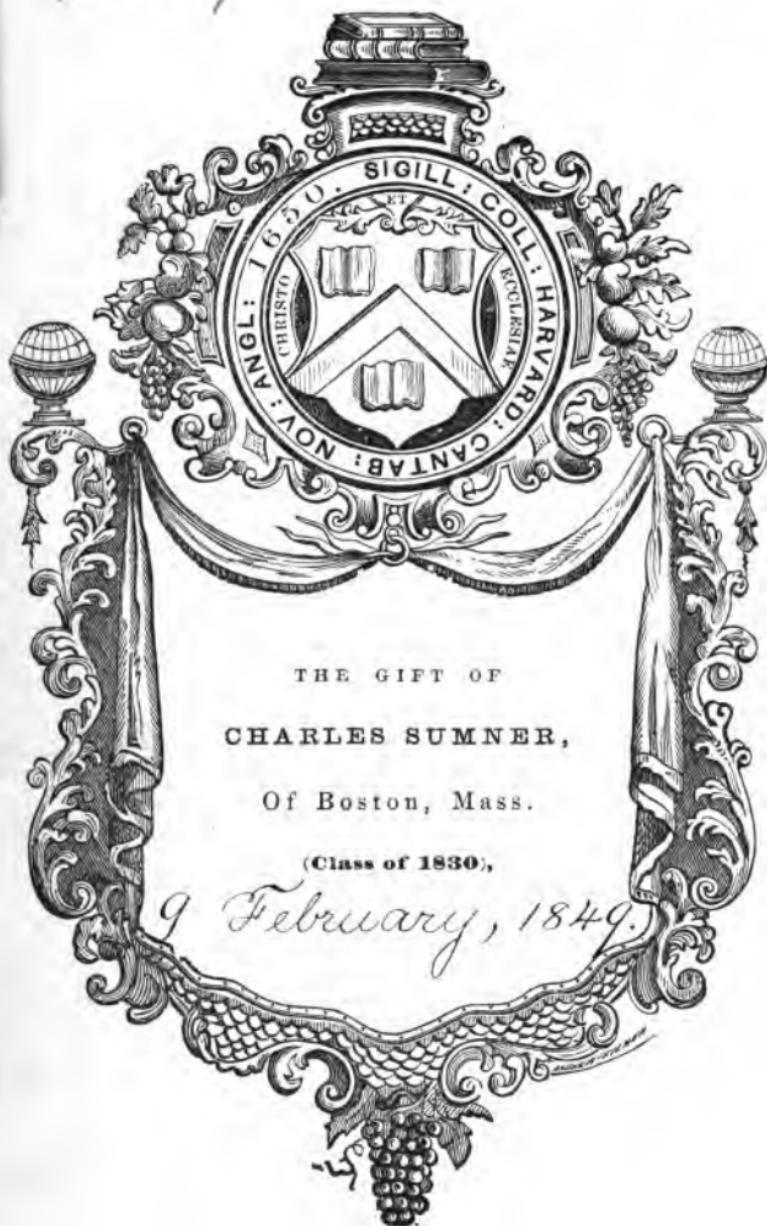


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Bd. 1873.



THE GIFT OF
CHARLES SUMNER,
Of Boston, Mass.

(Class of 1830),

9 February, 1849.

C. P. Summers

LETTERS

ON

MASONRY,

ADDRESSED TO THE

Professed Followers of Christ,

NOW IN CONNECTION WITH THE

INSTITUTION OF FREEMASONRY.

BY HENRY JONES,

*Pastor of the Congregational Church, in Cabot, Vermont,
And a dissented Royal Arch Mason.*

Boston:

**ANTI-MASONIC FREE PRESS, MERCHANTS' HALL—AND
JOHN MARSH—STATE STREET.**

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1829.

See 7118.29

18.19 Oct 6 9
W. C. Shanks Surveyor
of Boston

REV. MR. JONES' LETTERS,

Addressed to the Professed followers of Christ, now in connection with the Institution of Masonry.



LETTER NO. 1.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

I am aware, as well as yourselves, that the step which I am now taking, must lay me under a vast weight of responsibility and will bear with inconceivable force on the destiny of myself, and probably a multitude of others, for good or evil, in that day when we must all be judged and rewarded according to our present conduct. While it is no more than reasonable for me to expect, under existing circumstances, that *some* of the fraternity should denounce me, on this account, as a vile and perjured character, let me rather lay claim to your *sympathy*, as the meek and lowly followers of Jesus Christ, though it should be the judgment of many of you, at least, that I act under the influence of a perverted understanding, and that the publication of my views will be mischievous to the world.—Whatever else may be the case, this thing is sure, that I am placed in a most serious and critical dilemma. If I remain longer silent I must do violence to my conscience in disobeying an apparent command of Heaven; while on the other hand, if I speak out and declare my views publicly, as they may appear in this communication, it is more than probable that some consequences will be the result, which are very much to be deprecated, since it is believed to be the case that very many of our most respectable citizens, christians and ministers, who are connected with masonic lodges, are by no means prepared to acquiesce in such a procedure. Let the candid then decide what they should consider their duty under similar circumstances.

I would now proceed to state, that in Feb. 1815, I united with "Hiram Lodge," in Claremont, N. H. from vain and worldly motives, by receiving the three first degrees of masonry then, and immediately afterwards. During the first year after this period my mind was so occupied by the sub-

ject, that I became perfectly familiar with all the instructions of these degrees, and in March, 1816, in a Royal Arch Chapter, at Windsor, Vermont, I received five higher degrees, the last being an honorary degree above the Royal Arch. But in about three weeks after this period, as I have ever since indulged the hope, my heart was renewed by the Spirit of God, which seemed almost wholly to disqualify me for that satisfaction in the pursuit of Masonry, which I had previously supposed it to afford to the contemplative mind. I have since spoken well of some of the principles of the order, and from a sense of supposed duty, officiated one year in one of the higher stations of a New Lodge where I was last a member, it being ten years ago, yet my feelings have not been interested nor delighted in Masonry, and I am now happy to say, that I have scarcely been into a lodge room for four or five years, and previously I had so neglected it, as to expose myself to the frequent admonitions of the fraternity.

While I considered Masonry in general to be unnecessary, childish, and beneath the dignity of the Christian character, in a serious view of the subject, it scarcely occurred to my mind that any thing could be intermingled with its principles which was opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, seeing that it was patronized by so many of the clergy, and other men of the first respectability, although while receiving some of its first obligations, it seemed to me that they contained sentiments of immorality, and I sought for an explanation as soon as might be, while with those of the higher degrees I was still more unfavorably impressed; but all these were so interpreted to me by experienced Masons, that I very readily concluded they only needed to be definitely understood to be approved.

Considering Masonry as I have for several years, it has been my endeavour to occupy the ground of neutrality respecting it, not encouraging its celebrations, funeral formalities, &c. until, perhaps, the fore part of April last, when receiving something of an Anti-Masonic lecture from a Christian friend, not a member of our religious society, I soon consented to take up, as I called in at a neighbors' house, the "*North Star*" which represented the Masonic Institution to be immoral and corrupt; and on being told that one of the editors, who had formerly been a Mason, had now

renounced it, and declared its secrets to be out, on obtaining satisfaction with regard to the credibility of the man, my mind was at once attracted to see what reasons he had assigned for such an unprecedented course. From this time being out of the society of the fraternity, and alone as it were, I continued to borrow and read that paper, and examine the subject, until I became satisfied that the time had come when it was my duty, at least, to withdraw my connexion from the lodge, at the place whence I came to Cabot, two years and a half ago, and where I was a member. Accordingly I sent the following communication to that lodge, viz:

(Addressed to King Hiram Lodge, Waitsfield, Vermont, through the office of the Secretary.)

“CABOT, APRIL 25, 1828.

“The time seems to have arrived, when it becomes my duty to renounce any further connexion with the Institution of Free Masonry. Let this note then, if deposited among your records, be considered as a memorial that I am no longer a member of the Masonic Institution.

“This is not prepared for publication in any of the multiplicity of Anti-Masonic papers of the day, neither is it sent on account of any personal feelings towards any individual, nor any particular lodge; but rather on account of my sentiments relative to Masonry in general. What course I may hereafter pursue in reference to this subject, I cannot now predict, but intend, by all means to do that, so far as may be made known to me, which shall be for the best interests of mankind.

“Should you be desirous of knowing particularly, my reasons for wishing no further connexion with the institution, I might refer you to what has been published in the *North Star*, at Danville, in different papers, I believe, since about the first of March. Mr. Eaton, the editor, had long been and is now, a reputable member of the Congregational Church, in Danville, and cannot at present be impeached by any, except it be for his protesting against the Institution of Free Masonry; of which he has formerly been a member.

“With the same sentiments of personal respect and friendship as formerly, I am yours, Gentlemen, &c.

H. JONES.”

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Since the date of the above communication, this subject has occupied my mind with increasing solicitude, while I have improved opportunities, and made my views known upon it, personally, to a large number of the fraternity residing in different towns, among whom, several are labouring in the ministry. Much the largest part of all these had read little or nothing that has of late been published on the subject; and of course, as it appeared, thought my sentiments erroneous, and many have laboured to persuade me to relinquish them, or be silent on the subject; though it may be but just to state, that their treatment towards me has been respectful and kind, almost without exception.— After having so long endeavoured to obtain light on both sides of the question, I concluded at the last meeting of the Clerical Association to which I belong, to make known to them my condition and ask their advice, as will appear in the following communication, together with their reply:—

*To the Montpelier Association, in Session, Warren,
June 18, 1828.*

BRETHREN,—Supposing you all to be aware of the late disclosures which have been made, relative to the institution of Free Masonry, and of the excitement which has been occasioned in our land, in connexion with the fact, that great numbers of respectable Masons have renounced the institution, and declared its secrets to be substantially before the public, I would now ask your advice, as friends and as christians, relative to the course of duty which I ought to pursue. That you may be the better prepared to answer my request, I would state that having been a member of the institution for many years, I have of late become fully convinced that it is *contrary to the profession of a Christian* for me any longer to support it—that it is not only useless in our land, but a *hindrance to the progress of religion*—that some of its principles are at *variance with the Gospel of Christ*—that its obligations of perpetual secrecy are not *binding on its members*, and that it would be *offensive to God* for me any longer to pretend or insinuate that the secrets of Masonry are *not substantially before the world*.

You must see, brethren, that my situation is critical and delicate, connected as I am with so many yet attached to the institution, who are among our best men, both ministers and private christians. Being now in possession of

this my candid statement, and knowing otherwise what you do on the subject, I trust you will not fail to give me that advice which I may follow in safety, in view of the awful and approaching judgment. Yours, &c.

