AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED BY

JOHN J. MOORE, V.D.M.,

BEFORE THE

Colored Masonic Fraternity of California,

AT

San Francisco, June 23, 1865.

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PRINTED BY TOWNE AND BACON.
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Religion and science have been the great controling elements of civilization and social progress; they have been coeval with the history of man.

These grand patrons of human improvement, have aimed constantly to secure the highest advantages to man, for living comforts, convenience, power, influence, and happiness, attainable individually or socially.

Wherever, and whenever, in man's history, he has been shut off from the moulding influence of those two great pioneers of human progress, he has been the subject of a savage or barbarous condition of life.

Religion and science have moulded the manners, customs, and habits of all nations of the earth. These great co-workers God hath ordained for the grand and sublime work of developing the *nature*, *laws*, and *powers* of MIND and MATTER, as displayed in the attributes of GOD, man, our planet, and its kindred spheres.

Religion secures the development of the human conscience, the formation of moral character, social manners, and the acknowledgment, adoration, and love of a *Supreme Being*.

Science, religion's twin sister, investigates and appropriates to man's use, all laws, with their substantives, that are found to subserve him in his material state of being.

Of human science, we mean simply man's acquaintance with any distinct system of relative laws, that control mind or matter, that can be subordinated to human agency, so as to secure, uniformly, any given desired effect.

Religion modifies and regulates human mind and matter. *Science* modifies and subordinates matter, animate and inanimate. Jointly, those two great agencies control mind, spirit, and matter.

It was religion that inspired first the element of affection in the soul of our primogenitor—with the feelings of *adoration*, *devotion*, *love*, and *obedience* to his Creator, while science taught him the principles of distinction and classification, as demonstrated in the classification of animate creation, correspondent with given qualities. When sin divested our *Federal head* of their robe of moral innocency, and exposed them to guilt and shame, science vested them with the first covering to shelter their naked bodies from ignominy.

In the first act of sacred worship by righteous Abel, religion taught the order of ritual, and science built his altar. Thus religion and science have been coeval in controling or directing man's highest spiritual and temporal interests, providing for the soul and body. Though these two great agencies of human improvement have laid the foundation for all human institutions, yet they have themselves been the object of the fostering and protecting care of institutions.

In the earlier periods of the history of human society, religion and science were embraced in important institutions, connectedly, for their protecting care. In modern times it is not generally so. Church creeds and ecclesiastical governments foster and protect religion, and science has the fostering care of scholastic institutions. The first order of institutions alluded to as the early patrons of those great principles, religion and science, were common among the most ancient nations, as *Thracians*, *Egyptians*, *Greeks*, *Romans*, and *Phonicians*. Those institutions were established and conducted in the form of mystic associations, which, under different modifications, have been perpetuated to the present time, and in their most modern and enlightened form, constitute the association we are called upon to address on the present occasion.

In addressing the brethren of the fraternity this evening, we shall make, first, some allusion to the history of the mystic order of associations :

The first of these were known among the Egyptians, titled in history the Egyptian Mysteries. They consisted in two orders, or degrees, conferred by initiatory ceremonies. The institution was established and dedicated to the god *Osiris* and goddess *Isis*, the great teachers of Egyptian religion, laws, arts, and sciences, as held by them.

The second order, known to authentic history, was the Orphean Mysteries, established among the ancient Thracians of Europe. This order was established and dedicated to the god *Orpheus*, (the son of the Thracian River). He, it was said, to have inspired them with divinity, music, and poetry. This institution had several degrees, conferred by initiatory ceremonies.

The third order were the Eleusinian Mysteries, established among the ancient Greeks; dedicated to the goddess *Ceres*. This order had several degrees, conferred by initiatory ceremonies, upon males, females, and children, with great solemnity. It celebrated *Ceres*, annually, at Elusis, as the goddess that taught them the art of agriculture—the holy doctrine that purified the heart, and that expelled ignorance from the mind.

The fourth order was the *Dionyac Architects*, established among the Phœnicians, known in history, at Tyre, in the days of King Hiram, and in the time of Solomon, king of Israel. They were a regular organized association of builders, having initiatory ceremonies of a religious character, and having secret signs by which they were known to each other.

A band of these workmen, of this mystic association, was employed by Solomon in building the great temple at Jerusalem, being the most scientific workmen then living.

The Fifth Order brings us down to modern accounts of these mystic orders to A.D. 700. As known to history in different parts of Europe, the *Masonic Order*, consisting of different architectural corporations, existing under the same general regulations, but recognized under different names in different countries.

Those architectural associations were similar in their general constitutions to those of Ancient Tyre, showing that probably their elementary principals of architect descended from the Ancient Phœnicians. Those Masonic Fraternities of the seventh century were known by different names. In Italy they were titled "The Colages of Architects;" in France, "The Free Corporations," or "The Pontificial Brotherhood;" in England and in Scotland, they were called "Free Masons," because of their exclusive privileges as corporate builders; and thus the name of Free Mason has, in an operative sense, come down to us.

We learn from history that Athelstane, the King of England, being a great friend to Masonry, granted them, in the beginning of the tenth century, a charter to hold their general assemblies in York City, in England, where they met as early as A.D. 925, and in their regulations they there adopted the Gothic Constitutions.

