

*W. Bridges*

THE REPLY

OF

REV. W. M. G. STARR,

TO THE PAMPHLET OF

REV. W. B. WELLONS,

(Published July 15th, 1872.)

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This reply contains not only the actual correspondence which passed between the parties, and the pamphlet letter of Rev. Mr. Wellons, but also the

MASONIC ADDRESS

Which was delivered by Rev. Mr. Starr in Suffolk, Va., June 26th, 1872.

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NORFOLK, VA.:

● PRINTED AT THE JOURNAL BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

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## TO THE PUBLIC.



I have no apology to offer to the people of Suffolk and vicinity for the publication of the following correspondence. It tells its own story, and reveals fully the object of its publication :

SUFFOLK, VA , June 28th, 1872.

Rev. W. G. STARR,

*Dear Sir :* The position which you and I occupy in this community, leads me to enquire if you intended to reflect personally upon me, in any remarks made by you in your Masonic address, delivered from your pulpit on Wednesday evening last.

I desire a frank and candid answer.

My friend, Maj. D. B. Dunbar, will receive your reply.

Very respectfully,

W. B. WELLONS.



SUFFOLK, VA., June 28th, 1872.

Rev. W. B. WELLONS,

*Dear Sir :* Your note was received through Maj. D. B. Dunbar. In reply I have to state, that a part of the Masonic address delivered last Wednesday night was designed to vindicate the Lodge of which I am a member, from the public imputation that it is in the hands and at the mercy of a partizan spirit which has recently crept into it. I struck at the fact as it exists in the community, and disclaimed at the outset any personal attack upon any individual, and said : "if any one should determine to take to himself the rebuke administered to a great wrong to-night, I have only to say, he alone shall be held responsible for choosing to impersonate an evil, of which he thereby judges himself to be the fairest exponent." I then illustrated the evils of party spirit according to the teachings of history and observation. I did not design to assault the character of any one—but I did design to condemn the spirit referred to, in the strongest terms. I care not what representations may have been made to you concerning this matter. I never seek to attack any man—while at the same time, I never shrink from doing my duty, whatever may be the nature of the wrong I am called upon to denounce.

Very respectfully,

W. G. STARR.

SUFFOLK, VA., June 28th, 1872.

Rev. W. G. STARR,

*Dear Sir:* Yours of this date has just been handed me by Capt. Britt. It is evasive and unsatisfactory. I enquired "if you intended to reflect, personally, upon me in any remark made by you in your Masonic address, delivered from your pulpit on Wednesday evening last," and asked for a "frank and candid answer."

I repeat the enquiry, and desire that you shall say yes, or no.

Very respectfully,

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SUFFOLK, VA., June 29, 1872.

Rev. W. B. WELLONS,

*Dear Sir:* Your 2d note was delivered to me by Capt. E. B. Britt yesterday evening. In reply I shall say several things.

1. My answer to your 1st note was enough to satisfy any reasonable man. If you do not know the meaning of words, it is your misfortune—not my fault.

2. After writing that reply, I submitted it, together with your note, to three just and honorable men—one from your Lodge, one from mine, and one a citizen of the town, but not a Mason. They decided without a difference of opinion that my note was a "frank, candid and satisfactory" answer. This confirmed my own judgment; and you will have to accept that reply or none; for I am persuaded that nothing would satisfy you which would be consistent with a right course of conduct on my part. I have done all that an honorable man would do, and all that a just man would ask.

3. If it is your intention to impersonate the evil which I have condemned, just say so, and I shall not hesitate to apply to you every word of denunciation contained in the rebuke already referred to.

As to this difference between us, I have no plan of settlement to suggest. I stand upon the platform of a man who has done his duty to God and the people, and, blessed with the consciousness of that fact, I care not who may undertake to assault me for that cause. I am ready for any issue that may be thrust upon me.

Very respectfully,

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SUFFOLK, VA., July 15th, 1872.

To Rev. W. G. STARR,

*Sir:* Your reply to my second letter, dated June 29th, was so offensive in its tone, and so unsatisfactory in its statements, that I could not, in the exercise of a proper self-respect, continue longer a private correspondence with you, and I am therefore compelled to address you in this public manner, laying your conduct openly before the people, and leaving you to answer at the bar of public opinion.

I have purposely delayed this publication for two weeks, hoping that your conscience would so smite you, in your cooler moments, that you would be induced either to disavow any intention to so seriously wound and injure me, in your so-called Masonic address; or if at the time, while laboring under

very excited feelings, and surrounded by unfavorable circumstances and imprudent advisers, you had intentionally sought to reflect so seriously upon me personally, that a return of pious feeling and inclination would induce you to withdraw your offensive remarks. But seeing no such inclination manifested, I have determined, in this public manner, to lay before the people my whole cause of complaint against you.

Before entering upon the statement of facts which I intend to present, you will permit me to express great surprise at your wanton and uncalled for attack. It came to my ears as unexpected as a peal of thunder from a cloudless sky. I have lived in or near Suffolk for a quarter of a century, and am now among the older citizens of the place. A number of ministers of your denomination have been stationed here during this time, many of whom are now leading men in the Virginia Conference. With all of them I have lived in peace—have received at the hands of them all much of christian and ministerial courtesy, and I have tried to treat them all with a proper christian and ministerial regard. Our social and christian intercourse was always pleasant. You have proved the only exception. At your hands I never have received any ministerial courtesy or even recognition, either in visiting your church, or elsewhere. I have tried, however, to extend proper christian and ministerial respect to you at all times, and if I have failed in any particular, it was never intentional. I passed over your neglect, and charitably attributed it to youthful vanity, from which years of experience would relieve you; and up to the time of your personal attack on me, I had never said aught of evil against you. Whenever an opportunity offered, in private or in public, and through my paper, I have seized upon it to speak kindly of you. I did not desire, nor did I intend, that the cause of Christ should suffer because of any difference between us.

I carefully avoided any collision for another reason. Many of my personal friends are members of your charge; men with whom I transact business; whom I meet in the social circle, and I did not want them placed in the unpleasant position which a difference between us might force them to occupy.

Again, many of the members of your pastoral charge were converted under my ministerial labors, and at the altar of my church. I wept with them as penitents, and rejoiced with them in the young morn of their spiritual life. In them I have always felt a special and fatherly interest.

Another reason operated upon my heart. Methodist and CHRISTIAN worship is nearly the same, and for the doctrines preached and forms of worship observed in the Methodist Church I have ever cherished much love. I never desired that the wall of partition between us, as separate and distinct organizations, should be made stronger, in this community, by any difference between its representative men.

Another reason still. Suffolk is my home. All my temporal interests



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Another reason still. Suffolk is my home. All my temporal interests

are here. Here I am expecting to live and die, among those, so many of whom, have been brought to Christ under my poor labors. You are here only for a short time, according to the government of your Church. Why did you wish to engender a strife between you and me, and your brethren and my brethren, which will live on and do its evil work when you shall have found a home in another and perhaps a distant place? Surely you did not consider, before entering upon a work so full of evil. If imprudently advised to such a course, you should have shrunk from it. If you had attacked any doctrine held by me or the Church represented by me, I could have borne it, and would have met it without personal feeling. But your attack was wholly personal—was made from your pulpit, and in a place which shielded you from any direct reply on the part of my friends present. Surely the better and more intelligent of your hearers did not justify your course; and there is force in the remark which has been often made since, by persons not members of either your Church or mine, that you disgraced your pulpit.

Now, I come directly to the complaint which I have to make against you. It had been announced in your Lodge, from your pulpit, and by posters around the town, that you would deliver an address on Masonry. The public was invited to attend. The citizens of the town generally were out to hear your address. Three-fourths of my congregation, perhaps, were present—none of them even dreaming what was to be its character. I did not attend, nor did any member of my family. Judge of my surprise, next morning, when one after another, to the number of fifty or more, told me of your bitter personal attack on me. True, you did not mention my name in so many words, but in professing to show what Masonry was not, and in depicting party spirit, you illustrated your ideas with what you said you had seen developed, and in your illustrations used several incidents and things with which I had been recently directly concerned, distorting the facts connected with these incidents and circumstances; misstating their true character, and falsifying the position which I occupied in connection with them. *Not one of the incidents as distorted was true when applied to me;* and yet you so clearly pointed to me in those charges that, I suppose, not a man, woman or child in your church failed to understand that you meant me. My friends were surprised, thunderstruck, and would have called you to account at once had it not been in a church, and had you not been protected and shielded by your profession. May I ask again the reason for making this attack from your pulpit? Is the pulpit a suitable place for such bitter personalities? And then your language, your gestures, and the spirit manifested, startled many of your own friends. Such bitterness of language would not have been tolerated in a cross-roads political discussion. As your excitement brought the warm blood to your face, and your gestures betrayed your angry feelings, and the grinding of your teeth could be heard all over the house, it must have been, and doubtless was, very amusing to the light, the thoughtless, and that por-



tion of society who have no reverence for religion. But, my dear sir, how religion was stabbed—how God's cause was injured! Well might an intelligent gentleman, who had often heard you preach and admired you, say to me, with tears in his eyes, "I was never so disappointed in a man. I never saw such a display of angry and bitter feeling expressed even in a political discussion, and my confidence in religion has been shaken by it."

What had I ever done to you to bring out such bitterness toward me? What reason can you give for such an attack? The utmost stretch of charity and forbearance fails to bring to my mind a single excuse for your conduct on that occasion. The most charitable thing that can be said in your defence is, that you allowed yourself to be made a tool of by parties personally unfriendly to me, and if so, you showed a lack of judgment in consenting to occupy such a position, and they showed themselves untrue to you in pushing you into such a position.

In my first letter, I respectfully asked you if you *intended* to personally reflect upon me. I could not have done less. You replied that you had stated in your address that you did not intend to be personal, but if any one should determine to take to himself the rebuke, that he should be held responsible for it. I do not take to myself the wrongs charged, but all who heard your address *knew* that you intended to apply the wrong to me. It is your application of which I complain. And when I asked you respectfully to inform me if you intended to reflect upon me personally, if you had not intended to do so, it would have been so very easy for you to disavow any such intention, in unmistakable terms. But you would not do this; and you had not the manliness to withdraw your offensive remarks. I gave you time to sleep over your bitter words, and I hoped you would pray over them, before I enquired for your intention. Looking at the subject from any standpoint, your treatment of me seems unmanly. In your address, you either *did*, or *did not*, mean to reflect upon me. If you *did*, you should have had the courage to say so, and not to screen yourself from blame by an artfully constructed array of words. If you *did not*, you should have been just enough to say so, and relieve an innocent man from the opprobrium arising from an admissible application of your remarks.

