



The Character, Claims And Practical Workings Of Freemasonry

Charles G. Finney

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IN few words I wish to state what are not and what are my reasons for writing this book.

1. It is not that I have any quarrel or controversy with any member of the Masonic Order. No one of them can justly accuse me of any personal ill-will or unkindness.
2. It is not because I am fond of controversy--I am not. Although I have been compelled to engage in much discussion, still I have always dreaded and endeavored to avoid the spirit and even the form of controversy.
3. It is not because I disregard the sensibility of Freemasons upon the question of their pet institution, and am quite willing to arouse their enmity by exposing it. I value the good opinion and good wishes of Freemasons as I do those of other men, and have no disposition to capriciously or wantonly assail what they regard with so much favor.
4. It is not because I am willing, if I can dutifully avoid it, to render any member of the Fraternity odious. But my reasons are:
 1. I wish, if possible, to arrest the spread of this great evil, by giving the public, at least, so much information upon this subject as to induce them to examine and understand the true character and tendency of the institution.
 2. I wish, if possible, to arouse the young men who are Freemasons, to consider the inevitable consequences of such a horrible trifling with the most solemn oaths, as is constantly practiced by Freemasons. Such a course must, and does, as a matter of fact, grieve the Holy Spirit, sear the conscience, and harden the heart.
 3. I wish to induce the young men who are not Freemasons "to look before they leap," and not be deceived and committed, as thousands have been, before they were at all aware of the true nature of the institution of Freemasonry.
 4. I, with the many, have been remiss in suffering a new generation to grow up in ignorance of the character of Freemasonry, as it was fully revealed to us who are now old. We have greatly erred in not preserving and handing down to the rising generation the literature upon this subject, with which we were made familiar forty years ago. For one, I must not continue this remissness.
 5. Because I know that nothing but correct information is wanting to banish this institution from wholesome society. This has been abundantly proven. As soon as Freemasons saw that their secrets were made public, they abandoned their lodges for very shame. With such oaths upon their souls, they could not face the frown of an indignant public, already aware of their true position.
 6. Freemasons exhort each other to maintain a dignified silence and are exhorted not to enter into controversy with opposers of Freemasonry. The reasons are obvious to those who are informed. We know why they are silent if they are so, and why they will not enter the field of controversy and attempt to justify

their institution. Let anyone examine the question and he will see why they make no attempt to justify Freemasonry as it is revealed in the books from which I have quoted. I greatly desire to have the public, and especially the church of Christ, understand what Freemasonry is. Then let them act as duty requires.

7. Should I be asked why I have not spoken out upon this subject before, I reply that until the question was sprung upon us in this place a year ago, I was not at all aware that Freemasonry had been disinterred and was alive, and stalking abroad over the face of the whole land.

8. This book contains the numbers published in the Independent last year. These are revised, enlarged and rearranged. To these are added eight numbers not heretofore published.

9. I have said in the body of the work, and say also in this preface, that I have no pecuniary intent in the sale of this work. I have not written for money, nor for fame. I shall get neither for my pains. I desire only to do good.

C.G. FINNEY.

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