HENRY JONES.

In Association, "Resolved on the foregoing petition, that of the correctness of Brother Jones' views, as expressed in his request, the Association are incapable of forming a judgment; but of his duty, admitting the correctness of his views, there can be no reasonable doubt, he ought to publish them to the world."

A true extract from the minutes of the Association.

A. CHANDLER, *Moderator.*

Such a communication as this, made to a body of gentlemen, who with but one exception, never belonged to the Masonic Order, may probably excite the utmost astonishment in the minds of a great proportion of the fraternity, who with the public, will be justly entitled to an exhibition of my present reasons for holding such sentiments, and thus introducing them to the world. So far as I may be capable, it is my intention to render these reasons in some farther communications, and would only request that severe judgment may be suspended till they are candidly examined.

HENRY JONES.

A dissented R. A. Mason.

Cabot, Aug. 14, 1828.

LETTER NO. 2.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS :

In assigning reasons, as proposed in my former communication, for my public renunciation of Freemasonry, I would say—

First. I am constrained to consider the institution a useless one in society. I know it has been said by some, that its instructions at the Lodge room, are entertaining and useful; but if so, why has there been, almost invariably, such a backwardness in attending Lodge meetings among Masons of solid character, as soon as the novelty of the thing has ceased in their feelings? And let those instructions be as any would wish to consider them, what mind would not wea-

ry, instead of being entertained, in hearing them always repeated in the same words and labored formality? Besides, the present is a period quite too late, for the sentiment to pass currently, that the instructions of Masonry are entertaining or useful.

It is no doubt, also, the serious opinion of many, that this institution has contributed very largely towards the moral and social improvement of the community; but how, it has effected this, has not been satisfactorily shown. It is true, that Masonry has existed, while the moral and social improvement of community has been happily progressing, and many have taken a forward part in the good work, who have been members of the institution; but it does not appear, that their good influence was derived from this source; and is it not a rational conclusion, that their influence in the scale of this improvement would have been more, had they not been connected in full fellowship, as in that institution, with so many, as brethren; whose sentiments and life, are calculated directly to impede rather than promote, the moral improvement of the world? Though it has been so often affirmed, that Masonry has been "*the hand-maid of religion*," in carrying forward the great and noble work of benevolence in the amelioration of the condition of man; if we examine facts as they have occurred with our own experience and observation, with the exercise of our reason on the subject, must we not conclude, that this has not been the case, but rather, that such has been the natural tendency of Masonry, that it has been restrained, modified, and kept in more harmless bounds than it otherwise would have been, by the influence of religion?

Some few Masons, to be sure, may have received personal protection among enemies, which might not have been afforded them had they not made themselves known as Masons; but then, such instances have certainly been very rare, not one to thousands, it is presumed among masons, where any special good has been realized in this manner; and then, uniformly, the favor received, has been only temporal. It may be the case, likewise, that some individuals have received their first religious impressions from the scriptures, or prayers, which have been blended with masonry; but this circumstance could be no more in favor of the usefulness of the institution, than it would in the case of pharisaical

prayers, and the mere form of religion, if the Lord should, sometime, cause good to follow them.

The strongest plea, that is now recollect, in favor of the usefulness of the institution is, that it is almost of indispensable importance to the missionaries of the Cross, that they should be masons, when visiting unfriendly climes; but though I have felt a disposition to allow this argument, some weight, I do not recollect, in all my examination of missionary intelligence, for twelve years past, any cases where their lives have been preserved, or where they have been more successful in planting the standard of the gospel, by means of their having been masons; and may I not remark, here, that it appears to have been the general result, when the ministers of Christ have united with a lodge, with a view to promote the spiritual interests of its impenitent members, that their expectations have not been realized and that it is believed, they have usually, if not uniformly, lost more religious influence over such individuals, than they have gained, by such procedure. If then, the institution be only useless, it ought to be abandoned by all, rather than patronized, at so great an expense of time and property, as are necessary for its continuance.

A second reason to be assigned, for abandoning masonry, is, that it appears, in this land of gospel light, not only useless, but a hindrance to the progress of Religion. All of you, the professed followers of Christ, would doubtless consider this argument unanswerable, if persuaded of its being indeed, a matter of fact. Then let us examine some things in the argument, which you will probably not dispute as facts. It is certainly a fact, that whatever time, talents and property, the pious have devoted to the cause of masonry, they have been unable to devote to the cause of religion, where such assistance is usually attended with the greatest blessings.

When the pious, with their minister, devote that share of the time, to the meetings and prosperity of the Lodge which its by-laws require, how can it be otherwise, than that the church and her meetings must be left, in an equal degree, to mourn, at the neglect which she experiences from her members of whom she hoped better things? And how sad the appearance, in a season of revival, when there are many anxious inquirers for the way of salvation, to see some

of the leading men in the Church, and perhaps their minister with them, forsaking the conference, or prayer meeting, to attend the meeting of a recently established Lodge ! We believe better things of the pious generally, but it must not be disputed, that such has sometimes been a matter of fact. Is it not a fact, also, that masonry so extols itself, and has been so extolled by its members, as being little, if any thing, less than a divine institution, more ancient than the Christian Church, and as much connected with the "Great Grand Master, and Grand Lodge above," as the Church militant is with the church triumphant, while the high sounding titles and sublime honors which it professes to confer on its members, are so calculated to promote human pride and self exaltation, that not a few of the members who have never turned to the strong hold of Jesus Christ, have been led to feel themselves as though already so much secured in the refuge of that institution, while perhaps, somewhat reformed in their outward morals, that they have effectually shielded themselves from the arrows of conviction, which, otherwise, they could not probably have done. That such instances are not rare, I have full proof from observation. Thus it seems clearly, that the institution is a melancholy hindrance to the progress of religion, and ought to be discountenanced, without mentioning, as might be done, things under this argument, more objectionable.

Further, I consider Masonry as making very *unjustifiable claims* to the appellation of "Ancient and Honorable." It is known to all, who have even a small degree of information respecting this institution, that it claims the antiquity of the Jewish dispensation ; and some of its members have represented it as being coeval with creation. It boldly claims the honor of "King Solomon, King Hiram, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist," &c as Masons, and among the most devoted friends and patrons of the institution ; and on this account, have been celebrated, so frequently, the nativity of these two latter, holy men of God. There seems to be no doubt that these claims of the institution have stood like strong pillars to support it, in the view of those who never thought, nor suspected, but that all these claims were just and real : But so far as I can learn from my own researches, for more than thirteen years, while connected with it, I cannot obtain the least evidence on which dependance

can be placed, that these ancient Kings and men of God ever belonged to the order, or knew any thing about Freemasonry and its secrets, as they have been held by modern masons, nor any thing else, for which these things can justly be considered a substitute. It is true that masonic tradition informs us that they were masons, &c. ; and if it were an acknowledged fact, that these inspired men, while under the unerring direction of heaven, did patronize Masonry as it now exists, their example might consistently be urged in its favor : But, as no allowed evidence can be adduced in support of the position, the institution is entitled to no support from this source. It seems evidently still more unjustifiable to claim these ancient and holy men as masons, who patronized the institution with its present principles of Masonry : But as this may be considered a mere assertion, I will proceed to make the position another argument, and endeavor to show, farther, that the institution of Freemasonry should be discountenanced, because *some of its principles are at variance with the gospel of Christ.* The premises on which this argument might be established are considered numerous ; yet your attention is now invited to a few only, and those such as are familiar to masons, who are acquainted only with the first three degrees. One thing in Masonry which very evidently clashes with the Gospel, is this, that while the latter requires us to do good to all men, it requires us to do so "*especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*" But Masonry requires of its members, as every one must know, who is familiar with the obligations of the third degree, if we can understand it to have a meaning, that they do good especially to the Masonic fraternity, whether they do, or do not belong to the household of faith.

Masonry may be said, also, to be repugnant to the Gospel, in its profaning the holy scriptures. One instance, in which this is most evidently the case, is, in the frequently repeated use, in all lodges, so far as I have been acquainted, of this passage of holy writ : "*And God said, let there be light, and there was light,*" when there is nothing serious to be brought into view by the quotation, but it is used merely as a signal, of what appears to me, like united and systematic vanity, or as the military officer gives the word of command, that his soldiers may all discharge their pieces together :—And what else can it be, but a perversion or pro-

fanation of the scriptures, to use so frequently the words of Christ, as they are used in reference to the door of the Lodge-room, "*Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you!*" And what can it be but a profanation of the sacred word, as it is quoted in many other places, in the compass of the three first degrees, without mentioning particulars of this kind, any further at present.

Masonry is further repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel, in its authorizing the taking the name of the Lord in vain, which the Gospel most positively forbids. This may be an idea, which most of the fraternity have not heard suggested before, and would not, of course, suppose it to be a fact.—But let us examine it. Although it may be somewhat different in some lodges ; in those of my own acquaintance, there is a certain occasion, in conferring one of the degrees, when it has been required of the brethren, and it has been their practice, so far as individuals could have the hardihood to pronounce the words, unitedly to exclaim, "**O LORD, MY GOD !**" thrice repeated. Can this be any thing less than a full violation of the third commandment ? Will it be said, that the expression implies a solemn prayer to God, and should not be considered a vain repetition of the awful names of Deity ? I ask, then, what solemn petitions are here implied ? None, surely.—Perhaps, it may be said, that it represents a scene of real distress and prayer. Though I have no evidence that any such reality did ever exist, as represented in this tragedy, were we to suppose that it did, this imitation of it, now, could be nothing less than solemn prayer in common dialogue exhibition, which is a manifest profanation of prayer and the sacred name of God. Should the expression be called a solemn exclamation, it could be no less profanity, than when the name of Deity is used in other common exclamations. Other examples might be adduced, of this nature, but they are not necessary. Further reasons for the course I have taken, may be expected in another communication.

HENRY JONES,

A dissented Royal Arch Mason.

Cabot, August 14, 1828.