Subsequent to this, in the *twelfth century*, Free Masonry penetrated into *Scotland*, and erected the famous Abbey of Kilwinnig, which became the cradle of Free Masonry in Scotland.

In the thirteenth century they appeared in Germany. They held their first general convention at Strasburg, where they were engaged in the erection of its splendid cathedral. In imitation of their English brethren, they here took the name of Free Masons, and took the obligation of obedience to the laws and regulations of the society.

In the sixteenth century Masonry commenced to change its phase or form, from operative and speculative, to the single feature of speculative, and admitting men of science and learning and religion, regardless of operative intentions.

In 1717 the active lodges in London, in England, united together, and formed the Grand Lodge of England, establishing fully the order under the new form of Speculative Masonry.

Masonry then becoming speculative, taking its new modification of Free and Accepted Masons, embracing a system of symbolism, it commenced rapidly to spread throughout the world. In 1725, under its new form, it was introduced into France ; in 1729, into Ireland ; in 1731, into Holland, Spain, and Russia ; and in 1733, into Italy ; in 1733, into Boston, in America ; and during the same century into Africa and Asia. Thus Free Masonry has been established throughout the world. Thus we have a brief historical outline of its original establishment and progressive changes.

2d. We wish to trace the original and present design of those mystic institutions. We find invariably among those of the ancient order, from the Egyptian mysteries, four thousand years ago, down to A.D. 1717, those institutions had for their main and grand design uniformly the advancement of civilization, in the cultivation of *religious principle*, *science*, *art*, *and social fraternity*.

The Egyptian mysteries required a person of strict observance of their moral and religious code to be admitted to membership, while the initiated were required to cultivate and practice the various arts and sciences then commonly known.

Such, also, was the case with the Mystic Phœnician Fraternity, reckoned among the secret orders of ancient institutions. They held their members to the strictest observance of important religious rules they had established, while the members had to have certain scientific and architectural attainments, and to cultivate them ; and it is clearly established that a like design, characterized the Masonic order from the seventh to the seventeenth century, A.D., when Masonry was established entirely in its speculative form, which give a new phase to its design, which gives Free Masonry, as its present design, the following grand objects : The cultivation of *revealed religion and morality*, *intellectual improvements*, *fraternal friendship*, *and human beneficence*.

Whenever and wherever Masons ignore either of those great principles, he is either ignorant of the design of the institution, or has only his own selfish ends to accomplish. Religion, wisdom, fraternity, and beneficence are the pillars of Masonry. To effect either of these, is to shake the foundation of the association. The Mason who indulges in intemperance, or vanity, or vice of any kind, is an enemy of the worst kind to the institution; and no man ought to be tolerated as a member of the order who is guilty of those evils.

It is clearly shown in the history of the institution, that whenever it suffered declension, it was by the corruption of its membership, and the perversion of its true design. A true Mason will cultivate *Religion, Intelligence, Fraternity, and Beneficence.* The whole system of its symbols, emblems, and mottoes, point to those great human elements; whenever it abandons these principles, its dissolution is certain.

Let us, brethren, guard against moral corruption, against false insinuation and selfish designs, and keep to the old landmarks. Let us remember that Speculative Masonry is to develop man's higher nature; it is to check his *passions*, govern *his spirit*, cultivate his *heart*, and model his *life*.

3d. We come to notice some of the eminent patrons of Masonry, whose memory its history cherishes. Such illustrious waymarks as the renowned Hebrew, MOSES, the great representative of the legal economy of *revealed religion.* His divine selection, wonderful preservation, grand commission, gracious instruction, extensive education, superior genius, and religious devotion, holy life and sublime death, should challenge the admiration, and, as far as possible, secure the example of all masons.

Let us next glance at the memory of the master of the princes of Israel (SOLOMON), in wisdom, in wealth, in peaceful alliance with all nations of the earth. When he held the sceptre of Judea, his culture of Religion, Morality, Intelligence, Fraternal Friendship, Beneficence, made him a Grand Master of Masons. Let his example in these things make his memory a practical example in our lives.

Next, let us cast our mind upon the sacred history of the great prophet (as the forerunner of the Prince of Peace) JOHN THE BAPTIST, whose memory we celebrate this day. His holy mission, his devotion to it; his humble life, his temperate habits, religious integrity to death itself, and his faithful preaching, divinely commended, ought to be the pride and practice of every Mason.

But let us glance at the masonic celebrities of more modern times, whose characters we should not only celebrate, but develop in our lives. The illustrious Lafayette, the glorious Washington—the immortal Lincoln. These high votaries of masonry have hung an imperishable halo of glory around the masonic principles, that is as immortal as divinity itself. At this moment, the immortal Lincoln's spirit stands amid the glory of immortality, as the spectacle of admiring angels, who pour the chants of freedom upon his ravished ears.

Brethren, let our memories be immortalized by the history of a pure life, and good and great deeds, that, those that live after us, may call us blessed, as Christians and Masons; that the angel that shall guard the monument that shall point to our last pillow of rest, may, without a blush, point the pensive wanderer, to our holy virtues, as a fadeless epitaph; that we may join in the last chorus of life, and sing—

"All hail to the morning
That bids us rejoice,
The Temple's completed,
Exalt high each voice.

"The cap-stone is finish'd,
Our labors are o'er;
The sound of the gavel
Shall hail us no more."

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