My second letter was intended to be respectful in a renewal of the enquiry. Your reply to it, you will probably be ashamed of, when you see it in print, and if you are so hardened with prejudice that you cannot feel ashamed, your friends will feel ashamed for you. You say a "partisan spirit" has "crept into your Lodge." If so, I am not responsible, and *had nothing whatever to do with its introduction*. I am not a member of your Lodge, and have never been in it since its re-organization, and know nothing of its private workings. If the ballot box has been defiled, or any party or parties been rejected, I had nothing to do with it either *directly* or *indirectly*. My acquaintance with Masonic usage justifies me in saying that no public allusion



should ever have been made to any rejection in your Lodge room. If such a thing occurred, it should have remained in the Lodge and have been known only to the craft.

I demand at your hands a frank disavowal of any *intention* to reflect upon my moral and christian character in the address from your pulpit on the evening of the 26th of June; or, if intended, then I demand proof of the truthfulness of the charges, or a frank withdrawal of your offensive accusations. This you have refused to grant, and what you have refused to me personally, you shall now answer to the public. Your denunciations were too serious to be trifled with, and you shall not escape the responsibility, which you have either voluntarily assumed, or allowed others to impose upon you, in this affair.

You have grievously wronged me, and you have wronged my friends, and until you are willing to make that reparation which one christian man has a right to demand of another—which one gentleman has a right to demand of another, I can never countenance you as a christian or recognize you as a gentleman. And all the *extreme politeness* which you are attempting to show toward my personal friends and Christian brethren, will only cause them to feel the more contempt for you—a contempt which their christian refinement may not permit them to express in such language as you used in your pulpit, but which will ever be felt in their hearts.

Now, sir, you are yet a young man. I am many years your senior, and have many spiritual children who are older in grace than you are in years; therefore I have it in my heart to offer you kindly advice. You have been betrayed into a great error. The more intelligent, unprejudiced, and candid of your own friends will tell you so. It is a duty which you owe to yourself, your church, your friends and the public, to frankly confess your error, and seek first the forgiveness of Him whose law you have violated by bearing false witness against your neighbor; secondly, the forgiveness of your neighbor whom you have injured; thirdly, the forgiveness of your brethren for the desecration of their pulpit; and lastly, the forgiveness of the public, for having so unnecessarily stirred up strife and ill-feeling in the community. Do this, and I promise to be the first to open my arms and my heart to receive you again to my friendship and christian fellowship. But until you do this, a stigma must attach to your name which time will fail to remove.

Yours, &c.,

W. B. WELLONS.







## TO THE PUBLIC.

SUFFOLK, VA., July 31, 1872.

The publication of this reply to the pamphlet of the Rev. W. B. Wellons, dated July 15, 1872, was delayed, as I announced in the *Norfolk Journal* of July 21st, "owing to my determination to investigate impartially and carefully several items of testimony," which were necessary to a thorough ventilation of the conduct of my accuser. I was ready ten days ago to send the most of my manuscript to the printer, but I believed it to be best to hold in abeyance the eagerness of the people to read the other side of this controversy, until I could obtain a fair statement of all the evidence in any way relating to the groundless assertions of Mr. Wellons in his unwarranted attack upon me. The public will appreciate the purity of motive which prompted me to this act of justice in the treatment of an enemy.

It is my desire in this reply to be respectfully considerate of the wishes of those who look at discussions of this character from a purely religious standpoint; and I shall be careful to use no word or form of denunciation which is not, in my judgment, justified by the nature of the offence under consideration at the time, whatever it may be, or by the injury which my assailant has sought to inflict upon an innocent man. I repeat what I have stated elsewhere: "During the whole of this uncalled for and unjustifiable assault upon me by Mr. Wellons, I have maintained a good temper, and, what is better, a conscience void of offence toward God and man."

This controversy I did not seek. It was persistently forced upon me. It is the first in which I was ever involved—but I have no disposition on account of that fact to avoid the issue. Invested with an unimpeachable integrity of character—clad in the armor of an unstained reputation, and conscious that the approbation of God and an unprejudiced public rests upon the justice of my defence, I have nothing to fear from the result of the conflict.

I must be permitted to say, however, that I am not of the number who believe that no good can possibly be derived from such a contest. I believe that, occasionally, a contingency may arise wherein God may be served by controversy. Especially is this true whenever such a course of conduct leads directly to the unmasking of secret sin, or to the exposure of a "wolf in sheep's clothing." If such shall be the result of this collision, I shall have a satisfactory interpretation of the providence of that unerring Counsellor, by whose will this unlooked-for event has been permitted to transpire. And I shall be enabled all the better to understand the language of the Saviour when he said: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."

It is my privilege to bring before the people for the first time the apparent cause of the unaccountable outbreak on the part of my accuser—

I mean the definite language of the Masonic Address, which was delivered in Suffolk on the 26th of last June. In his pamphlet, Mr. Wellons did not state even the substance of the words made use of by me, and at which he took such mortal offence. Therefore the people, outside of this community, who read that pamphlet, without knowing what I did say, could not judge as to its application. Mr. Wellons, with his redoubtable cudgel, slashes around promiscuously, like a Limerick bruiser at an Irish funeral, but nobody at a distance could understand the meaning or the philosophy of the belligerent display. I have been highly amused at some of the letters I have received asking about the bone of contention.

In the *Norfolk Journal* of July 23d, there is a short card from Mr. Wellons, which claims a brief notice just here. He emphatically states that he "had nothing whatever to do with the publication" of his pamphlet in the columns of that paper. Nor did I. I knew nothing about it until I saw it in print. But I did not object to it. That fact simply gave public currency to the whole affair—nothing more. It was not wrong, for truth can stand the light; it does not seek to hide away from an honest investigation. All that I ask is a fair hearing in the presence of the people, and the Masonic Fraternity everywhere.

Again, Mr. Wellons states that "the correspondence was intended for the people of Suffolk and vicinity, where all the facts are known." Then I ask: Why was it scattered abroad beyond the limits of Suffolk and its vicinity? Ministers have written to me from distant parts of North Carolina and Virginia, announcing the fact that they had received the correspondence, and denouncing the spirit displayed by my assailant.—Who sent out that correspondence? I did not. It is not probable that the citizens of the place did so, for they were not so liberally supplied with the document as to justify it. I am prepared to prove that the homes of some of my friends in the town were overlooked. Now, it is a patent fact that somebody had such a large supply at his disposal, that the pamphlet has received a circulation, the extent of which I am unable to determine, *beyond* the limits of Suffolk and its vicinity. This fact will acquire additional significance when taken in connection with certain revelations of character and conduct to come hereafter, for it must be remembered that Mr. Wellons states distinctly, in the card above referred to, that he "had no *desire* (the italics are his) to give the young man, who has so wantonly assailed me, such notoriety as the publication of our correspondence in your paper has given him."

Once more, by way of preface. Mr. Wellons insists that I am a young man. In his pamphlet there are several contemptuous allusions to my youthfulness. It is true, I am young. In the language of Patrick Henry, "this fact I can neither palliate nor deny," and I am thankful to know that in the estimation of the people, it is neither a crime on the one hand, nor an error strictly confined to childhood on the other. It is possible to be young and to maintain at the same time a good reputation. It is also possible to grow old, and to be found after the meridian of life, so warped by the asperities of past experience, so spotted by the doubtful transactions of bygone days, and so jealous of rivalry, under the pressure of a graceless ambition, as to be burdened with the additional care of defending, at the slightest approach of suspicion, a character which is thereby confessed to be vulnerable. I would rather be young and at

the same time afflicted with the simplicity which can often be traced to a consciousness of purity, than to be an old man so nervous about the general acceptability of his conduct as to fire recklessly at a foeman on the field with no better effect than to reveal the weakness of a position, which is neither defensible nor safe. I had rather be a young man, and be known as the friend of Peace, when it can be secured without the sacrifice of Right, than to be old and be very talkative about love and fellowship, and yet, before the eyes of unbiassed witnesses, to be the instigator of a public combat, when the occasion of difference might have so easily furnished such a paragon of piety the opportunity of setting a better example to the inexperience of youth.

In the presentation of what I shall have to say, I prefer to be guided by the following order of arrangement. I propose to give—

- 1st. The action of the Lodge of which I am a member, respecting the Masonic address in question;
- 2d. The address itself;
- 3d. A defence of the character and the public delivery of that address;
- 4th. A complete exoneration of my Church from any connection whatever with said address, and with the fact that it was the place selected for the Masonic celebration that night;
- 5th. A review of the actual correspondence which passed between Mr. Wellons and myself;
- 6th. The pamphlet of Mr. Wellons republished in full;
- 7th. My reply to the same.

## I.

### THE ACTION OF THE LODGE RESPECTING THE ADDRESS BEFORE ITS DELIVERY.

At a regular communication of Suffolk Lodge, No. 30, held May 27th, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

[Extract from the record of the Secretary, published by order of the Lodge.]

“Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed by the Worshipful Master to arrange for a suitable celebration by this Lodge of the anniversary of St. John the Baptist, June 24th, 1872, and that Bro. Wm. G. Starr be requested, by said committee, to deliver a public Masonic address on that occasion.

“Bros. T. G. Elam, A. W. Eley, H. R. Cully, J. F. Lotzia and J. M. Shepherd were appointed a committee. Bro. Wm. G. Starr, being present, accepted the invitation.”

### THE ACTION OF THE LODGE RESPECTING THE ADDRESS AFTER ITS DELIVERY.

At a regular communication of Suffolk Lodge No. 30, held July 22d, 1872, the following resolutions were adopted:

[Extract from the record of the Secretary, published by order of the Lodge.]

1. “Resolved, That we tender to our worthy brother, Rev. William G. Starr, the sincere thanks of the Lodge for his very able address delivered in defence of the principles of Freemasonry on the 26th of June, 1872.

2. “Resolved, That our brother be requested to furnish to the Lodge a copy of said address, and that the Treasurer be directed to have 500 copies printed for the use of the Lodge.”



To this official recognition of the character of the address, I desire to add:

1st. The *attendance* of the Lodge at the time when these resolutions were adopted was the *largest* on record at any *regular* communication for several years;

2d. The resolutions were *unanimously* adopted.

## II.

### A MASONIC ADDRESS DELIVERED BY REV. WM. G. STARR, AT THE REQUEST OF SUFFOLK LODGE, No. 30, JUNE 26TH, 1872.

The address, which comes next in order, is derisively styled by Mr. Wellons "your so-called Masonic address." He alludes to it as, "a wanton and uncalled-for attack;" and says, "such bitterness of language would not have been tolerated in a cross-roads political discussion." Let the Masonic Fraternity render their own verdict.

#### THE ADDRESS.

"MASONRY—WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT." This shall be my subject to-night.