LETTER NO. 3.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

In accordance with the proposal in my last communication, to exhibit further reasons for my public renunciation of Free Masonry, I would say, without doubt, in my opinion, the Institution has been instrumental, in no small degree, in the *promotion of dissipation and intemperance*. It is true, that Lodges might hold their monthly, and other meetings, without the use of ardent spirits for their refreshment; and it is a matter of rejoicing, that, since the commencement of the special efforts to promote temperance of late, it is believed, that some Lodges have practiced on this plan; but these are evidently, rare exceptions in our land generally, while it has been the custom from time immemorial, as it seems, for Lodges to have their seasons of being called from labor to refreshment, in all their meetings; when they have considered it indispensably necessary for them to be refreshed with strong drink, as the custom has been with hard laboring operative masons, in handling their trowels, brick, and mortar. Instead of noticing effects here, which have been already produced, to support the argument, let us look rather, to causes, the effects of which, might be evil hereafter. Considering the natural sympathy with which man is endowed, to feel, and act with his associates; it is not difficult to account for the fact, that there are many men, who have so little relish for ardent spirits, that they seldom wish to taste a drop, except in company with those who have a good relish, and can drink with apparent delight, when they can seem to forget their want of a relish, and drink with satisfaction also. So it appears, that when such men have united with this institution, without any acquired relish for ardent spirits, and could not obtain it, only by the force of habit, they are brought immediately into a condition to have it entailed upon them. I think it must be known to the serious part of the fraternity, that these frequent seasons of refreshment, have apparently been considered, by a major-

ity of the whole, most generally, as the most delightful part of Masonry; and must we not believe, that this has been occasioned by the glow of animal spirits, produced by distilled spirits? Here, then, is to be witnessed, so much social drinking, connected with so much animation and delight, even if none should become disguised, that it lays the strongest temptation in the way of those who associate with them to do as they do, though otherwise they might have preferred not to drink, and in this way, it is exceedingly natural, for a relish of spirits to be cultivated, till it becomes a fixed habit. Then what is plainer, than, that the refreshment seasons at the Lodge rooms, have been very much calculated to beget a habitual relish for strong drink, to the encouragement of dissipation and intemperance? This limb of the body, to be sure, might be amputated, which would avoid the evil; and if the institution were otherwise good and useful, we ought not to contend for any thing farther. But since this practice has so long been incorporated with Masonry, being a very important part, as it seems, of its constitution, and without which, it is believed, it could not have survived 'till now; it would seem preferable to abandon it, wholly, rather than attempt, by a series of amputations to make it better.

Again, the argument so many times suggested against the Institution, that it *interrupts domestic happiness*, ought not to be treated with contempt. It is not here maintained, that such is the case generally; but certainly such its frequent tendency, and more especially so, in case of those who join the Lodge after their connexion in marriage.— Having pledged their hearts to a bosom companion for life, and with her commenced a life of conjugal affection, between whom and themselves, no distant party, nor interest is to be known, and no important secrets are expected to be withheld from each other, it need not be thought strange, that female sensibility should be wounded and grieved, when apprised of the husband's having purchased secrets at the joint expense of both parties, which, according to the laws of the Institution, must be locked up in his breast, and forever beyond the reach of female scrutiny.— The foresight of this, no doubt, has prevented many from uniting with the Institution, and been a great hindrance to the progress of Masonry: And how seldom has it been the

case, within our observation, where respectable men have joined the Lodge, that they have first consulted with their ladies, and obtained their cheerful consent, but have they not usually done it without giving any notice thereof, to them, till forever too late to urge objections? And how many Masons have discontinued their pursuit of Masonry, on account of its being such a grief to their companions; and how many others, in this more enlightened period respecting the Institution, are prepared to rejoice, that they have been kept out of the order, by a foresight of this very thing.

Another objection to the Institution is, that it assumes to itself, that advantage over the rights and privileges of others, not its members, which is of *dangerous tendency, and repugnant to the principles of a free government.*—Whether the principles of Masonry are to be considered as requiring or allowing capital punishments to be inflicted on any, without the sanction of civil authority, is a question, which, perhaps, I should do well to decide; but this I think, that many Masons have so considered them; and that it should not be questioned, but that many citizens have been punished with death, by members of the fraternity, for a violation of Masonic obligations, without allowing any appeal to the civil authority; yet I would not be suspected of believing that the members of the Institution generally have approved of it, or believed it sanctioned by the principles of Masonry; and I should be far from a wish to have the innocent bear the reproach of the guilty in this thing; and as my object is, not to impeach the character of individuals in this discussion, I would rather pass silently by the acknowledged outrages of particular members of the Institution, and continue myself more simply to its principles. Whatever we may think of the original intention of Masonic principles, with regard to their assuming authority in defiance of the civil government, I must say there are some things in connexion with them or especially in the obligations, which afford us very strong reasons to suspect, that this was their intention originally, and certainly is not to be thought strange, that some of the fraternity, even in those better days, who have not been governed by that uprightness of moral principle which is desirable, should consider themselves authorized by Masonic principles, to use vio-

lence against their own offenders, which the laws of the land would not approve; and must we not certainly infer as much as this, from the consideration that so many such members of the fraternity, have been bold to declare, as their sentiments, the righteous conduct of those who may join in delivering the Institution forever, of certain individuals of its offenders, according to the penalty of their obligations? Much has been said of the dangerous tendency of masonic influence against the laws of the land in courts of justice, and though I have not been personally acquainted with such facts in this case, as have been stated by others, yet knowing what I do, of the principles of this Institution, and the perverse inclination of human nature, I have no doubt in my mind, that, in many instances, justice has been counteracted, and criminals have been unpunished, by reason of Masonic principles, especially in places where there has been much favourable interest in Masonry, and but little comparatively, of a feeling sense of the importance of obeying the law of God.

And since there is so much in the Masonic obligations, which appears like a preference for the members of the Institution to be elected into public office, is it not just to remark, that its tendency and influence, if unrestrained, are dangerous to our political freedom? Though it is out of my province, at present, to take any part in the political question which is before the public; I would ask, how would Masons themselves, all probably, without exception, view a secret society, of some other order than their own, established in all parts of the Union, having all its members bound to each other with such strong obligations as theirs have been; increasing, with the prospect of soon securing within its body a majority of voters? In such case, would not even a Mason's heart throb with fearful solicitude for the destiny of the happy institutions of our free government? Why then, should they contend for the support of an Institution of their own, which, if patronized, as many are desiring this to be, would be no less repugnant to our general political freedom, than what has just been supposed? Although there might be objections against all secret societies, those that are local, and calculated to embrace but few individuals, are not to be compared with one which is aiming to

gather into its union, the strength of the nation.—Further reasons are to be assigned in another number.

HENRY JONES,
A dissented Royal Arch Mason.

Cabot, Aug. 30, 1828.

LETTER NO. 4.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

As proposed in my last communication, I must further say, as a reason for believing it the duty of each one of us to abandon the Institution of Masonry, that I can see no other way now, to *avoid in ourselves, a species of deception*, altogether repugnant to the profession of a christian. Whether there are any cases, in which deception would be justifiable, will not at present be a subject of discussion; but I believe it may be shown with clearness, that the deception which is now necessary for the encouragement and support of this institution, is unjustifiable and criminal. By this remark, my christian friends, who still adhere to the Order, will not consider me as questioning the uprightness of their intentions, thus far, in so doing, for our experience has taught us, that on some occasions, heretofore, we have been absolutely in the wrong, when we were confident of being in the right. Thus it was, once, with a most eminent Apostle, as he verily thought, he ought to do that, which he afterwards found, was contrary to Jesus of Nazareth. Then let us carefully examine this important argument. It is a point, which I think, will not be disputed by the most tenacious in the fraternity, that the close and safe keeping of their secrets, has been their only safeguard to prevent the fall of the institution. And now, since there is not an informed Mason in our land, who can conscientiously and unequivocally declare, that these secrets, are not in substance revealed to the world, as accurately as pen and ink could do it, and as accurately as could be, considering the trifling alterations in their phraseology, which they must necessarily sustain, from time to time, and place to place, there being no uniform standard by which to compare them; I would ask how can we as christians, any longer adhere to it, as an institution professing still to have its former secrets careful-

2*

ly secured from the world, as it must appear, by the "tyler, without the door, with a drawn sword in his hand"? It might be said, though these disclosures are made, people without the Lodge, could never know their truth, provided masons themselves, should not acknowledge the fact. There is, no doubt, much truth in this remark, and there seems to be no question, but this very thing, with a species of denial of their truth, has been the means of perpetuating the institution for many years past, since certain publications have been abroad in the world, exposing it. But to adhere to the institution still longer, and to take such a part as this, in sustaining it, which can be accomplished in no other way, is what I could do, only at the sacrifice of truth. It might be said, again, we are not always under obligations to tell what we know of a thing, to keep within the bounds of truth, as it is our prerogative to be silent. This is true in some, but not in all cases, because the circumstances on some occasions, are such, that silence, on our part, must be considered as an affirmation answer to the question, or an acknowledgment of the charge, which we may be called upon to disprove. For instance, if the character of any friend, shall be impeached, or he is about to suffer for any crime charged against him, of which he is entirely innocent, when it is known that we are acquainted with all the circumstances in the case, when nothing but our testimony will clear him, every one knows we could not keep silence; we must speak and acquit him. And what man, in his right mind, could be brought to the bar of human justice to answer to a grievous charge, of which he was innocent, and remain silent, to be condemned to the State's prison, when a bare denial of the groundless charge, would exonerate him from all harm? Now there is something very much like this in relation to the secrets of masonry. There are heavy charges brought against certain things in the principles of the institution, that they are corrupt, immoral, &c. making it criminal for any to adhere to them, if indeed they are so found in masonry. These exceptionable parts of the masonic principles, are now, as it were, in the mouth of almost every man, woman and child, where the Anti-Masonic Intelligence is circulated, and masons must be frequently called to their bar, to testify, if they honestly can, in vindication of themselves, if they do not fellowship such pri-

ciples, by being masons; when it is expected, as from an acknowledged law of nature, that if there are such vile things in masonry which they are justifying, they cannot keep silence, but must speak out and deny them. And is not this according to the practice of masons themselves? When real false charges have been sometimes brought against the principles of the institution, or false signs exhibited as belonging to it, have they not rather felt a rational pleasure in a prompt denial of their truth, than remained in silence, when called upon to deny, if they could consistently? But shall it be said, we might give an evasive answer, which would turn off the intruding inquirer, without uttering either truth or falsehood? No doubt there are many who feel themselves justified in taking this course, and it is but just for me to acknowledge here, that I have heretofore, done the same, without suspecting myself, at the time, as bordering on the ground of falsehood. And now let me appeal to the consciences of my masonic christian friends, if this evasive manner of treating the subject, can be any thing less than unnecessary and unjustifiable dissimulation? Are we not placed here, in a condition, were others have a right to expect of us, that we shall not be silent, when they require of us a negative or an affirmative? And is it not known, that to make no reply, in such circumstances, is the same as a tacit acknowledgment of the charge they bring against the institution? Then, to avoid this, and also, a daring falsehood, if we give a jesting, or evasive answer, in whatever shape it may be, with an intention or wish to be understood as denying the fact, how can it be viewed by him, who searches the heart, as any thing less than deception or a species of falsehood? And even if the truth shall be acknowledged, with tones and gestures purposely to indicate something else, it may be considered still further from uprightness, even as a falsehood with a false pretension to truth. And how, let me ask, can Lodges continue their operations, without gross deception on this point, in the reception of new members; even if candidates should voluntarily present themselves; and take from the usual fees of initiation, knowing that they come forward under the full expectation of receiving as a remuneration for their expense and trouble, much useful and hidden knowledge, which was ~~in~~ ~~secret~~ known to any but masons, and which never can

be known only by a formal joining the Lodge, when immediately on learning the whole, they must find it nought, but a serious, costly disappointment, or cheat; because the information which they have now obtained, for ten, or fifteen dollars, perhaps, is, in substance, just what they possessed, or might have done, before, and what the curious may now, and do possess without expense, and communicate to others, without the fear of ignominy? May I not here humbly, yet correctly, request every professor of religion; yet adhering to the masonic institution, to consider this part of the subject, with devout prayer to God, for direction in the path of duty, and as soon as it may be made known, immediately to walk in it, regardless of all earthly consequences.