It has been said that "the popular notion with regard to the Masonic Brotherhood is somewhat vague and uncertain. It is principally associated with curious ceremonies, terrible ordeals, a very close acquaintance with a red-hot poker, and an incandescent gridiron!" It is believed that the candidate for initiation is required to climb a ladder of thorns, crossing over a dark pit, and leading up to a mysterious loft, where strange sounds and stranger sights constitute a lesson of experience never to be forgotten. The candidate, it is said, is then conducted by a supernatural stairway down into a subterranean vault filled with skulls and bones. There he is invested with his shroud, seated upon his coffin, granted the liberty of the premises, and requested to make himself at home. After a short resting-spell, suitable for reflection and repentance, he is introduced to the grim monster who takes care of the fire on the inside of the earth. Hardly a word passes before a signal is given, the door of the nether world is thrown open, the doorkeeper takes the poor fellow by the arm, and what he sees and what he suffers ere he comes out an accepted Freemason, will never be told until that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be known!

Such is the *popular idea*, and it is useless to try to divest the uninitiated of these unaccountable impressions. It will be affirmed until the end of time, that an induction into the wonders of the *Mystic Tie* constitutes the final test of human endurance. For it is agreed that the man who can stand his ground in a graveyard on a dark night, may be frightened out of his wits before the lights, once blown out, are again relit in a Masonic Lodge!

But Masonry is something nobler than the touchstone of brute bravery—it is something higher and broader than the rough measure of manly courage. Masonry has been defined to be "a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols," designed to teach those spiritual truths which involve the duties we owe to God, ourselves,

and all mankind. But it is more than this. It is a vital power in the land. It undertakes to protect the feeble, to comfort the poor, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to cheer the disconsolate, to encourage the weary pilgrim and help him on his way. "It enters the family and points out the obligations we owe there, requiring us to perform all the duties of a good father, a kind husband, an obedient son and an affectionate brother. It goes from the family to the social and business circles of society, and requires us to be true to our friends, faithful to all the promises we make, and the vows that we voluntarily assume. It treats of our duty to the government under which we live, making it obligatory to be faithful to our country, and to maintain its honor and integrity at all times and in all places."

In a word, the grand object of Masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race, and it is the chosen duty of the Fraternity to carry the torch of moral and spiritual light in the vanguard of the world's onward march. Such is our mission and our work.

Is it necessary to tell you more? Must I uncap the sacred urn and unfold the ancient secrets of the Order, and reveal the source from which so many blessings flow, only to gratify a morbid curiosity? I am sure you will not require it. If the hand that gives cannot be seen, it is enough to know that it is the hand of a friend and a brother.

Did you ever stand near a railroad, awaiting the coming of the midnight train? Through the brooding darkness, you first catch a glimpse of the head-light far away in the distance. With shrill scream, on it comes over the booming bridge and across the silent plain. On it comes past the homes of weary workmen wrapped in quiet slumber. On it dashes past furnace chimneys whose arms of crimson fire seem to be grappling with the night. On it dashes through the lonely swamp, and under the branches of the tall black pines,

"Till startled by its mad career  
They seem to keep a hush of fear  
As if a god swept by!"

Nearer comes the train thundering down the track—the iron rails hum and ring, and the cross-ties glitter ahead under the lamp-light. A moment more and the bright windows flash by so quickly that you can scarcely take one brief glance, ere the cars are gone with their precious freight of generous souls and costly merchandise. And as the midnight train goes darting along its destined route to where some kingly city stands, you cannot keep down a prayer for its safety, nor hold back a cheerful "God bless you," for each absent loved one gliding nearer and yet nearer to the sweet smiles and the happy faces in the old family home!

And so, to-night, as you stand upon the track of time, while Masonry shall pass in rapid review before you, you may not be able to peep through so much as the smallest crevice in its massive front to discern the impenetrable mystery within—but you can recognize its mission of mercy to all mankind; and as its chariot wheels roll on, you can breathe a prayer and bid it "God speed," and let fall a "God bless you" upon each member of the Fraternity, remembering that after awhile, if we are each true to the summons of the Grand Master of the Universe, we shall all meet as a band of brothers in the old family home!

I. Masonry is the *heritage of the ages*. The origin of the society of

Free and Accepted Masons is very ancient. We have no authentic account of the time when it was first instituted. Some trace back the establishment of the Order to the dark ages, when thousands of skillful workmen were kept constantly employed in building the numerous churches and religious edifices, which the superstition of that feudal era prompted the people to raise. Others affirm that the organization of the craft is coeval with the laying of the corner stone of Solomon's Temple. Others go still further back and date its commencement from the rise and fall of the Tower of Babel. The signs and tokens of the Fraternity, as the offspring of actual necessity, were then introduced among the laborers, after the confusion of tongues, to enable them to hold friendly intercourse and communicate one with another. Others identify the Order with the Sacred Builders of Egypt—an ancient Fraternity distinguished for the part they took in the construction of the Pyramids. And still another account carries back the beginning of the Brotherhood to the days of Seth, the son of God, who collected together ready workmen, and after due organization, erected the pillars of Enoch in the land of Sirad. Josephus, the historian, informs us that they were to be seen in his time, and were designed by their author to be a monument of his love to posterity. "Foreseeing the universal desolation which would happen by fire and water, and deprive mankind of those arts and sciences which were well known in that day, he raised these two pillars of stone, and inscribed thereon an abridgement of the learning of those times, particularly Geometry or Masonry, in order that they might withstand the overthrow of the flood."

From all this it is evident that the Order is one of the oldest institutions in existence, and that it dates from a time "whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary."

I have already alluded to the fact that "in the middle ages, bands of skillful workmen wandered over Europe, building those magnificent cathedrals and monasteries which have been the admiration of every succeeding age. No one was admitted into the craft unless properly qualified, and duly examined as to whether he possessed competent skill as an operative workman; and as Masons, from the very nature of their business, were wanderers upon the earth, each person, on his obtaining admission into the craft, was intrusted with certain secrets, by which he was enabled to show that he was a worthy craftsman, and to obtain employment from his brethren wherever he went, without being obliged to undergo a further examination as to his Masonic qualifications.—Certain laws were promulgated for the regulation of the Order, and for preserving good conduct and social harmony among its members. Each band of workmen formed a Lodge which was presided over by some eminent brother, who saw that the members of his Lodge properly performed their allotted task, and received their just due."

Sixteen hundred years ago the first Lodge was formed in England, under the auspices of Carausius, who collected a number of ingenious Masons from different countries, and appointed his steward St. Alban to be the principal superintendent or Grand Master of the assemblies.—From that time until the 17th century, Freemasonry flourished with varied success—the Fraternity being employed in building churches and other costly structures.



During the reign of Queen Anne, Masonry made but little progress; and subsequently the number of lodges fell off, the annual festivals were but thinly attended, and the number of Masons rapidly diminished. It was then determined by the brethren that the privileges of the Order should no longer be confined to operative Masons only, but that any one duly proposed, approved and initiated, should be admitted to a participation in all the rites and honors of the Fraternity—so that Freemasonry, from an operative, became a speculative science.

And here, by way of explanation, I must tell you that while Operative Masonry, according to the lexicon of Dr. Mackey, is still engaged in constructing the material edifice—Speculative Masonry is occupied in the erection of a spiritual temple. The latter, which is called FREE Masonry, adopts and symbolizes for its sacred purpose the implements and working materials which are used in the former. Hence Operative Masonry is an art, and Speculative Masonry is a science; and while the objects of the one are temporal, those of the other are sacred and eternal.

Since the revival of the Order two centuries ago, and especially after the accession of George I., Freemasonry became the centre of union between good men and true, and the happy means of conciliating friendship among those who must have otherwise remained at a perpetual distance; and being founded on the broad principles of morality, mutual relief and brotherly love, it unites under its banner men of every country, sect and opinion—all who believe in the existence of that Supreme Being who was the glorious builder of Heaven and earth; and as Freemasonry is universally spread over the four quarters of the globe—embracing at this time about 2,000,000 of Accepted Masons—wherever a brother of the craft may go, in every nation, he will find a *friend* and in every country a *home*.

And now permit me to say to those who believe that Masonry is a modern invention, we have now alive and at work Masonic Lodges more than eight hundred years old. I read recently an item taken from a paper published at Glasgow, in Scotland, stating that St. John's Lodge, No. 3, of that city, had recently celebrated the 813th anniversary of its existence—it having been created by a charter from King Malcolm in the year 1058. I should like to see the muster roll of that Lodge, beginning more than eight centuries ago, and running along down with the ages to the present time. What kings and kingdoms have risen and fallen since *there* the gavel first sounded in the east!

I can give another fact. There is still living a Grand Lodge of Masons at York, in England, which can trace its birthday back to the year 926. It was founded under the patronage of Edwin, brother of King Athelstane, and from that day to this it has flourished, blessed with the hidden life of the century plant, and sustained by the unflagging zeal and the untiring devotion of its members. On the 23d day of last April it celebrated its 946th anniversary. Just think of it—nearly 1,000 years in the lifetime of a Masonic Lodge!

It is said that on the eastern bank of the Rhine, overlooking one of the wildest glens of Switzerland, there stands a castle, the oldest perhaps to be found anywhere along the margin of the river. Once it was the home of royalty; but the wasting of many stormy years has left it a desolate ruin. It is inhabited now by a group of gray-haired monks, who

wander like ghosts over the broken pavement, and offer their devotions beside the tombs of lordly knights and barons long since passed away. High up in the square, massive tower, overshadowing the river, there swings a huge bell, cast in the olden time, and committed to the keeping of the priestly tenants of the castle. It is said that so soon as the vesper hymn dies away at sunset, the bell is slowly tolled with measured stroke, and the solemn sound rings out through fretted arch and ivy-clad gate and down to the dark river under the cliff. Far along the quivering stream, under crag and over hill-top, sweeps the thrilling tone for many a winding mile; and the peasant fishermen on the coast, one hundred leagues away, at nightfall cross their breasts and say they hear the prayer of the gray-haired priests far up the silent Rhine. And now, although we cannot lead you to the spot where Masonry began, yet if we stand beside the stream of life as it glides out of the mist of antique history, we will hear the signal bell of Masonry pealing through all ages of the world. Ringing through the kingdoms of the past, its welcome tone comes down to us—we hear it echoing from every land—and it will ring on, so long as there is a sufferer to help, or an aching heart to soothe, or a homeless wanderer to feed, or an orphan to provide with a better couch than the mouldy straw of the beggar's hut!

Again: Masonry is not only the heritage of the ages, but

II. It is the palladium of sound government.

III. It is the conservatory of the arts and sciences.

IV. It is the champion of the true, the beautiful, the good and the right.

For want of time to-night, we must commit these several divisions of the subject to your safe keeping. We pass on to affirm that

V. Masonry is peculiarly the friend of the friendless.

1. *It seeks, first, to relieve the wants of the poor.*

Dr. Albert G. Mackey says "of the philanthropy of our order, abundant evidence is afforded in every country where a Lodge exists. Its charities are extended to the widow and the orphan and the destitute, with a liberal hand; and its numerous institutions for improving the physical and moral condition of the human race, prove that brotherly love, relief and truth are not the unmeaning language of a boastful motto, but the true and guiding principles of our association. In our own land, several of the Grand Lodges have established colleges and schools for the education of the children of reduced Masons." Across the Atlantic—in England, Germany, Sweden and many other countries, we find the landmarks of Masonry in the orphanhouse, the almshouse, the hospital, the free institution of learning and the public library. Our Lodges may be stripped of their ornaments by the hand of the despoiler, but there will still remain two jewels which the robber cannot take—"the widow's tear of joy and the orphan's prayer of gratitude."

I shall never forget an incident which is said to have occurred while I was pastor of a church among the mountains, during the year 1868. I was a stranger in the community at the time, and a notice I then wrote about it was materially modified by subsequent information. Those who live in comfortable homes and feast all day upon the luxuries of the land and lie down to rest at night upon downy pillows, know nothing of the sufferings endured in silence by many who have become pitiable vic-

tims of poverty and want. Never has it devolved upon me to relate a more painful story of absolute indigence and utter helplessness than the one I am about to give you.

Some years ago there lived in a little town, situated in the Valley of Virginia, a happy family consisting of father, mother and four young children, with eyes as bright and cheeks as rosy as ever gladdened a mountain home. Suddenly death came into the household and bore away first one parent, and after a short time the other, and buried them out of sight under the cold clods of the valley. Four little orphans, broken-hearted and poverty-stricken, were thus thrown, by this twofold bereavement, upon the charity of the world. With few friends to sympathize with them, they felt that they could no longer dwell as strangers in a community where no kinsman could be found to offer them a house of refuge in their dreary and desolate situation. Some of the citizens of the town, it is true, gave proof of their hospitality, by the generous offer of permanent homes, but the children, despite their youthfulness, determined to set out on foot, to discover, if possible, the whereabouts of their relatives, who, they were told, were residents of the county of Franklin, in this State. Caring nothing for the snow on the mountains, through which they were compelled to pass, and the bitter coldness of the weather, the little travelers journeyed bravely southward over frozen roads and ice-bound streams, until they reached the town of Liberty, in the county of Bedford, January 10th, 1868. A crowd soon gathered around them as they stood there shivering in the street. The eldest was but ten years of age and the youngest not quite four. Not a word of sympathy was spoken, for they looked like outcasts, and they knew no friend at whose hands they could solicit shelter and food. At that time I was not a Mason; but I remember it was said that suddenly a bystander caught a glimpse of a trincket attached to a faded necklace worn by the eldest. He saw in a moment that it was the badge of a Master Mason, and as the finder was himself a member of the Order, he asked the question, and in reply the young girl said, "That belonged to my poor father; he was a Mason, and he wore it until he died, and then he gave it to me, and it was all he had to give." Then the tears began to flow, and hearts began to warm; and, as if by magic, there were fifty doors flung wide to receive the little strangers, and a hundred hearts busy to afford the necessary relief!

In the practice of the tenets of our time-honored fraternity, we have found that benevolence is not an art: it is the first impulse of a noble heart, when the woes of the unfortunate are borne to the ears; and the man who refuses to do a deed of kindness when poverty clasps her famished hands at his door, may find his indifference to be a bitter memory in after life.

2. Again: *Masonry seeks to relieve also the sorrows of the distressed.* To help a brother is our first and highest duty; and to aid one, in peril, to ask for assistance, we have a signal known as the *sign of distress*. I have seen in a late journal an expressive poem representing the virtue and the value of this token of our brotherhood:

'Twas a wild, dreary night in cheerless December;  
 'Twas a night only lit by a meteor's gleam;  
 And on that stormy night I distinctly remember  
 That my soul journeyed forth on the wings of a dream.



That dream found me happy, by true friends surrounded,  
 Enjoying with rapture the comforts of wealth ;  
 My cup overflowing with blessings unbounded,  
 My heart fully charged from the fountains of health.

That dream left me wretched, by friendship forsaken,  
 Dejected, despairing and wrapped in dismay ;  
 By poverty, sickness and ruin o'ertaken,  
 To every temptation and passion a prey ;

Devoid of an end or an aim, I then wandered  
 O'er highway and by-way and the lone wilderness ;  
 On the past and the present and future I pondered,  
 But pride bade me tender no sign of distress.

In frenzy the winecup I instantly quaffed at ;  
 And habit and time made me quaff to excess ;  
 But heated by wine, like a madman, I laugh at  
 The thought of e'er giving the sign of distress.

But wine sank me lower by lying pretenses—  
 It tattered my raiment and furrowed my face,  
 It palsied my sinews and pilfered my senses,  
 And forced me to proffer a sign of distress.

I reeled to a chapel where churchmen were kneeling  
 And asking their Saviour poor sinners to bless ;  
 My claim I presented—the door of that chapel  
 Was slammed in my face at the sign of distress.

I strolled to the priest, to the servant of heaven,  
 And sued for relief with a sorrowing face ;  
 He prayed that my sins might at last be forgiven,  
 And thought he had answered my sign of distress.

I staggered at last to the home of my mother,  
 Believing my prayers there would meet with success,  
 But father and mother and sister and brother  
 Disowned me, and taunted my sign of distress.

I lay down to die—a stranger drew nigh me,  
 A spotless white lambskin adorning his dress ;  
 My eye caught the emblem, and ere he passed by me  
 I gave, as before, the sign of distress.

With god-like emotion that messenger hastens  
 To grasp me, and whisper “ My brother, I bless  
 The hour of my life when I learned of the Mason  
 To give and to answer your sign of distress.

“ Let a sign of distress by a craftsman be given,  
 And though priceless to me is eternity's bliss,  
 May my name never enter the records of Heaven  
 Should I fail to acknowledge that sign of distress.”

3. Again : *Masonry seeks to relieve the miseries of war* ; and how often has it been the efficient agent in the salvation of life. History can tell us how men have thirsted and panted for war until it came, clad like an angel of light, proclaiming “ peace on earth and good will to men ;” and it can also tell how they have groaned, when, through the blinding dust of defeat, they have seen that fierce spirit of battle rushing over and on, girt with the blackness of the pit, leading the furies of hell in his wake and fluttering his blood-red banner over a hundred thousand ruined homes and broken hearts. But in the midst of the wreck and ruin, Freemasonry has signally displayed its great worth, and often in the hottest of the conflict.

During the first American war, a young English officer was lying wounded in an entrenchment and was about to receive the death-plunge from a bayonet, when he caught sight of an American soldier near by and indicated to him that he was a Freemason—the bayonet was struck down—and the life of a helpless enemy saved. The officer rescued thus, became the father-in-law of Alison, the great historian of Europe.

At the second battle of Cold Harbor the repulse of the Federals left the ground in front of the Confederate works strewn with their dead and wounded. These lying more than a day under a hot July sun, dying with thirst, begged piteously for help—but the Federal lines were so close, that none could leave the protection of the breastwork without becoming a target for their guns. Some dragged themselves to the ditch and were hoisted over by means of waist-belts buckled together and let down so as to reach them.

At this time, when to cross the works seemed certain death, two men came to headquarters and asked permission to bring in a wounded Federal lying in their front. They were referred to the order prohibiting such reckless exposure, and the danger of the attempt was pointed out. They answered that this man had shown the Masonic signal of distress, and that, as Masons, they felt bound to relieve him at any cost. The general commanding—General Hoke, of North Carolina—could not refuse his consent; and at nightfall the two went out together upon the field, and though exposed to the greatest danger, succeeded in bringing the man safely off. The stranger was believed to be mortally wounded, but he was so well cared for, in the private house of a Mason, that he recovered eventually and was exchanged as a prisoner of war. That day, where the wounded fell, they nearly all died in sight of the two armies—but the Masonic signal, though feebly raised, found a response in hostile breasts, and added one more to the many victories of love over death.

And to day, the Masonic Fraternity is alone the trusted keeper in common of the honored dead—on both sides—who fell in that great struggle. And faithfully does it keep its silent watch.

Here and there, all over the land these fallen heroes sleep. Many are resting beneath the shadows of the trees at home. Many are buried in unknown graves on the battlefield—and those graves are to be found everywhere along the tide-water plains and upon the mountain slopes from Gettysburg to the Mississippi, and thence onward to the Rio Grande.

They fell where they fought, and there they rest calmly, quietly, grandly. The tombs of most of them are unmarked by mosses or marble, but the sleep of the soldier is as glorious without them. In the soil that drank their blood, they will peacefully repose, heedless of the rain that shall bring kind flowers to decorate their graves, and unconscious of the moonbeams that shall nightly weave around them many a silver wreath as if with that to honor the brave.

Apparently neglected and forgotten, in the summer time the plough-boy may whistle beside them, and the tall grass moan in the evening wind above the broken ground where they lie. But forgotten they never can or shall be—their names are embalmed in the great heart of the country—their deeds will live forever.

"On Fame's eternal camping-ground  
Their silent tents are spread,  
And glory guards with solemn round  
The encampment of the dead!"

And beside each consecrated spot will Masonry keep constant vigil, teaching, like the God she worships, "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace!"

Having spoken plainly of what Masonry IS, we desire to tell you now of some things that Masonry IS NOT.

1st. Masonry *is not* the enemy of the church. And now I utter the language of a man who is not only a Freemason, but also a minister of the gospel: "It has been affirmed that Masonry was designed to substitute Christianity. This we flatly deny, and demand the proof. And here let me say, that, while we cherish the cause of God as sacredly as any man—in company with thousands whose lives have been devoted to their Lord—we are disgusted with hearing of this perpetual championship of Christ and His church by certain fanatics, and this brainless denunciation of the craft, for fear lest it enter into rivalry with the Gospel of Christ. We know what the truth of God is, and we know what Masonry is; and, in addition to this, we know that these anti-Masons libel an institution from which they are excluded, and slander brethren whose names and deeds for Christ and His church, in some instances, far surpass those of these reckless scoffers.

"Is it not preposterous to affirm that a belief in God and immortality will destroy the Church of the Saviour? Is it not shameful to say that the heathen, if taught on Sunday by the Missionary that there is a triune God, and on Monday that the soul is immortal by Freemasonry—to say that he may not advance to the comprehension of the whole truth, simply because a second and subordinate teacher comes in to help him? Is the pupil learning arithmetic thereby prevented from acquiring a knowledge of algebra? Must the lesser be despised because the greater is of infinite value? Are grammar schools nothing because in them is not taught the entire curriculum of a university?"

"Because Freemasonry teaches and requires a few doctrinal truths (although these are fundamental to and in common with it and Christianity) and yet does not teach the whole, therefore our institution must be destroyed! The question for the church to decide is this: Is Freemasonry antagonistic? Does it inculcate tenets in opposition to the symbols of Gospel truth? If so, wherein is this done? Let the proof be furnished, or else let the attacks upon the Fraternity cease.