I will mention one reason farther, on this occasion, showing the impropriety of a longer continuance in the masonic institution, which is, that such is its present condition in our land, that *it must be absolutely, impossible to save it from the wreck*; and would it not be preferable to abandon "the ship" than to sink with it? It would not be strange, if a strenuous opposition should meet me, on this ground. But sure, it does not require the gift of propheey, to see the approaching end of masonry in this country, any more than events which have already occurred, unless one might look for something supernatural to restore it to its former standing. If we overlook the evil of deception, which has just been reprobated, and though we should, without remorse of conscience, partially maintain, that there have been no essential disclosures, of masonic secrets; who is there among us, that would dare express such denial in the plain unqualified language of his lips? Then while there are hundreds, in our land, whose number seems every day increasing, who have, within a few months, come out from the fraternity, practically, orally and boldly, declaring that these long hidden mysteries are now before the public, pointing us to the books which contain them, besides repeating them from memory, what must an unprejudiced world of beholders believe? Will they not sooner believe those, who declare practically and orally, that these things are now given to the public, than others, who possess no more information, and who shall only practically, deny the fact, as though their own consciences, were ready to sepel

such a denial if made orally and without reservo? When it is considered also, what powerful temptations the party is under to deny the fact of their being out, and the sacrifices which the other must make, in order to declare them to the world, where is the place to doubt the truth of the letter? If an individual of former respectable standing in society, shall be suspected of having committed some secret crime, of which there is not sufficient evidence to convict him, should we not be more ready to consider him as uttering truth, if he shall frankly confess it, though he lose by it his good name and the confidence of his associates, than another in similar circumstances, who should deny the charge? And can it be any thing less than a provoked acknowledgment to the world, by so many of the adhering fraternity, that the secrets of their Order are published, when they have unhesitatingly declared him that has done it, "*a perjured villain?*" and this before the uninitiated.— For why should this be said of him, unless his disclosures were true? I confess, for one, that before I heard of this acknowledgment from the abiding fraternity, I had no apprehension, of the fall of the institution comparatively, to what I had, on learning it. Under these circumstances then, how can masonry continue and keep its numbers good? Certainly, it is not expected of any man, who believes himself already in possession of the former secrets of masonry, that he will be willing to sacrifice the usual fees of initiation to hear them repeated in the walls of a Lodge room, as though they were never yet repeated elsewhere.— Or can there be any solid ground of hope for the institution by reason of the new secrets that are added on, since the late full disclosures; there being so many continually deserting the ranks, and bringing out with them the new additions, as fast as they are made? And though we are repeatedly told, that the present excitement, it is called, on the subject of masonry, is subsiding, and will soon be past, nothing seems to be more futile, since it is publicly asserted, without contradiction, to my knowledge, that there are, already, in the States, more than thirty newspapers engaged in circulating this information, with others adding to the same list, while, so far as I can learn, there are none among the christian public, who are free from the influence of masonry, and who have carefully examined

the subject, by the light which has recently been reflected upon it, who do not disapprove of the institution, and wonder that good men do not all leave it at such a time as the present. According to the information which I possess with regard to the public feeling on this subject, I must believe, that those who are already acquainted with it, cannot be satisfied to become silent spectators as before, to see Masonry patronized and increasing in our country ; yet though it were expected here, as in some of the powers of the east, that Masonry will be put down by the strong hand of government, the expectation would seem to be vain, because there is so much proof that it is going, and will go, rapidly out of date, merely by the influence of popular sentiment against it. Heretofore, it has been greatly nourished and strengthened by the favor of popular opinion: but christianity has now made such progress in our country, while the public opinion respecting it is taking such a turn, with so deep and general an interest set in array against it, that for one, I see no remaining hope for the institution, but that it must now, gradually sink into disrepute and oblivion. I am aware, however, that there are not a few, who would fain hope, that what masonry is now experiencing, is nothing but a wicked persecution from the spirit of the world, which will only terminate in the purification of the institution, the same as the Church of Christ has many times experienced. But to see the emptiness of this imagination, it need only to be remembered, that in the present movement against Masonry, its members are not assailed, they are not reviled for being masons, and are not desired to be imprisoned and put to death ; but it is the institution, separate from the persons and character of its members, which is sustaining the shock ; though it would be unjust in me to doubt that its members do most generally and honestly feel, that the attack is against their persons and characters, and it has been with regret, that I witnessed many things, which must, very naturally be so constructed : But considering the variety of characters enlisted on both sides of the question, it is not surprising that such has been the case ; since it is so common a thing in all important controversial matters, for individuals to lose sight of their ultimate object in view, in their abuse of each other's persons and characters.

With regard to this question, though I acknowledge the spirit of personal abuse on the one side, it should not be denied, that the same has been equally apparent on the other, the whole of which is wrong, and should be considered entirely separate from the great question, whether this institution should stand or fall. This communication may close, by a plain question. Since it is so generally agreed, now, by a disinterested public, who have examined the subject of Masonry, of late, so extensively through the country that the Masonic Obligations ought not to be considered binding upon any ; how can it be expected that new members, if any should unite, under existing circumstances should be willing after being thus deceived, to remain in the Lodge, and closely keep those obligations, to help perpetuate the institution? In another communication, as soon as convenient, I think of noticing some exceptionable things in the masonic obligations, in connexion with reasons, why they are not to be considered binding.

HENRY JONES,

A dissented Royal Arch Mason.

Cabot, September 3, 1828.

LETTER NO. 5.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

It is my intention in the present letter, as I proposed before, to notice some things in the OATHS or OBLIGATIONS of Masonry, which are *objectionable* and in my opinion *destroying their binding nature*, as to *perpetual secrecy*. Before I proceed, however, it may be suitable to remark, that as in the course I have heretofore pursued in writing, it is my purpose not to introduce any thing as belonging to these Obligations, except what was actually taught me as such while a regular member of the Institution. Although the *phraseology* of these Oaths, as they are now before the public, is in some respects different, from that in which I learnt them; so far as I may have occasion to allude to them, in my writing, I shall adhere closely to the form in which they were taught to me, thirteen years ago; while my then vain and impenitent heart was enamoured with Masonry. If any individual shall question my ability to present the *very form* so far as I may need to

do it, after so long a period of indifference and neglect, concerning Masonry; I would observe for the satisfaction of such, that I should hold myself in readiness, if required, to submit the question to disinterested judges, and to abide their decision. It was not my intention, and I should not have thought it expedient now to publish any part of these Oaths, in the precise *words* in which they were taught to me, were it not for the fact, which has very much surprised me of late; that many of the fraternity, as I am credibly informed; are positively denying the substantial correctness of them, as they stand in Morgan's Illustrations, thereby, as it must be considered, implicating me with the gross charge of falsehood.

The first thing to be noticed as objectionable in these Obligations, is the extraordinary *mock solemnity, profanity &c.* of their introduction, viz: "*I, A. B. of my own free will and accord, in presence of Almighty God, and this Right Worshipful Lodge, erected to God and dedicated to the Order of the holy St. John; do hereby, and hereon, most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear.*" All three, of the first obligations, have precisely this introduction, according to my earliest instructions; and what, let me ask, is there in them, or in the other parts of Masonry, which can demand, or justify this pretended, solemn formality? As I know of no necessity for this, nor any thing which can be reasonably urged in its justification. I have no hesitation in declaring my opinion fully, that it is an absolute violation of the third Commandment, in twice taking the name of the Lord in vain; and what an unqualified violation it is, also, of the injunction of holy writ; "*to swear not at all.*" And what can it be, but a most daring insult, in the face of the Most High, for a body of men, who, with but very few if any exceptions, generally, are not those, who fear God and work righteousness, to set themselves up, as it were, by his side, clothed with such extraordinary, self created, self exalted titles; and what is it but an impious mockery of God, to declare such Lodges, in his awful presence: *Erected to God, and dedicated to the order of the holy St. John?*" Sure, if these Lodges, generally, have been erected to any god, and are acknowledged by him, as such, it must have been to some other than the God of heaven. I wish to be understood, as speaking exclusively of the *wickedness of*

these *Oaths*, in distinction from the character of those who may be still unconsciously giving their sanction to such wickedness.

Another clause which I shall notice at this time, is the same in substance in both the second and third degrees as follows, “ *I furthermore promise and swear, that I will answer and obey, all due signs and summons, given, sent or thrown to me, by the hand of a true and lawful brother fellow craft, (or master mason) or from the body of a legally constituted lodge of fellow crafts, (or master masons) so far as in me lies, if within the length of my cable tow.*” It is certainly difficult to find a happy construction of this clause, and I very much doubt, whether it has been understood by masons themselves, generally. Were it not for its peculiar phraseology, it might be understood to mean, that a person who takes this obligation upon him, is to answer all *signs*, made to him personally, by a brother of the same degree, by making corresponding masonic signs in return, so as to inspire a masonic confidence in each other; and further that such a person should obey all *summons or citations* from the lodge to attend its meetings; but as no distinction is made here, between the prerogative of a lodge and a private brother, to *make* such signs or summonses; it seems, that each one is bound to yield implicit obedience, in case of the signs and summons of an *individual brother*; as well as in case of the calls of the lodge, in all cases without qualification, when possible, unless he should be called on to travel further than the length of his cable tow; the length of which imaginary line, I believe, is not uniformly considered alike among masons; though it has been called three, four or five miles. It seems impossible to understand these “*signs and summons*,” as signs of *distress* and calls for charitable *assistance*, because a *whole lodge*, as in this case could not be supposed to call on an *individual member* for such assistance. If we may be allowed to construe this clause of giving, answering, and obeying “*signs and summons*,” as would seem most rational and easy from its expression; it binds a mason to be ready, on the shortest notice, to leave his business and go, at the sign of a lodge, private brother, to assist in doing any thing which they might declare necessary to be done, for the welfare and safety of the masonic institution, or its members, as such, should evil be cloaked in the design.

This suggestion, which is the only rational interpretation of the clause which I am able to obtain, I acknowledge, might not have entered my mind, had it not been, that there was such a full, and complete illustration of it, in the circumstances attending the kidnapping and unquestionable murder of Morgan, by the Freemasons two years ago, and in the masonic outrages which were committed with a view to destroy the disclosures of his, which are now before the world in the three first degrees of Masonry, and which were then supposed to be in printed sheets, at the printing office of Mr. Miller. Since the publication of my last number, the Report, in a pamphlet form has fallen into my hands, for the first time, of a large Committee, appointed for the purpose, from six or seven counties in N. Y. accompanied with the best testimony under oath, that they could obtain, relative to their outrages and if the gentlemen to whom I am writing, would avail themselves of that Report, and read it with care and impartiality, it seems as though they must see, that the clause of the masonic obligation on which I am now treating was *there* correctly understood, and faithfully acted out by *hundreds* of masons. Though the fraternity generally, may be yet far from adopting this opinion, I do consider myself fully authorized in the belief, that the original spirit and design of this clause, was to warrant such proceedings as those in the Morgan affair, when the life and honor of the institution should seem to be thus in jeopardy. In writing again upon the subject of these Oaths, I purpose to notice some clauses, which seem to carry with them, their own bold interpretation of iniquity.

HENRY JONES,
A dissented R. A. Mason.

Cabot, Sept. 3, 1828.

LETTER NO. 6.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS :

I continue as proposed, my examination of the Oaths of Masonry. The next clause which claims attention, is as follows, in the oath of the third degree: *I furthermore promise and swear, that I will keep a brother's secrets, and all others committed to me as such, MURDER AND TREASON ONLY EXCEPTED, and those at my own discre-*

tion," election, or choice. Before proceeding to state my particular objections to this clause, I would just remark, that I have no doubt, that, as it was taught me, it contains an important mistake, as it seems to level down the privileges of Masons with those of other men, in reference to the safety of their secrets with their brethren, and it is presumed that these words, "*and all others,*" in the clause were added by some ~~conscientious~~ Masonic Lecturer, who, at the time, thought it a necessary and happy amendment, though usually, it is most probable, they have not been admitted into the clause.

One objection to this clause is, that, if there were any validity in such *Oath*, it obliges masons in some particular cases to become accomplices with a brother in his gross violations of the laws of God and man, by concealing his guilt, and thus screening him from the demands of public justice. If a Mason of the third degree shall be guilty of counterfeiting, theft, forgery, or highway robbery, for which he shall be about to be brought to justice, if he can find a brother Mason, who has taken this obligation, and is able to afford him protection, provided he can be entrusted with all the secret circumstances, in the case; then, according to his *Oath*, he is perfectly safe, to go and relate to him the whole matter concerning his crime, to be kept as his secrets, at all events, since they are not the secrets of his *Murder* nor *Treason*, which he is here not bound to keep, except when he may prefer keeping them also.

Another objection to this clause, is, that it must sometimes expose those who take it, to the necessity of swearing falsely, without any possible way of escape. For instance, in such a case as has already been supposed, where one party is entirely innocent of the secret crime; or, in such a case as that of the Morgan affair, where several may have been combined in the same dark and evil designs, all of which was previously committed to each other, as the secrets of a master mason: Now, if a part of these shall be detected, or shall recant from any further share in such iniquity, and shall be duly summoned as witnesses and sworn to tell the whole truth in the case, against the others, they cannot proceed to do it, without violating their masonic obligation; then to be silent, or keep sacred such an *Oath*, there is no possible alternative, but to violate

their judicial Oath, and thus betray their country; and those who have read the testimony under oath, of masonic witnesses, who had been engaged in the conspiracy against Morgan, have seen the dilemma of masons, thus situated, and where there seemed to be the most unequivocal presumption, that they considered it a less evil to violate their judicial, rather than their masonic oath, when one only could be kept sacred.

But will some reply to these objections, that there is no such meaning in the clause, and it was never expected, from it, that a brother would be bound to keep wickedness a secret, when the public good requires it to be exposed?— Then, what means this particular exception of only two crimes, and these not excepted, unless it be the choice of the persons thus bound? Were it not for this particular exception of **MURDER AND TREASON**, only, it might have been rational, according to the common usage of language, to draw this inference from it that the secrets of masons should be most sacredly kept, in all lawful cases, only; but as the clause now stands, it is impossible to draw from it so favorable an inference, without a gross perversion of language. Will it be said, again, that the interpretation of this oath is always given to the candidate before he receives it, so far as the assurance that it contains nothing which is repugnant to his duty, either to his country or his God, and therefore, it cannot mean to bind any one to keep secret, the crimes of wicked masons? It is not pretended, but all well meaning masons have so received and considered it: But, let it be remembered, that the oath, itself, and the mistaken interpretation of it by the master of the Lodge, are no more necessarily connected together, than the Bible is, with the false interpretations which are many times given it.

Again, it might be said, that, the Bible itself, in the principles of Masonry, is said to be the “rule and guide” of the faith and practice, of every mason, therefore, all the other parts of masonic principles, must be interpreted according to the principles of that sacred volume. This is certainly plausible, were we to admit the antiquity and divine origin of the institution, which have been confidently and boastingly pretended by many. But let it be remembered, that masonry was never founded on the word of God; since it is

so abundantly evident that, in a Gospel land, the Bible has rather been profanely taken and placed upon masonry, as a cloak of hypocrisy, which alone could sustain the institution, in such a land as this; while the Koran, only, in a Mahometan land, could answer the same purpose. Thus it may be seen, that the Bible, and the oaths of masonry, have no connexion with each other, and the latter are not, necessarily explained by the former. What impartial observer then, cannot see the wickedness of such a clause, in the masonic oaths, however innocent they may be explained, and however innocent the intention of masons most generally, as I cheerfully grant, in their unsuspectingly taking upon themselves, so wicked an obligation.

It might be expected by some, that, before I dismiss, this clause, I should bear testimony, either for or against it, as it is publicly declared to stand, in the Royal Arch degree; where, instead of "Murder and Treason excepted," it is said to read "Murder and Treason not excepted." But my friends, who have not been thus "exalted" in the pretended sublimities of masonry, may recollect, that I intimated in my first letter, that I discontinued the pursuit of masonry, within a few days after my taking the Royal Arch degree, and of course, I never heard that oath again, neither in, nor out of the "Chapter," so that I cannot tell from recollection, whether that clause was so imposed upon me or not; yet, I by no means doubt the veracity of those, once Royal Arch Masons in New-York, who declare the clause to be thus worded, among masons of that degree in that direction; though it may have been differently expressed among such masons of New-England. Although my recollection could not be expected to serve me, as to the particular matter or expression of those higher obligations. I do distinctly recollect, that, at the time of their being imposed on me, some things in them, were considered so exceptionable by me, that I suffered my candidate companions, then on their knees with me, to repeat them after the "High Priest," instead of doing it myself, while my silence passed, as I supposed unnoticed. In reference to this contested clause, of "Murder and Treason not excepted," I confess, I have been stumbled of late, with the views of many members of the fraternity on the subject; for at the same time that they have reprobated in the severest terms, the

idea of keeping all a brother's secrets, these two crimes "not excepted," they have not been able to discover any thing contrary to the spirit of the gospel, in the obligation to keep all other secrets, except those of "Murder and Treason." I would here ask my Christian friends, if in their view, there can be any greater difference between the obligated wickedness of these two clauses which have now been compared together, than there is, in the magnitude of crime attached to murder and treason above the grossest of other crimes, if indeed, these two, should always be ranked higher than all others?

HENRY JONES,

A dissented Royal Arch Mason,

Cabot, Oct. 14, 1828.

LETTER NO. 7.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

The next clause which remains to be examined in the Obligations of Masonry belongs to that of the third degree, and though it binds a master Mason to be *chaste* in his outward conduct, in *some* cases which are there specified, it seems by an irresistible inference, to allow *unchastity* in all other cases, *not* particularly specified. I shall be excused from repeating this clause in the language in which I learnt it, though I would say, there is scarcely the least difference in the phraseology of it, from the manner in which Morgan has expressed it in his disclosures. The substance of this clause is simply this ; it binds those who take it, *to keep the seventh Commandment inviolate*, so far as may relate to the female department of a *brother Master Mason's family* ; provided however, they shall *know*, at the time, that such females do belong to such a family ; or sustain such a relation, to a master Mason.

It is true, that the clause does not *enjoin* a violation of the seventh Commandment in other cases not specified, but certainly it contains the *allowance* of it, or else there is no meaning in the obligated *restriction* of chastity to a few specified cases. What else can we infer from this *limiting* of a master Mason's charity, to a few particular cases, but that his masonic Obligation is designed to leave him the fullest

liberty to trample on the seventh Commandment in any other case, which it might be desirable? And even if he shall set at nought this Commandment, in any of the cases where he is required to *keep* it in the Obligation, when he is not aware, that his unchastity or lewdness is thus connected with a master mason's family, his obligation in that respect is not to be considered violated. It may give us a more clear and definite view of what is enjoined, and what is allowed in the clause here examined, if we bring forward some of the other Commandments, under the same restrictions and indulgences as parallel cases. How would Obligations like the following appear, if imposed upon members of the fraternity—that they will not take the name of the Lord in vain, in presence of any of a *brother* master Mason's family, "knowing them to be such," or will not murder one of *them*, nor steal from *them*, nor bear false witness against *them*, &c, "knowing them to be such?" What Masons of moral principles, let me ask, could endure with obligations like these, which contain the allowance of a violation of the several commandments named? And yet, they are precisely like the one which I have been reprobating, as still held in the fellowship of the Lodges.