"Freemasonry does not substitute humanity for Christianity, nor nature for grace. It believes that virtues as well as vices may be cultivated; and it supposes, without entering into the theological cause thereof, that much may be done to advance universal benevolence, and strengthen the great bond of a common brotherhood among men, by the use of symbols and ceremonies, books and lectures, and a thorough organization. What mean the creeds and collects and catechisms taught to the young in the churches? What means the zeal to instruct the on-coming generation? What mean the labors of catechists and the clergy? Do they not fill the mind and the heart with truth, and is not this training designed to make each pupil purer and wiser? Just so, Masonry presents her symbols to



the eye, her lectures to the ear, her catechism to the apprentice, and her instruction to the craftsman, upon the broad basis of prayer to and faith in God; charity toward all men and an unshaken confidence in the immortality of the soul. Freemasonry having fewer doctrines, can embrace a larger number of the human family as the case now stands. But when Christianity shall cover the earth, and convince the judgment, and fill the heart of the world, then the demand for Masonry will cease—the full supply of knowledge and charity having been universally disseminated by the Church of Christ.”

But such a religion as these Reverend anti-Masons seek to propagate will never overspread the earth. While it remains, perhaps, no less orthodox, it must be more generous, more catholic, more practical. It must have faith in its great Teacher, in its great mission, and in itself. It must lose its apprehension of any competition. It must cast away the jealousy (too often exhibited by its superficial advocates) of things external—such as was once manifested towards the development of science. For a time during the rapid advancement of the several branches of natural science, the foundations of revealed religion appeared to be threatened. A desire arose to regard this dangerous region as one separated by an impassable gulf from the kingdom of theology—a province governed by different laws—and to be judged upon principles entirely independent. But such a theory could not long maintain itself against that instinct of the human mind which recognizes as an axiom the unity of truth, or, at least, the necessary compatibility with each other of all truths known to man. Men have come to feel that in the domain of knowledge, no such partition is logically possible; and in the language of that eminent British Freemason, the Duke of Argyle, they see that “every one truth is connected with every other truth in the great universe of God.” The spiritual and intellectual world may diverge from each other in countless ways, but they must also meet at innumerable points of contact; and although in each realm, speculation may range freely, and work out its problems to their ultimate solution, yet if we believe in that great Creator who watches over both, we must also believe that their teaching is uniform, and that between all the legitimate deductions of the two there must ever subsist a perfect harmony, though it may be often too obscure to be seen by mortal eye. And so, between Freemasonry and Christianity there is no antagonism; they meet at innumerable points of contact, and they work together to transform this desolate earth into a land of promise.

2d. Again: Masonry is not the slave of partizan influence. And here I claim your special attention. Recently in Suffolk Lodge, No. 30, an unjustifiable party spirit, in open violation of the principles of Masonry, has undertaken to use for party purposes the sacred office of the ballot.—Now this language contains the statement of a very repulsive fact. It affirms that there exists in our midst a corrupt partizan influence, and no man can deny the fact without giving utterance to what he knows to be untrue.

Now, the question for us, as members of this ancient Fraternity, to decide, is this: Shall this party spirit, withering as is its influence to everything good and noble, shall it break down Masonry in this community? And, to-night, I answer in the name of the Lodge I represent—no, it

shall not. We will say to this black wave, "thus far canst thou go, and no farther." We mean to exorcise this demon in the name of the God of the truth and the right.

We do not exaggerate the fact, nor overstate its tendency. The source from which the evil springs may be small, it is true, as far as moral influence is concerned, and its field of operation may be circumscribed by a very narrow boundary. The world at large will never feel it, and it may never know anything about it, save through the necessity of a public exposure. But while all this is true, still here at home it is an influence which may creep like a poisonous snake past every man's door, stealthily seeking to accomplish its selfish designs at the expense of the peace and spiritual prosperity of the community. A short time ago we saw its slimy track across the threshold of our Lodge, and it is our duty to strangle this hydra-headed monster and crush it down to the hell from which it sprang.

And here let me say, I stand before you, to-night, simply as the representative of the Lodge of which I am an humble member. I shall hold up before you, not individuals, but party measures and party meanness, that I may illustrate the universal character of this great evil. I have a nobler aim than personal attack, and I care not what the guilty may say about me. Conscious of my own integrity, I rise above the level of such critics; and I thank God I breathe an atmosphere and live in a sunshine to which, without a genuine reformation, they may never attain. If anyone should determine to take to himself the rebuke administered to a great wrong to-night, I have only to say, he alone shall be held responsible for choosing to impersonate an evil, of which he thereby judges himself to be the fairest exponent.

History utters but one voice concerning this whole matter. The annals of the past loudly protest against unworthy methods of aggrandizement, under the guidance of impure men, whether in the affairs of Church or State, or in the management of business life. History illustrates the folly of all this, and reveals the fact that partizan influence is always prompted by wicked selfishness—and so soon as it can command the power, it always results in a despotic proscription *first*, and *then* in a bloody inquisition, if needs be.

And what has been my own observation during my short lifetime? With my eyes always wide open, I have seen through the printed page doings of others around me. Looking out from my standpoint, I have seen this incarnate fiend called *Partizan Influence*, without a shadow of justification, kindling here and there its bonfires for the destruction of everything except itself. I have seen it preach charity, and at the same time practice the gospel of hatred. I have seen it, with the palaver of the cunning deceiver, busily at work folding the mantle of purity around the baseness of human character. I have seen it struggling to thrust Church matters and Church candidates upon the suffrage of the people, until the low trickery of this sanctified demagogue has become a stench in the nostrils of all good men everywhere. I have seen it drag the character of a slandered woman from the virtuous obscurity of her quiet home, and in its eagerness to hurry on the vindictive pursuit of its chosen victim, I have seen it lift up that character and handle it with the wanton recklessness of a brute. I have seen it enter the court-room and snatch

the guilty from the hands of Justice, while the community shuddered at the violence done to the morals of the land. I have seen it stand before a jury, with brazen face, and undertake to destroy the testimony of a true witness by the utterance of a falsehood as black as the lie that blistered the lips of Annanias. I have seen it, in its godless thirst for money, endeavoring to supplant honest business men and drive them to removal or to ruin. I have seen it resorting to sundry methods of intimidation to force poor men into its service, thereby robbing the poor laborer of the right to think and speak for himself—a right which God gave and no man dare take away—a right which the heroes of '76 fought to defend and secure—a right with which no one can safely venture to interfere, by driving the poor workman to the alternative of yielding to this influence against his conscience or of hearing his children cry for bread when there is nothing to eat in the house.

O, it is enough to make the blood boil in your veins! It is enough to make you clench your hands, involuntarily, as if you were grasping for a weapon to strike this monster through and through! Who, that has the soul of a man, is not ready to cry out against this wickedness—this godless ambition of Partizan Influence to rule or ruin! Let this go on, unrebuked, and the fire now burning on the edge will sweep over the whole surface of the prairie, leaving in the place of purity and fraternity only the blackened waste where the flame has been as a monument to the memory of the infamous incendiary!

Now, the question for us, as Masons, to decide, is this: Shall Masonry, too, be trampled under by the hoof of this cloven-footed beast? Methinks I can hear two millions of determined spirits from all lands and across many waters send up the reply, "It cannot be, and it shall not be!"

It is my duty to assure this assembly that the evil to which I have alluded will be properly dealt with in the deliberations of our Lodge. Time may elapse—yet it will eventually be rooted out and destroyed. But is there not a nearer remedy which may be found in our conduct as Masons in social life? Yes, there is; and we must use it with an unflinching trust in the power of God to help us. We must stand together, shoulder to shoulder, in our resistance to this remorseless spirit—remembering that nothing is to be gained by serving it, because it clings to you only so long as it can use you, and then it kicks you off forever. How often, in the history of the world, has this been the literal fact.

The Rev. Dr. Punshon tells us that "in 1780 a strange darkness came suddenly at midday upon the State of Connecticut, and many thought the end of the world was come." The speaker of the House of Assembly, then in session, was in his place, and when many desired to adjourn, he calmed the rising fears of the members with these words: If this be the day of judgment I desire that the Judge may find me at my post of duty. Let the candles be brought in and the business proceed. May God help us to be found at our posts of duty, always, in the grand work of crushing out this ruthless partizan spirit which has shown its hideous head in our Lodge. For, excepting the worship of God, the judgment could not find us engaged in a nobler undertaking than this—the work of beating back this prince of darkness, and breaking the shackles that fetter the imperial will of man, however poor and dependent he may be.

Again, we must remember that Masonry has no nobler proof of its



intrinsic worth than the cultivation of true manhood. To those who have allowed any sort of partizan influence to harness them to its dirty car, let me say, don't be such an abject slave—lick the dust from no man's feet—let no man put a dog-collar on your neck and drag you about like a poor brute to serve a vulgar master. Be something nobler. Stand erect, as God made you. Hand back the money and the patronage, and take your conscience again, and be able to testify once more that your soul is your own. Spurn the fawning friendship of any one who would attempt to use you thus, for he will be sure to deceive you. Don't abandon your principles or surrender your manhood, because you fear that an independent course of conduct will drive you into the clutches of this dragon—Partizan Influence—and starve you to death there. Such a thing is utterly impossible, and I can cite conspicuous instances to show it. No—do your duty like a man, and the community will stand by you—and God will honor you, when he sees that you cannot be hired to fall down and worship the beast and receive its mark in your forehead. The ravens of Heaven will feed you sooner than you shall be robbed of a living by the Jesuitical persecution of party spirit. Your brethren of the Lodge will stand by you and see that you are not crushed out. We will clasp hands over the sacred altar and pledge you the necessary assistance. And we will imbue our whole brotherhood with the spirit of that grand old song of the battle ground :

“ When midst the wreck of fire and smoke,  
 When cannons rend the sky asunder,  
 And fierce dragoons, with quickening stroke,  
 Upon the reeling squadrons thunder,  
 The ranks close up at the sharp command,  
 Till helmet's feather touches feather,  
 Compact the furious shock they stand,  
 And conquer—for they cling together.

When, now, our comrades tell of want,  
 And the plea of the poor is rising faster,  
 And charging madly on our front  
 Comes the black herald of disaster,  
 Shall we present a wavering band,  
 And fly like leaves before wild weather?  
 No ! side by side and hand in hand  
 We'll stand our ground and cling together.

God gave us hands—one left, one right :  
 The first to help ourselves, the other  
 To stretch abroad in kindly might  
 And help along our faithful brother.  
 Then, if you see a comrade fall  
 And bow his head before the weather,  
 If you be not a dastard all,  
 You'll help him up and cling together.”

Let us redeem Masonry from the stigma which has recently been placed upon the institution in Suffolk, and the Order will again be a power in our midst—severed and separated forever from the wickedness of this partisan influence.

And now, brethren of the Masonic Fraternity, the past is secure—it cannot be defamed by the crimes of the present ; let us cherish and defend the spotless history of our craft. Soon our work will be over. Time is hurrying us rapidly on.

'O Time—remorseless Time,  
 Pierce spirit of the glass and scythe! what power  
 Can stay him in his silent course, or melt  
 His iron heart to pity! On, still on,  
 He presses, and forever. The proud bird,  
 The Condor of the Andes, that can soar  
 Through Heaven's unfathomable depths, or brave  
 The fury of the Northern hurricane  
 And bathe his plumage in the thunder's home,  
 Furls his broad wings at nightfall and sinks down  
 To rest upon his mountain crag; but Time  
 Knows not the weight of sleep or weariness,  
 And Night's deep darkness hath no chain to bind  
 His rushing wing."

Let us be faithful while we may, to the solemn obligations of the ancient craft—remembering that it is ours to labor until the eighth bell strikes, and the angels call us to the rest and refreshment of the Great Temple beyond the river.

Let us be true to our trust and faithful to God. O, for the self-sacrificing spirit which characterized the devotion of the hero who sleeps in his grave at Lexington, Virginia. Neither the charms of repose in the night hour, nor the stern duties of the busy day could turn the mind of the immortal Jackson from its steady purpose to help man and serve God. Nor did the shock of arms, in conflict, banish the memory of that one grand consciousness of a duty that must be done.

Once, during military life, while the enemy were advancing in splendid line from the banks of the Rappahannock, he stood in front of his troops upon the heights of Fredericksburg, and there, while down the plains the guns of the foe glittered in the morning sun, and their drums beat the furious charge—he stood calmly, with uncovered head and uplifted eyes, meekly pleading with the God of Battles to spare the lives of his brave men and give victory to his arms.

O, what a sight was that for Heaven to look on—a soldier on the field, in the dread hour of battle, true to his God as he was true to his country.

O, that every Freemason to-day were a Jackson to stand by the interests of the craft—unmoved and undaunted by the threats of honest foes abroad or the plots of secret traitors at home.

And now, in the name of our brotherhood, we plead—

"O Father! grant thy love divine  
 To make these mystic temples thine!  
 When wasting age and wearying strife  
 Have sapped the leaning walls of life—  
 When darkness gathers over all,  
 And the last tottering pillars fall,  
 Take the poor dust thy mercy warms  
 And mould it into heavenly forms."

### III.

Next in order comes a defence of the character and the public delivery of the address. The action of the Lodge subsequent to that event, and to which reference has already been made, is enough, if taken in connection with the address itself, to satisfy the Masonic world.

But the occasion which furnished the real cause for a public defence of the principles of Freemasonry, is officially set forth in the following preamble and resolutions, which were offered at a regular communication

of the Lodge, May 27, 1872, and adopted at the next regular communication, July 22d, 1872, by a *unanimous* vote :

[Extract from the record of the Secretary.]

Whereas, We believe that a corrupt partizan spirit has recently crept into our Lodge, and, in open violation of Masonic faith, has undertaken to degrade, for party purpose, the sacred office of the ballot; and whereas, it is not only hostile to the genius of Masonry, but utterly subversive of the great design of the Order in its labor of love to bring men so near to each other within one common bond of brotherhood that they may be enabled to live above the reach of personal prejudice and party schemes, and thereby preserve and protect the conservative interests of society; and whereas, we believe that this shameful spirit has not only dishonored Masonry in the judgment of the community, but in addition to this deplorable result, it has already inflicted serious injury upon our Lodge, and is destined, unless corrected and removed, to destroy, not only the efficiency, but also the very life of the Order in Suffolk; therefore,

Resolved, 1st. That the members of Suffolk Lodge, No. 30, in a body representing *nineteen-twentieths* of our entire membership, do hereby condemn and utterly repudiate the unworthy spirit previously alluded to, and we indignantly disclaim all responsibility connected with the great wrong which has been done to the Order by this unwarranted interference with a department of our work identified in every way with the integrity of the Craft.

Resolved, 2d. That we pledge ourselves to resist the encroachment of this remorseless spirit, that by so doing we may repair the damage done to Masonry in the community, restore the lost confidence of the public, vindicate the honor of the Fraternity, and expel from our Lodge an influence which so manifestly seeks to rule or ruin.

By a unanimous vote of the Lodge I was granted the privilege of using the official paper just read, if I should deem it to be necessary to the vindication of my conduct. I desire to say, incidentally, that these resolutions, as they originally appeared, were prepared by me at the request of several members of the Lodge. They were materially altered, however, before they were offered, and they were amended while under discussion before they were adopted. They were not, therefore, simply an expression of individual opinion; they are the official opinion of the Lodge as to the real importance of the evil denounced in the address.

The specific act alluded to in these resolutions was the rejection of an applicant for membership. Never did a more thrifty, energetic and universally esteemed young man come to the door of any Lodge as a candidate for initiation; and never was a Lodge more thoroughly shocked and disgusted by any conceivable act as by this rejection. It was believed then, and it is still believed, that party spirit did the work.

But Mr. Wellons says in his pamphlet: "My acquaintance with Masonic usage justifies me in saying that no public allusion should ever have been made to any rejection in your Lodge room." This declaration brings up the question—why was the rebuke to party spirit administered publicly?

I reply, because the deed from which all the evil sprang *was freely spoken of and denounced by the young man who was blackballed.*

After he was duly informed of the rejection of his application for membership, according to Masonic usage, he had a right to speak of it whenever and wherever he pleased so to do. He was not amenable to Masonic law. *The secret was not divulged by any member of our Lodge;* it was revealed by the man who felt that he had been improperly treated. He had a right to express his indignation, and the declaration of Mr.



Wellons, which was intended to apply to this case, is, in this connection, *utterly worthless*.

And now, after the deed referred to became the talk of the town, the honor of the Craft was *most* seriously assailed. The very existence of the Order in Suffolk was threatened. Our brethren were publicly taunted, the Lodge was ridiculed, and Masonry became a hissing and a by-word. For four long weeks this intolerable reproach was patiently borne. At last the day of deliverance came. In the presence of a large assembly the reputation of the Lodge was vindicated, and the principles of Freemasonry were most faithfully advocated with all the earnestness of which the speaker was capable. If there is anything to be regretted about that speech, it is simply and solely the fact that I could not bring to the defence of my Lodge talents of a higher order and words of power more ingeniously adapted to the utter destruction of the wrong denounced. Until God takes back the breath he gave, I am resolved to fight this hideous spawn of sin wherever it shows its insolent front. Out of the depth of my soul, I do detest the wickedness of a corrupt partizan spirit, and I will never let it rest so long as there is a chance to sink one more sabre gash into the core of its brutal heart.

Mr. Wellons intimates that, in the preparation of that address, I permitted myself to become the victim of "imprudent advisers," or, as he expresses it in another part of his pamphlet, "the tool of parties personally unfriendly" to him. To this impudent insinuation, no other reply is necessary than simply to remind him that, although quite *young*, I am nevertheless old enough to speak for myself.

As to the composition of that address, it is perhaps best that I should correct a rumor which has been extensively circulated through this county, by stating publicly that—1st. No one advised with me in any way previous to, or during the preparation of the manuscript; 2d. No one saw it or heard it read until it was delivered. It was, in that sense, thoroughly *new* to every *hearer*. This statement terminates the existence of a *very athletic falsehood*.

Thus far I have made no allusion to that portion of the address which seems to have nettled the temper of my assailant, because it is my purpose to discuss its application at another and a more appropriate place in this controversy.

At this point, the relation which my Lodge has sustained to this affair comes properly to an end. But, before I leave this department of the subject, it is my duty to say, to the Masonic Fraternity throughout the State of Virginia, that *this is the first time I have ever been involved in a difficulty affecting in any way the interests of the Craft*. In making this statement, I am aware that the facts in the case enable me to draw a strong contrast between my own past conduct and that of my accuser. I am prepared to prove that *Mr. Wellons has been involved in no less than nine Masonic trials within the last ten months!* In every instance, he was the prosecuting party. In one case, the defendant was expelled. In the remaining eight cases the accused were triumphantly acquitted. Such is the Masonic record of Wm. B. Wellons.\*

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\*To this brief statement about the nine Masonic trials, we will add the fact that they were all connected with and resulted from one cause of complaint. There were only two indictments; in one of these were included the names of eight members of Solomon's Lodge, No. 34. The case of each one, however, was separately investigated, hence the statement of the author.

## IV.

Next in order comes the exoneration of my Church from any connection whatever with the address, and with the well known fact that it was the place selected for the Masonic celebration that night.

A false report has been most industriously circulated through this and the adjacent counties, the plain object of which was to identify the Methodist Church in Suffolk with the apparent cause of the subsequent disturbance. Now I desire to say, publicly and officially, that there never was the shadow of a foundation for the report. Whether this groundless rumor was designed to affect the business relations and the patronage of any of the merchants of Suffolk, I shall let the citizens of the town and the county determine.

The facts in the case are these: When I accepted the invitation of the Lodge I offered the Fraternity the use of my Church for the designated celebration. There is no town hall in Suffolk of sufficient capacity to accommodate a large assembly. The main audience room in my Church building was, in my judgment, the only place large enough to hold the gathering for which provision was to be made; and the result demonstrated the soundness of that opinion.

*I alone am responsible* for the fact that the Masons occupied my Church that night. I did not consult any one as to the propriety of this step, because I knew that it was not the first time that either a lecture or a Masonic address had been delivered in the house. I did not discover the impropriety of my conduct then. I do not see it yet. And I will not see it, until the trustees of the Church shall pass a prohibitory law to prevent a recurrence of the same hereafter.

I desire to say, moreover, that *the address in question was purely Masonic*. The celebration that night did not in any way partake of the nature of a formal or informal church service, and *the speaker appeared in no other capacity than that of a Freemason*.

My assailant states that perhaps *three-fourths of his congregation* were present that night. I remember distinctly that when I glanced over that assembly, I discovered that *more than one-half of my own members were NOT present*. Their absence was accounted for next morning by the statement that they had understood that the address was simply a Masonic lecture, designed more especially for the members of the Craft.

I alone am responsible for the delivery of that address, in that house, and I pronounce the originators of the report above mentioned to be the authors of a most malicious falsehood.

Let this suffice for the exoneration of my Church from any sort of complicity with the affair.

Before we pass from this division of the subject, I must notice a sentence or two in the pamphlet of Mr. Wellons. He falsely assumes, and does not hesitate to give currency to the unauthorized insinuation that my conduct has brought me into collision with the *official* members of my Church. This certainly is the legitimate inference to be drawn from the following language: "The forgiveness of your brethren for the desecration of their pulpit." This is what he tells me it is my duty to seek.