Another objection to the Masonic Obligations, is, that they are frequently given to bind men to the performance of things, of which, at the time, they are left in profound ignorance. It has been no uncommon thing, with the unskilful Master of the Lodge, not being able to repeat the whole of the Oath, when called to administer it to the candidate, to make up his deficiency with a concluding and all comprehending clause, prepared for such an emergency, to this amount; that if any part of such oath has been omitted in the administration, the candidate must swear that he will hold himself bound by it, as soon as he may be informed what it is. Thus, if nine tenths of it are omitted, he must swear to be bound by the whole, as soon as he may hear it. Can such a manner of administering and receiving oaths be justified? Is it not literally, if I might use the phrase, a swearing at random? If such be not a profane trifling with the solemnity of oaths, it seems difficult to conceive, what would be called profanity.

The next and last part of the Obligations, which I think of noticing at present, is the *penalties* which are attached to

their violation. Though I recollect that the penalty of the Oath of the Royal Arch degree, is such as to forfeit life, by having the upper part of the skull struck off, I shall confine myself to those of the first three degrees, because these are most familiar to me, and sufficient for my purpose. The first penalty is, having the "*throat cut from ear to ear*," the "*tongue torn out by the roots*," &c. The second having the "*left breast torn open*," the "*heart taken from thence and thrown over*," the "*left shoulder, to become a prey to the beasts of the field, or the vultures of the air*;" and the third, I will write out in full, as it was taught me. viz. "*All this, I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a fixed and steady resolution to keep and perform the same, without any equivocation, mental reservation, or self evasion of mind in me whatever; binding myself under the no less penalty, than having my body severed in twain, my bowels torn from thence, and burnt to ashes, those ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven; my body severed in quarters, those quarters placed on the four cardinal points of the compass, with my head in the centre, never again to be reunited until the general resurrection or the judgment.*"

Passing by the gross and heathenish abominations which are so abundant here: I shall attend in this discussion, to but one particular point, which is this: *these penalties are at variance with the sixth Commandment of the decalogue, "Thou shalt not kill."* None will presume to say, that either of those penalties could be inflicted, without its producing instant death. So the candidate is made to pledge to the Lodge, or Institution of Freemasonry, as a surety, that he will safely keep its secrets, *not his money, nor his sacred honour; but his very life*; as though that was his own property, and he had an undisputed right to give it into the hands of assassins when he pleased. This would be no less than suicide, or a positive violation of the sixth Commandment. Certainly, a man has no more right to forfeit his own life, as a penalty for the violation of his oath, than that of his wife, child or friend. Then is it not great wickedness to do it, in violation of a plain command of God, as it is done in each of the penalties which have been mentioned?

Should it be said, that in these penalties, it is only meant that the candidate should express his strong determination, *not to suffer the secrets of Masonry to be extorted from*

him, even should ruffians put him to death in any form whatever, it might be answered that the expression of these penalties, *disproves* such an explanation; for the penalty of death, we see, is not attached to that clause of keeping the secrets *only*, but to *every* clause, thus, "All this, I most solemnly," &c. "binding myself under the less penalty," &c. so that it cannot mean, that the penalty is only to be suffered from ruffians, when the secrets would otherwise be extorted.

Although these penalties have so long been explained as not allowing the craft to execute them, thereby murdering the Mason who may knowingly and purposely violate the Obligation; and tho' it has been so common for Masons to believe, that no such wickedness was intended, or thought of, in the origin of these penalties, it must certainly, be doing violence to our language, so to understand them, from the words in which they are expressed. It has been said, that Masonry knows of "no penalties worse than expulsion." Then let me ask, why are these horrid *things*, in every Obligation, *called* penalties? Are they to be understood as a mere, solemn, unmeaning exclamation, showing the strong determination of the candidate to keep the Obligation, like the profane and thoughtless character, who sometimes says, he will *die*, if his assertion be not true, or if he shall not fulfil his word? Considering that the candidate at the time of taking this Oath and penalty upon him, is on his knees; and also he is caused to say, "in the presence of Almighty God, and that" "Right Worshipful Lodge," it will not be supposed, that the language of these penalties was meant to be trifled with in such a manner.— If these awful penalties *have* any meaning, what can they mean less than death; to be inflicted on the candidate, in case of a violation of his Oath, in the very shape there represented? Certainly, nothing less than this, for so it is expressly declared, "Under the *no less* penalty than having my body severed in twain," &c. And who then are the persons authorised to inflict those penalties but Masons, themselves, who are the only persons aggrieved or injured by such violations? And if these penalties are not to be so understood, what must we think of the recent declaration of Masons in a multitude of instances; that if Morgan *was* murdered by the fraternity, as it is generally allowed

that it was, he was treated just as he should have been ; and if still living, he *ought* to be disposed of in such a manner ? And further, if these penalties were never intended to authorize the craft to inflict any punishment on offenders worse than expulsion ; how is it to be explained to us, that a great number of Masons should be engaged in the outrages against Morgan and Miller, and though several of them have since been convicted of their crime in the affair, and punished by the civil authority, and others have absconded to evade such punishment, while Masonry, or all the Lodges connected with those Masons, stand mute, or look upon those enormities with approbation ?

If these penalties do *not* forfeit the life into the hands of the fraternity, and of course, Masonry has no laws, which authorise kidnapping and murder of its offenders, why were not *all* those Masons who were engaged in the conspiracy and mob of forcibly seizing and carrying off a free citizen to be murdered, as none can consistently deny, expelled from the Lodges to which they respectively belonged ? Instead of this not one of them, it appears, has violated the laws of Masonry in that matter, so far as to procure his expulsion. Does not this declare in language too plain to be misunderstood, that such is *not* unmasonic conduct ? Does it not seem to say to us, that an offender like Morgan, according to the laws of masonry, has *forfeited* his person and *life*, to be at the disposal of the brotherhood, so that such individuals have only acted in behalf of the fraternity, and of course, are not to be called to account for so doing ? And does not this prove, that Masonry, so far does consider these penalties to mean precisely what they express ? And that they forfeit life, in violation of the sixth Commandment ? To show more particularly that these Oaths are not binding, will be my next object.

HENRY JONES,
A dissented Royal Arch Mason,

Cabot, Oct. 29, 1828.

LETTER NO. 8.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS :

In the early part of my communications I made mention of my intention, with other things, to show why the Muson-

ic Oaths ought not to be considered binding as to perpetual secrecy. This is a point which I have endeavored to keep prominently in view, from the beginning, and if not deceived all the arguments which have been adduced, are calculated, more or less, to establish the position: But now, I have arrived at a place in the discussion, where it seems to come in course, to take up this point by itself, and bring forward arguments, with particular design to show that *these Oaths are, in no sense binding upon Masons*; although it is admitted that there are some things in them, which according to the Gospel all men are under obligation to observe and do; still, no one is to be considered under any greater obligation for the same by reason of these Masonic Oaths.

First, I would say, that these Oaths are not binding, and Masonry ought not to be kept a secret, because of the wickedness which is inculcated in its principles, and because of their dangerous and destructive tendency with regard to human happiness. My *premises* here will doubtless be sharply contested by some; but I appeal to the candid and disinterested who have carefully perused my former numbers to decide, whether I have not already brought forward facts and arguments, abundantly sufficient to establish my position on a basis which cannot be removed. Then taking it for granted that Masonry is an engine of evil, and calculated to diminish the sum of human happiness for time and eternity, and of course greatly to displease and dishonor God, what can be plainer than this, that every mason is at liberty to disclaim all further allegiance to these Oaths and this institution? And is it not his duty, at such a time as the present, to investigate the subject faithfully and impartially, if he has not done it before, and as soon as he may obtain a just and clear view of the principles of this institution, to come out and separate himself from her abomination, and bear testimony against them, to counteract, if possible, the unhappy influence of his sanctioning and upholding them heretofore? Still, *some* may be ready to say, though they are convinced of the evils of Masonry, they see no way to break away from them, and condemn them before the world, without becoming guilty of perjury. As it might be expected, under existing circumstances, there will be some to contend, that these Oaths are so sacred that no man can possibly disengage himself from them,

without the grossest perjury, as though they were in fact, paramount to his obligation to his country and his God; yet why should the conscientious any longer be guided by this sentiment? Surely, the pretended antiquity of masonry, nor the number and respectability of those who tenaciously adhere to it, nor their unwillingness to have its merits or demerits tried at the bar of public opinion, can be any reason why human happiness should be diminished and God dishonored, for the sake of keeping sacred such wicked and abominable Oaths. No reflecting person can imagine, that Herod, in murdering a distinguished man of God, was more approved in the sight of Heaven for the deed, though it was done to keep sacred his rash oath, than had he repented of his heedless profanity, and set the good man at liberty.

It is believed to be universally agreed among the thinking part of community, that all other similar obligations to that of Herod, found in the scripture and elsewhere, should not be considered binding, until we come to those of the Masonic Institution, where many are ready to make exceptions. It will probably be said by some, that the oaths of masonry are in no degree, parallel to the oath of Herod; to which I would reply, by again appealing to the candid and disinterested, to decide, if I have not sufficiently shown, that they are parallel; by showing that they are rashly taken before their contents are known, and that like Herod's Oath, they require men, in some particulars, to do evil.

Some may be ready to inquire and say: but why may we not *silently withdraw* our connexion from the institution, without coming out in hostile array against it, by bearing testimony to the world against its internal abominations, since there is at present, so much in the influence of the institution, which renders such a course, most terribly forbidding? I answer, because in this way, you would continue to show favor to the institution, and in a great degree, would still be a partaker of its abominations. You could not discover our country to be in danger from any unsuspected source, though your own person and property might be considered safe, without giving the alarm, and using your influence for the safety of others.

Another argument which shows that these Oaths are not to be considered sacred and binding, is, that *they are unlawfully administered and taken, both as they relate to laws human*

and divine. Although oaths, as a general thing, are most solemnly prohibited by the word of God, it is believed, that there are some exceptions made, where they are to be considered necessary and lawful; but the lawfulness or expediency of such a common multiplicity of them, as we have sometimes witnessed in civil affairs, is to me more than doubtful. And I am confident, that the scripture, in its solemn prohibitions, makes no provision for the Oaths of Masonry, and more especially so, since the proof is so abundant, that they are needed and used there merely as a canopy of impenetrable darkness to the secret abominations of that institution. By what authority then, shall the Master of a Lodge, in that capacity only, presume to administer these Oaths? and how can an individual receive them from him, without a violation of the divine command?