According to the economy of my Church, "the brethren," in such a case, communicate with their pastor through the officers of the Church. This is the legal process; hence the words I have already used. Now it is almost needless to say, that no such conflict has occurred between me and *any member* of my pastoral charge, official or otherwise, nor is there the remotest probability of it. In all this controversy I have not sought nor would I have permitted any interference on the part of my Church in my behalf. I accept the result of my own conduct, and I ask no man to fight my battles for me. But inasmuch as my accuser has heralded to the world the intimation that I have desecrated my pulpit in the estimation of my people, I challenge him to give me the *names* of those who revealed to him this conviction! When my people get ready to arraign me for trial, it will be time enough for this arrogant intruder to flit his impertinent suggestions into the face of men who are already proficient in the happy art of minding their own business.

Mr. Wellons says in his pamphlet, "You have been betrayed into a great error. The more intelligent, unprejudiced and candid of your own friends will tell you so." I reply, they have never told me so yet! Just here it is my duty to sift another false report which was founded, I have no doubt, upon the above-quoted language. It has been stated that one of my official members has publicly denounced my conduct. The prominence of the man gave importance to the rumor. It was freely circulated, to my injury, among those to whom I was personally a stranger.

The facts in the case are these: The man referred to is a distinguished lawyer, but he is as highly appreciated for his integrity of character, and his well known benevolence as for his talents and attainments as a jurist. When the address was delivered he was in Charlottesville. On his return he received from different persons an account of the affair; and he said that "he could not approve of certain language *reported* to have been used by me." Several days thereafter, I visited his office; he repeated the same in substance. *I then determined to publish my address and let it vindicate or condemn me.* This action I resolved upon, because nothing is more repulsive to me than to attempt to worry any man out of his opinion when it happens to run counter to my own. I think for myself, and I accord to every one else the same privilege.

Moreover, it is my duty to add that it was the sincere desire of the gentleman referred to, to keep clear of the difficulty, so that, at the proper time, he might be prepared to act in the capacity of peacemaker, as he had often done before between other parties. His position is eminently worthy of admiration. But how painfully does it contrast with the conduct of Rev. W. B. Wellons, who, on the night of August 24th, 1871, while standing by two persons engaged in a fight, waved back the sheriff of the county and said "Let them alone," or words to that effect. And it was not until the officer of the law announced his authority that Mr. Wellons replied, "Then do your duty." These facts were a part of the evidence in a criminal case, recently tried in our County court. It is indeed a source of mutual congratulation in the community that the laws of the Commonwealth are strong enough to reach a belligerent preacher who could not be restrained by the law of God. It would be a triumph of arithmetical accuracy to ascertain what share Mr. Wellons may possibly claim of that



blessing which is contained in those good old words: "Blessed are the *peacemakers*, for they shall be called the children of God"!

One more allusion in this connection. In his pamphlet my accuser says "there is force in the remark, which has been often made since, by persons not members of either your church or mine, that you disgraced your pulpit." After diligent search during two weeks or more, I have been unable to discover the imaginary speakers who are so emphatically referred to. Street rumor fixed the libel upon a prominent physician of the town. I asked him if the report was true, and he pronounced it *a base fabrication*. In the absence of any fact or name to sustain the assertion, I do not hesitate to call the statement *a falsehood*. Certain it is, that the parties referred to have never been heard from or seen by any of my friends in Suffolk; and, I may safely add, my friends compose about four-fifths of the people in town.

## V.

Next in order comes a review of the actual correspondence which passed between Mr. Wellons and myself. I give the letters as they were published in his pamphlet:

SUFFOLK, VA., June 28th, 1872.

REV. W. G. STARR—Dear Sir: The position which you and I occupy in this community, leads me to enquire if you intended to reflect personally upon me in any remarks made by you in your Masonic address, delivered from your pulpit on Wednesday evening last.

I desire a frank and candid answer.

My friend, Major D. B. Dunbar, will receive your reply.

Very respectfully,

W. B. WELLONS.

SUFFOLK, VA., June 28, 1872.

REV. W. B. WELLONS—Dear Sir: Your note was received through Maj. D. B. Dunbar. In reply I have to state, that a part of the Masonic address delivered last Wednesday night was designed to vindicate the Lodge of which I am a member, from the public imputation that it is in the hands and at the mercy of a partizan spirit which has recently crept into it. I struck at the fact as it exists in the community, and disclaimed at the outset any personal attack upon any individual, and said: "If any one should determine to take to himself the rebuke administered to a great wrong to-night, I have only to say, he alone shall be held responsible for choosing to impersonate an evil, of which he thereby judges himself to be the fairest exponent." I then illustrated the evils of party spirit according to the teachings of history, and observation. I did not design to assault the character of any one—but I did design to condemn the spirit referred to, in the strongest terms. I care not what representations may have been made to you concerning this matter. I never seek to attack any man—while, at the same time, I never shrink from doing my duty, whatever may be the nature of the wrong I am called upon to denounce.

Very respectfully,

W. G. STARR.

SUFFOLK, VA., June 28th, 1872.

REV. W. G. STARR—Dear Sir: Yours of this date has just been handed me by Captain Britt. It is evasive and unsatisfactory. I enquired "if you intended to reflect personally upon me in any remark by you in your Masonic address, delivered from your pulpit on Wednesday evening last," and asked for a "frank and candid reply."

I repeat the enquiry, and desire that you shall say yes or no.

Very respectfully,

W. B. WELLONS.

SUFFOLK, VA., June 29, 1872.

REV. W. B. WELLONS—Dear Sir: Your second note was delivered to me

by Captain E. B. Britt yesterday evening. In reply I shall say several things:

1. My answer to your first note was enough to satisfy any reasonable man. If you do not know the meaning of words, it is your misfortune—not my fault.

2. After writing that reply, I submitted it, together with your note, to three just and honorable men—one from your Lodge, one from mine, and one a citizen of the town, but not a Mason. They decided without a difference of opinion that my note was a “frank, candid and satisfactory” answer. This confirmed my own judgment; and you will have to accept that reply or none; for I am persuaded that nothing would satisfy you which would be consistent with a right course of conduct on my part. I have done all that an honorable man would do, and all that a just man would ask.

3. If it is your intention to impersonate the evil which I have condemned, just say so, and I shall not hesitate to apply to you every word of denunciation contained in the rebuke already referred to.

As to the difference between us, I have no plan of settlement to suggest. I stand upon the platform of a man who has done his duty to God and the people, and blessed with the consciousness of that fact, I care not who may undertake to assault me for that cause. I am ready for any issue that may be thrust upon me.

Very respectfully,

W. G. STARR.

As to the character of my first letter, I affirm that in the judgment of unprejudiced men, it has been everywhere regarded as a perfectly satisfactory reply to the first note of my accuser. I have received but one expression of opinion, from the workman at his bench to the lawyer in his office. *It ought to have been satisfactory, and the difficulty ought to have stopped there. This is the voice of the people!*

But Mr. Wellons was not satisfied. He had an ulterior object to gain, and so he wrote a second letter. That letter produced upon the public mind, generally, the impression that he *sought to force a public controversy upon me.*

So soon as he informed me that my first note was not satisfactory I was convinced that he desired to provoke a personal difficulty by asking for such confessions, and perhaps retractions, as he knew he would never get. This conviction was barely modified by the suspicion that, perhaps, he mistook the spirit of his opponent, and had struck upon this plan to make me truckle to his will. As to truckling, there was not a drop of blood in me that did not hoot at the thought. I had no alternative but to accept the issue.

Moreover, I was, in a measure, led to this conclusion by the discourteous treatment I had received from Mr. Wellons ever since the first month of my sojourn in Suffolk—December, 1869—and for which, at the proper time, I shall most clearly show that I was *not* responsible. In addition to this, I do my assailant no injustice when I say that he is believed by some to possess a domineering disposition.

A gentleman, whose friendship he will not question, observed a few days ago: “If Mr. Wellons had the power, he would be a tyrant.”

Now, add the conduct of the man to what appeared to me to be his character, and the public will have a full idea of the *spirit of determination* which is undoubtedly visible in my second letter.

My accuser predicted that either I or my friends, or both, would be ashamed of that letter when it appeared in print. He turns out, however, to be a very poor prophet; for nobody is ashamed of the purpose of a young man who chooses to resist, rather than submit to a sacrifice

of honor. Neither of my letters were hastily written. I was not angry. My temper was not in the slightest degree nettled. I understood what I did, and nine-tenths of the people understood it too, and endorsed me, so soon as those letters were published and read.

Here comes in *an interval of two weeks*, during which time I am supposed by Mr. Wellons to be the victim of penitential sorrow. The picture which was presented to the imagination of my venerable accuser must have been truly touching. Doubtless I was supposed to be seated like Daniel in a gloomy den, surrounded by mortifying reflections instead of lions—my *youthful* form covered with sack cloth and ashes, and my tearful eyes dimly searching for some word of comfort among the lamentations of Jeremiah. The night passes away; the morning dawns. The king approaches the den of the prisoner. He seeks in vain to discover a hopeful reformation in the penitent. There sits the incorrigible Daniel, without a bite or a scratch, very composedly waiting for something to turn up!

Before I introduce the pamphlet of Mr. Wellons, which is supposed to terminate the patient forbearance of the most patient of saints, I prefer to ask, why did he not obtain at my hands, what he seems to regard as the literal cause of the dispute? While he was forming his judgment upon heresy evidence only, and harboring in his heart all this bitter resentment, why did he not send for my address and read it for his own satisfaction? It was in manuscript. I read it when it was delivered. He might have obtained it any time. The occasion would have warranted the temporary repudiation of any barrier which custom may have ordinarily interposed. He *did not want* that, however. He seemed to crave the glory of a great triumph over a *youth*, whose bones might be easily crunched in the voracious jaws of a terrible antagonist; and then, how grandly might he walk the land with the headless trunk of his butchered victim, as the conspicuous trophy of a signal victory! True, he might have learned the value of prudence from the lesson which the little shepherd boy taught the giant of the Philistines; but he was bent on a pitched battle, and nothing else could appease his irrepressible wrath. When he went beyond my *first* reply, he stepped over the brink, and fell upon the sharp point of an unlooked for trouble. Could he halt there? Oh, no—the sense of right is too firmly fixed in this young man to be spanked out—it must be ground out between the upper and the nether millstone. His *second* letter to me was a great blunder; the *third*, embraced in the body of his pamphlet, was a greater blunder still. He thought it would be a Waterloo defeat, but he may find out, to his sorrow, that it only made the matter worse. And this reminds me of a piece of poetry which I offer as an honest tribute to the good sense and the piety of the man. He has so graciously impressed the people with his knowledge of my *youthfulness*, I hope he will not deny me the humble privilege of a short quotation from Mother Goose's melodies:

“ There was a man of our town,  
 And he was wondrous wise,  
 He jumped into a bramble bush  
 And scratched out both his eyes;  
 And when he saw his eyes were out,  
 With all his might and main,  
 He jumped into another bush  
 To scratch them in again!”