Shall it be said, that such oaths have so long been locked up in secrecy, and out of the way of the world, that they have not come in contact with the civil authority, and of course, are not to be judged, nor condemned by human laws? It is true that they have long been shrouded in thick darkness, as to a view of the world; yet no darkness could hide them from the view of Him who searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men; and now the lock is broken, they may come in contact with human laws, and their being so long hidden from the world, instead of making them more tolerable, only shows them to be so much the more among the unfruitful works of darkness, for which the people of God are commanded to have no fellowship. Men may promise, and make oath to their promise, to perform some lawful things, and their promise, if lawfully made, would lay them under a corresponding obligation to fulfil; but an unlawful oath, annexed to it, would add to it no further obligation; and certainly so far as they may promise with an oath to do things contrary to the will of God, as in case of the Masonic obligations, instead of keeping and fulfilling them, they seem to be called upon by divine authority, to withdraw from them and disown them.— Seeing then, that these oaths are not administered or received lawfully, but in direct violation of the divine law, I ask, where is the sanction of God upon them, which alone can give them the lawful validity of an oath? Certainly such sanction is not to be found, but the contrary is clear.— These unlawful oaths then, do not, nor cannot, impose the

least obligation upon those who may take them. This question may be further noticed in another communication.

HENRY JONES,

A dissented Royal Arch Mason.

Cabot, November 4, 1828.

LETTER NO. 9.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

It is now further to be shown, that the oaths of Masonry are not to be considered binding upon its members, because the *condition on which they are taken is not ascertained to be found in truth.* So far as I have been able to learn, all lodges, it has been the undeviating practice of the Master, or presiding officer, when about to administer these Oaths, in behalf of the institution, to inform the candidate who is required to take them, in substance as follows: that they "contain nothing contrary to his allegiance to his country, or his religion to his God." And sure, it is now too late for any to say, who have attended candidly to this discussion, that such oaths are free from every thing which is contrary to the religion of the Bible, when it has been shown so abundantly, that they do contain much that is of an evil character, and at variance with the duties required in the gospel. Then how does it appear according to the previous *agreement* between the administrator and the receiver, that such oath is binding. The agreement made between the two parties at the time, is like this: while the master or officer acting for the institution, requires the candidate to take the oath, only with this condition, his submitting, and taking it under that condition, is no less than saying, tho' not spoken with words, that he will take it, and be bound by it, provided the statement of the condition is true, but not otherwise. Then so soon as he shall discover the contents of such oath, to be contrary to the condition to repeat it after the master, why is he not just as much at liberty to be disentangled from it as before?

We may be told, that such objections, if ever made, should be made at the time; or before repeating the oath from the lips of the master; and that, if on hearing the oath it should be objectionable to the candidate, he need not have taken it. But let all fairly understand this matter,

and that the candidate has no reasonable opportunity to examine the oath before taken, for he is not permitted to know one syllable of its contents, nor, that there is any oath to be taken, on joining the institution, if possible to keep him ignorant of it; until he is caused to kneel at "the altar, neither naked nor clothed, barefoot nor shod, hood-winked, with a cable tow," or rope, "about" his "neck," and told that he is "now about to take the solemn Oaths or Obligation of an Entered Apprentice," &c. and then he can know nothing of it any faster, than a few words of it are said over for him to repeat after the Master, sentence after sentence, or half sentence, or word at a time, until it is finished, like the stupid school boy, who knows not one word of his lesson, but repeats it as he is commanded, word for word, at the lips of the teacher. How little then, could be learnt, or understood, of a long oath taken in this manner, amid so much, at such a season, that is calculated to distract the thoughts. If ever it is to be fairly examined and tried by the scale of moral rectitude, it must be done after it is taken, when a person may see and examine it, as other things are tried, to be approved or condemned. How unreasonable then, that he should be required to judge of it, and condemn it at such a critical and unexpected moment, or be forever debarred the privilege afterwards. Besides considering the incapacity of the candidate of judging of the moral character of such oaths, at the time of taking them, his condition is such as every one may see, as will not allow of his usurping authority, to judge, and condemn them, even if his mind could be then sufficiently enlightened. Before the first step is taken towards the institution, he must promise upon his honor, before a number of the fraternity, that he will conform to all their customs and requirements in taking the degree, as all others have done, on becoming masons. Then he hears and learns many things, of the secret forms of initiation, before he comes to the oath, when circumstanced as I have mentioned, and knowing that there is no possible way of escape, if he should protest against the oath, or any part of it, and refuse to take it, he cannot feel, while taking it, as though he was acting for himself, but that he has blindly and voluntarily placed himself in a condition where he must inevitably comply with the usages of the lodges as though he should, at the time being, finishing the oath, perceive that there was

more matter proposed to him in it, which appeared wrong to be taken, how can he do otherwise, having gone so far, than finish it, hoping to make the best of it afterwards.— Thus, when he shall have an opportunity to examine it for himself separate from the specious interpretations which are given it, by those who have themselves taken in upon trust, and finds it contains things contrary to the condition on which he took it, what can be plainer, than that he is not bound by it, according to the previous agreement? If I make a promise to a stranger, that I will grant his request, before he makes it known to me, provided, that it is both lawful and reasonable, shall I be holden to fulfil such a promise, and grant the request, though when declared, I find it both unlawful and unreasonable?

Though as it appears, that none, having commenced the taking of these oaths in this their blind and helpless condition, make their escape without having the whole of them imposed upon them, it is confidently believed, that no men of moral principles would have been caught there, could they have known positively, before making up their minds to unite with the fraternity, that in going forward, they must take upon themselves oaths of precisely such a moral character as those of masonry.

The last reason which I now think of assigning to show that the masonic oaths are without validity, is, that *the word of God absolutely condemns them, and requires them to be repented of, and put away.* Separate from the general prohibitions concerning the taking of oaths in the scriptures, some of which have already been briefly noticed. I shall now produce a passage, which if I mistake not, seems given to settle this question beyond any further dispute, in the minds of all who shall carefully and truly compare it with the oaths of Masonry. The passage is in Leviticus, 5th Chap. 4th and 5th verses. “*If a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips, to do evil, or to do good, whatever it be, that a man shall pronounce with an Oath and it be hid from him, when he knoweth of it, then shall he be guilty in one of these. And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess, that he hath sinned in that thing.*” Surely nothing could have been written on the subject of oaths, more appropriate to the oaths of masonry than this passage of scripture; and nothing could more expressly condemn them, and declare their invalidity. And truly it seems as

though the passage could not be applied to any other kind of oaths which are at present in use among men ; and it is believed, that the masonic, are the only oaths which are taken which their contents are "*hid from*" the receiver, and the only oaths, to my knowledge, except such as are openly and grossly profane, which a man takes, "*pronouncing with his lips,*" as mentioned in this passage. Many men among us have been calied, to take hundreds of solemn oaths, but not one of them was pronounced at the time by the receiver, with his lips, except in Masonry. Where else then could this passage be applied, but to the oaths of this institution? It certainly seems to set the matter beyond all reasonable dispute between Masons and Anti-Masons, as it goes farther than any thing, for which the latter have ever contended since it does not condemn the oath that is unwittingly taken, merely because of the *evil* which it may contain, but condemns it because it is *so taken*; whether it be evil or good; "*whatever it be that a man shall pronounce with an Oath,*" in that manner. Is not the requisition in this scripture so plain that a child might understand it, that when an individual has thus sworn "*to do evil or to do good,*" when it was thus "*hid from him,*" as in the masonic oaths, he ought to withdraw from them, as soon as he may know what he has done, and "*confess that he hath sinned in that thing!*" At present, I can see but one way by which way will be likely to endeavor to evade the conclusion which is so clear from this passage; which is: it may be said that the passage stands connected with Jewish ceremonies, which are now done away, and of course, that this passage must now be as much out of date as those ceremonies. But the thoughtful and candid will not be thus easily convinced, that the moral law of God, or his law respecting the wickedness of oaths, has been changed or done away with the ceremonies of the Jewish Church.

HENRY JONES,
A dissented Royal Arch Mason.

Cabot, Oct. 29, 1828.

LETTER NO. 10.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

Once more I address you, and the present series of Let-
4*

ters will be closed. At a time like the present, when the institution of Free Masonry, are undergoing the faithful scrutiny of the public, it seems to be of very great importance, that the question, so frequently asked, "*What is the origin of the Institution?*" should receive the answer which it demands, in order that an impartial and correct judgment may be more readily formed. If it originated with the people of God; and was patronized as a good and useful institution by many of the most eminent characters whose names are recorded in holy writ; at a time too, when they were enjoying the special guidance and approbation of the Most High; a favorable judgment must be rendered of it, at least while in its native purity, though now so degenerated and perverted:—But if, on the other hand, this institution originated with men of corrupt principles, who have falsely founded it, on pretended important facts, which never existed; then of course, considering also, its present deformed character, it must be condemned by the public, as a base and wicked fabrication, an insult upon community, and only worthy to be utterly expunged from all ranks of society. Each of these suppositions, for the origin of the institution, is considered correct, by the opposite parties who feel interested in the subject, and are exhibited by them, respectively, as proof of its merits, or demerits.

Although there are no documents by which to ascertain the precise time and place, of the origin of Freemasonry, and although this is a point, about which I would not be curious; it is my design on this occasion to show, that *its own claims to an origin at the building of the temple of Solomon, among wise and holy men, are unfounded*, and that consequently, *it must have had its origin since that time, among false and wicked men, so that those wise and holy men had no part nor lot in the matter.*

It is well known to all the fraternity who have become somewhat familiar with the lectures of the first three degrees, that they do teach us, that Speculative, or Freemasonry, originated at the building of Solomon's temple, and that a large share of the mysteries of the institution are established on certain events, which are said to have transpired at that time and place. I shall not consider it necessary to repeat over those parts of the lectures to which I allude; but for the benefit of some who may still be unacquainted with the subject, I would concisely bring into view some of

the pretensions of Masonry, as to its having its origin at the building of the temple with Solomon and others, which I am to endeavor to show, as being false.

Passing by much in the first and second degrees, which teaches the same, I shall confine my remarks to the third degree; and would observe, First, that the lecture of this "sublime" degree, teaches us that Freemasonry was founded at the building of the temple, by these important circumstances, which it professes to record, *viz.* that there were employed in building it, three Grand Masters; Solomon king of Israel, Hiram king of Tyre, and Hiram "Abiff," as he is designated in masonry, but in the scripture, Hiram the son of a widow, &c. who alone constituted the Master's lodge at that time, and who alone possessed the Master's secrets or word, holding their secret meetings in the sanctum sanctorum, or holy of holies of the temple. They are represented also, in this degree, as having agreed together, never to give the Master's word to any other person, unless they all three were together in doing it; so that, when Hiram "Abiff" is represented in this degree, as being slain, before any of the craftsmen had received this secret word of the Masters', it could not afterwards be given, for want of the three Grand Masters together, and was, in consequence of this, for many years lost, having another word substituted in its stead.

Having brought forward these things as the pretended matters of fact, on which the institution of Freemasonry professes to be founded; I would observe, that they bring with themselves no proof that they are matters of fact in reality, unless we are bound to consider them so proved by the bare assertion of an individual, who says that he was secretly told so, by a second person in the preceding generation, who in like manner, received his information from a third, and so on through fifty or an hundred generations, to go back to the days of Solomon: But no tribunal has ever been authorized to allow the least credit to a witness like this, on any important question between opposite parties.

Although it is often difficult to prove a negative in such a case as this; I am prepared to prove, unless I greatly mistake, that these Masonic pretensions to the origin of the institution at the building of the temple, are false; by showing from scripture history, that Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram

“Abiff” never were associated with Solomon as Grand Master in the building of the temple, so that they three, never constituted a Master’s lodge there, assembling in the sanctum sanctorum for their secret meetings. Every one must know, who is acquainted with this history, I Kings, 11 Chron. that Solomon was Master alone, over all the work of the building, that he was especially endowed with wisdom from above to qualify him to form so great a work, and that the Lord furnished him with particular directions, through the agency of David his father,* which was equal to a pattern of the building, and more than this, Hiram king of Tyre, as it seems from scripture and reason, never left his kingdom to go and dwell at Jerusalem, while the temple was building, as he only bartered with Solomon in a friendly manner, by furnishing timber for the temple, and sending his servants to cut and prepare it, &c. for which Solomon made satisfaction in wheat, barley, wine and oil; with twenty cities. It is evident, also, beyond dispute, that Hiram “Abiff” was not a Grand Master with Solomon in building the temple, and with him constituting a Master’s lodge meeting privately in the Sanctum Sanctorum, as the third degree represents; because he was employed only as a very skilful workman in metals, and because, he labored *not* on, or about the temple, but exclusively in casting the furniture, &c. for the temple, under the direction of Solomon, “*In the plain of Jordan—in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan,*” or “*Zeredathah.*”†

Again, the instructions of the third, or “sublime” degree, give us to understand that Free Masonry originated with wise and good men, under the patronage of God, at the building of the temple, by its establishing the principal part of the mysteries of that degree on the pretended murder of Hiram “Abiff,” with the various circumstances in its connexion, while he was in the temple, before it was finished, at a time too, when he was daily employed in planning work for the craft, and overseeing them on the building. All who have taken the third degree, or have examined Morgan’s book, may know, that there is a long secret dialogue or tragedy, to be acted out, by the members of the lodge whenever the degree is conferred, in imitation of the whole process, and all the circumstances, of the pretended murder

* 1. Chron. 28. 11, 12, 19.

† I Kings 7: 46; and 11. Chron. 4: 17.

of this Hiram, and that the candidate who takes the degree, must always represent Hiram and experience a mock murder, two burials, &c.: But of Hiram's being thus murdered in the temple, before its completion, Masonry gives us no better evidence than what has been noticed in case of the other pretended facts, on which, not the least dependence can be placed, even if there were nothing to disprove it.

If such a horrible assassination as this is represented to be, so important a character as Hiram was, had taken place under those circumstances, it is unaccountably strange, that the sacred writer, in recording the remarkable events connected with that great work, should pass over so important an event as this, in utter silence; and strange too, that Josephus, who has given such a particular account of the building, workmen and circumstances of the temple, in his 8th Book, 2nd and 3d Chapters, should not intimate a word of any such important transaction.

Although both Josephus and the scripture on the other side of the question, is not silent, but it speaks out, and gives us to understand that he was *not* thus there murdered.

The first proof to be mentioned from scripture of this fact, is what has already been noticed, viz., that he never wrought as an overseer on the building of the temple, as I think we must conclude, from the consideration, of his being employed by Solomon only as a cunning workman, in casting the metallic vessels, furniture, &c. of the temple, "in the plain of Jordan," at a place, not less than thirty or forty miles, from Jerusalem, where the temple was built, as it appears by consulting sacred geography on the subject. ••

Another scripture testimony which is positive, against the pretended fact of Hiram's being murdered in the temple before its completion, and before he had finished the work which had been assigned him, is that he was *living* when the temple was completed, and that he lived to *finish* all the work, which had lain upon his hands, for the use of the temple. The first passage which declares this, is I. Kings, 7th Chap. 40th verse, *And Hiram made the lavers and the shovels and the basons; so Hiram MADE AN END of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the Lord.*"

Then, lest this plain text should be perverted, the same Chap. enumerates all the wonderful castings of Hiram, and in the last verse, which is in the same connexion, with

Hiram's making an end of all his work for king Solomon, it is said, " *So was ENDED all the work, that KING SOLOMON made for the house of the Lord.*" Then according to the sacred writer, the very next thing was, the dedication of the temple by Solomon, as it is particularized in the next Chap.

To set the fact of Hiram's being alive, at the finishing of the temple, still further beyond all doubt, the same testimony of it, is recorded again, in II, Chron. 4th Chap. 15th verse, " *And Huram [or Hiram] made the pots, and the shovels, and the basons. And Huram FINISHED the work that he was to make for king Solomon, for the house of God.*" So it is said again, in the same connexion of the subject, in the first verse of the next Chap. " *Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the Lord was FINISHED,*" &c. immediately upon which, as the history informs us, the people of Israel were assembled for the dedication of the building.

Having shown now, as I would hope, to the satisfaction of all who rely upon scripture testimony, and the exercise of reason, for evidence; that Solomon was *alone*, under God, a 'Grand Master,' or the builder of the temple; that Hiram king of Tyre, never *left his kingdom* to go and dwell at Jerusalem, to be a Grand Master in the building, forming a Master's lodge, &c; that Hiram "Abiff," was *not* a Grand Master at Jerusalem with Solomon in erecting the temple, and that he was *never slain* there before the finishing of his appropriate work, having lived to *make an end* of it, and see the temple completed; What are we to think of the institution of Free Masonry? the lectures of which tell us, that Hiram king of Tyre, and Hiram "Abiff," were Grand Masters with Solomon in building the temple; that they three constituted a Master's lodge assembling in the *sanctum sanctorum*, &c. and that Hiram "Abiff," was *slain* in the temple before its completion, while busily employed in the great work. And what shall we think of it too, when it professes in its lectures to have its *origin* in connexion with these reputed events, and to be *founded* upon them, while nearly the whole substance of the mysteries of the third degree, is a dialogue, in imitation of Hiram's assassination, &c.? Considering that the first three degrees of Free Masonry which were established, must be the corner stone, or foundation, on which all the latter degrees are built, would it be unreason-

able for me now to ask; On what then does the whole superstructure of Free Masonry rest but a base fabrication of wicked men, who in some dark and apostate age of the world, have risen up, united into a secret society, and darkly handed down their inventions, to flatter us to believe that their institution is good, as having originated among wise and good men; and being ignorant of the manner in which their false pretensions would be exposed; have told us, that it was established on certain specified facts and events, which, by looking at them carefully, and comparing them with our Bible, we find, never had existence? Was there ever an imposture of such magnitude as this, so generally palmed upon mankind? And yet, here is the origin of the foundation of Speculative Free Masonry; and here is a portrait of the character of its founders and first principles, and here I would leave it, for the examination of its present, conscientious members and the trial of the public.

HENRY JONES,

A dissented Royal Arch Mason,

Cabot, Nov. 19, 1828.

EXPULSION.

At a regular communication of King Hiram Lodge, convened at Mason's Hall in Waitsfield, September 24, A. L. 5828, voted unanimously that Henry Jones, now residing in Cabot, a *master mason*, and a member of said lodge, be expelled therefrom for unworthy and unmasonic conduct.

LEWIS HOLDEN, *Secretary pro tem.*

MR. JONES' CHURCH.

Oct. 8, 1828. At a meeting of the Congregational Church in Cabot, held at the meeting house, the Pastor not being present, Dea. Moses Stone was appointed *Moderator pro tem.* and Dea. Marcus O. Fisher, *Clerk pro tem.*

It being then stated that the object of the meeting was to take into consideration the conduct of *Mr. Jones* in relation to the subject of Freemasonry, and to act thereon, if thought expedient, the following preamble and resolutions were introduced, and unanimously adopted :

Whereas, the Rev. *Henry Jones*, our Pastor has seceded from the Masonic Institution, and declared publicly, "that its secrets are substantially before the world," by reason of a conscientious view of the subject, for which he is suffer-

ing the severest displeasure and reproach of that fraternity. And whereas, it is rumored that we are dissatisfied with him for so doing, Therefore,

Resolved, That we highly *approve* of his conduct in regard to this thing, and that we will, so far as in us lies, *sustain* him against whatever calumny or malignity may be offered him by the supporters of that institution.

Resolved, That, since we have such full and conclusive evidence, that the once hidden things of Masonry, are now before us for investigation, and of course we may consistently decide on the subject—we consider those Masons who have renounced these things, as deserving well of their country, and especially of the Church, for such a step, and that we sympathize with them in their *trials* and *persecutions*, and earnestly pray God to deliver our land from the evils of this Institution, and the Church from all Masonic influence.

Resolved, That, in our opinion, the *Oaths and Obligations* of Masonry, are no more binding upon the members, than was the Oath of Herod to slay John the Baptist, or that of the forty Jews who banded together to kill Paul; and that those who *adhere* to them after a reasonable time and opportunity to examine the subject in the light which is now reflected on it, are adding sin to sin.

Resolved, That the proceedings of this Church meeting be signed by the Moderator and Clerk, and forwarded to the several editors of public journals at Montpelier and Danville, with our request that they may be inserted in their respective papers.

MOSES STONE, *Moderator pro tem.*
MARCUS O. FISHER, *Clerk pro tem.*

Oct. 14, 1828. We hereby certify, that agreeably to the wish of the brethren of the above meeting, the views of our resident brethren who were then *absent* have been ascertained, on the proceedings of the meeting, so that we are now authorised to say, that there is an entire unanimity through the Church concerning them, and we know not of an individual member of our *Congregational Society*, who dissents from the same sentiments; yet we are not aware that these things were so matured, in a single instance, as to come to the knowledge of Mr. Jones until after his renunciation of Masonry.

MOSES STONE.

MARCUS O. FISHER.

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