## VI.

Next in order comes the pamphlet of Mr. Wellons, republished in full. I am under no obligation to him to do this, but I am not willing to take even the smallest advantage of an enemy. Moreover, the people have a right to see the target, if they are to stand by and judge whether or not the firing be accurately done :

## TO THE PUBLIC.

I have no apology to offer to the people of Suffolk and vicinity for the publication of the following correspondence. It tells its own story, and reveals fully the object of its publication :

[Here follow the four letters which are introduced elsewhere.]

SUFFOLK, VA., July 15th, 1872.

TO REV. W. G. STARR—Sir : Your reply to my second letter, dated June 29th, was so offensive in its tone, and so unsatisfactory in its statements, that I could not, in the exercise of a proper self-respect, continue longer a private correspondence with you, and I am therefore compelled to address you in this public manner, laying your conduct openly before the people, and leaving you to answer at the bar of public opinion.

I have purposely delayed this publication for two weeks, hoping that your conscience would so smite you, in your cooler moments, that you would be induced either to disavow any intention to so seriously wound and injure me, in your so-called Masonic address ; or if at the time, while laboring under very excited feelings, and surrounded by unfavorable circumstances and imprudent advisers, you had intentionally sought to reflect so seriously upon me personally, that a return of pious feeling and inclination would induce you to withdraw your offensive remarks. But seeing no such inclination manifested, I have determined, in this public manner, to lay before the people my whole cause of complaint against you.

Before entering upon the statement of facts which I intend to present, you will permit me to express great surprise at your wanton and uncalled for attack. It came to my ears as unexpected as a peal of thunder from a cloudless sky. I have lived in or near Suffolk for a quarter of a century, and am now among the older citizens of the place. A number of ministers of your denomination have been stationed here during this time, many of whom are now leading men in the Virginia Conference. With all of them I have lived in peace—have received at the hands of them all much of christian and ministerial courtesy, and I have tried to treat them all with a proper christian and ministerial regard. Our social and christian intercourse was always pleasant. You have proved the only exception. At your hands I never have received any ministerial courtesy or even recognition, either in visiting your Church, or elsewhere. I have tried, however, to extend proper christian and ministerial respect to you at all times, and if I have failed in any particular, it was never intentional. I passed over your neglect, and charitably attributed it to youthful vanity, from which years of experience would relieve you ; and up to the time of your personal attack on me, I had never said aught of evil against you. Whenever an opportunity offered, in private or public, and through my paper, I have seized upon it to speak kindly of you. I did not desire, nor did I intend, that the cause of Christ should suffer because of any difference between us.

I carefully avoided any collision for another reason. Many of my personal friends are members of your charge ; men with whom I transact business ; whom I meet in the social circle, and I did not want them placed in the unpleasant position which a difference between us might force them to occupy.

Again, many of the members of your pastoral charge were converted under my ministerial labors, and at the altar of my Church. I wept with them as penitents, and rejoiced with them in the young morn of their spiritual life. In them I have always felt a special and fatherly interest.

Another reason operated upon my heart. Methodist and CHRISTIAN worship is nearly the same, and for the doctrines preached and forms of worship observed in the Methodist Church I have ever cherished much love. I never desired that the wall of partition between us, as separate and distinct organizations, should be made stronger, in this community, by any difference between its representative men.

Another reason still. Suffolk is my home. All my temporal interests are here. Here I am expecting to live and die, among those, so many of whom, have been brought to Christ under my poor labors. You are here only for a short time, according to the government of your Church. Why did you wish to engender a strife between you and me, and your brethren and my brethren, which will live on and do its evil work when you shall have found a home in another and perhaps a distant place? Surely you did not consider before entering on a work so full of evil. If imprudently advised to such a course, you should have shrunk from it. If you had attacked any doctrine held by me or the Church represented by me, I could have borne it, and would have met it without personal feeling. But your attack was wholly personal—was made from your pulpit, and in a place which shielded you from any direct reply on the part of my friends present. Surely the better and more intelligent of your hearers did not justify your course; and there is force in the remark which has been often made since, by persons not members of either your Church or mine, that you disgraced your pulpit.

Now, I come directly to the complaint which I have to make against you. It had been announced in your Lodge, from your pulpit, and by posters around the town, that you would deliver an address on Masonry. The public was invited to attend. The citizens of the town generally were out to hear your address. Three-fourths of my congregation, perhaps, were present—none of them even dreaming what was to be its character. I did not attend, nor did any member of my family. Judge of my surprise, next morning, when one after another, to the number of fifty or more, told me of your bitter personal attack on me. True, you did not mention my name in so many words, but in professing to show what Masonry was not, and in depicting party spirit, you illustrated your ideas with what you said you had seen developed, and in your illustrations used several incidents and things with which I had been recently directly concerned, distorting the facts connected with these incidents and circumstances; misstating their true character, and falsifying the position which I occupied in connection with them. *Not one of the incidents as distorted was true when applied to me;* and yet you so clearly pointed to me in those charges that, I suppose, not a man, woman or child in your Church failed to understand that you meant me. My friends were surprised, thunderstruck, and would have called you to account at once had it not been in a Church, and had you not been protected and shielded by your profession. May I ask again the reason for making this attack from your pulpit? Is the pulpit a suitable place for such bitter personalities? And then your language, your gestures, and the spirit manifested, startled many of your own friends. Such bitterness of language would not have been tolerated in a cross-roads political discussion. As your excitement brought the warm blood to your face, and your gestures betrayed your angry feelings, and the grinding of your teeth could be heard all over the house, it must have been, and doubtless was, very amusing to the light, the thoughtless, and that portion of society who have no reverence for religion. But, my dear sir, how religion was stabbed—how God's cause was injured! Well might an intelligent gentleman, who had often heard you preach and admired you, say to me, with tears in his eyes, "I was never so disappointed in a man. I never saw such a display of angry and bitter feeling expressed even in a political discussion, and my confidence in religion has been shaken by it."

What had I ever done to you to bring out such bitterness toward me? What reason can you give for such an attack? The utmost stretch of charity and forbearance fails to bring to my mind a single excuse for your conduct on that occasion. The most charitable thing that can be said in your defence is, that you allowed yourself to be made a tool of by parties personally unfriendly to me, and if so, you showed a lack of judgment in consenting to occupy such a position, and they showed themselves untrue to you in pushing you into such a position.

In my first letter, I respectfully asked you if you *intended* to personally



reflect upon me. I could not have done less. You replied that you had stated in your address that you did not intend to be personal, but if any one should determine to take to himself the rebuke, that he should be held responsible for it. I do not take to myself the wrongs charged, but all who heard your address *knew* that you intended to apply the wrong to me. It is your application of which I complain. And when I asked you respectfully to inform me if you intended to reflect upon me personally, if you had not intended to do so, it would have been so very easy for you to disavow any such intention, in unmistakable terms. But you would not do this; and you had not the manliness to withdraw your offensive remarks. I gave you time to sleep over your bitter words, and I hoped you would pray over them, before I enquired for your intention. Looking at the subject from any standpoint, your treatment of me seems unmanly. In your address, you either *did*, or *did not*, mean to reflect upon me. If you *did*, you should have had the courage to say so, and not to screen yourself from blame by an artfully constructed array of words. If you *did not*, you should have been just enough to say so, and relieve an innocent man from the opprobrium arising from an admissible application of your remarks.

My second letter was intended to be respectful in a renewal of the enquiry. Your reply to it, you will probably be ashamed of, when you see it in print, and if you are so hardened with prejudice that you cannot feel ashamed, your friends will feel ashamed for you. You say a "partizan spirit" has "crept into your Lodge." If so, I am not responsible, and *had nothing whatever to do with its introduction*. I am not a member of your Lodge, and have never been in it since its re-organization, and know nothing of its private workings. If the ballot box has been defiled, or any party or parties been rejected, I had nothing to do with it either directly or indirectly. My acquaintance with Masonic usage justifies me in saying that that no public allusion should ever have been made to any rejection in your Lodge room. If such a thing occurred, it should have remained in the Lodge and have been known only to the Craft.

I demand at your hands a frank disavowal of any *intention* to reflect upon my moral and christian character in the address from your pulpit on the evening of the 26th of June; or, if intended, then I demand proof of the truthfulness of the charges, or a frank withdrawal of your offensive accusations. This you have refused to grant, and what you have refused to me personally, you shall now answer to the public. Your denunciations were too serious to be trifled with, and you shall not escape the responsibility, which you have either voluntarily assumed, or allowed others to impose upon you, in this affair.

You have grievously wronged me, and you have wronged my friends, and until you are willing to make that reparation which one christian man has a right to demand of another—which one gentleman has a right to demand of another, I can never countenance you as a christian or recognize you as a gentleman. And all the *extreme politeness* which you are attempting to show toward my personal friends and Christian brethren, will only cause them to feel the more contempt for you—a contempt which their christian refinement may not permit them to express in such language as you used in your pulpit, but which will ever be felt in their hearts.

Now, sir, you are yet a young man. I am many years your senior, and have many spiritual children who are older in grace than you are in years; therefore I have it in my heart to offer you kindly advice. You have been betrayed into a great error. The more intelligent, unprejudiced, and candid of your own friends will tell you so. It is a duty which you owe to yourself, your church, your friends and the public, to frankly confess your error, and seek first the forgiveness of Him whose law you have violated by bearing false witness against your neighbor; secondly, the forgiveness of your neighbor whom you have injured; thirdly, the forgiveness of your brethren for the desecration of their pulpit; and lastly, the forgiveness of the public, for having so unnecessarily stirred up strife and ill-feeling in the community. Do this, and I promise to be the first to open my arms and my heart to receive you again to my friendship and christian fellowship. But until you do this, a stigma must attach to your name which time will fail to remove.

Yours, &c.,

W. B. WELLONS.



## VII.

Finally, I offer an answer to all that is worth noticing in this slanderous pamphlet. I am too *young*, perhaps, to claim credit for anything from my pen in this entire publication; but I do deserve to be kindly spoken of for the sake of the *acute analysis* I have ultimately made of that rigidly intellectual production which has called forth the reply I am about to submit to the people. I say to the *people*, because I can hold no sort of communication with the man who has said to me—I presume in an agony of brotherly love—"I can never countenance you as a christian or recognize you as a gentleman" until there shall come from me an act of humiliation simply to gratify his personal ambition. This Papal excommunication I would not be so irreverent as to resist. Therefore I must endure with meekness the loss occasioned by the absence of his great name from such a dedication as might have appeared in heroic verse. Nevertheless, I do not mean to assign him to a back seat in the exhibition. This would be offensive to his sense of propriety. He shall not be invisible. Occasionally he shall hear me gently calling, as did the Great Teacher when he said, "*Simon*, I have somewhat to say unto thee."

I. I shall notice the unequivocal statement which Mr. Wellons has published to the world respecting my *general conduct* towards him ever since I became the pastor of one of the churches in Suffolk. He says to me, "at your hands I never have received any ministerial courtesy or even recognition, either in visiting your Church or elsewhere." This statement is a *deliberate falsehood*. I proceed to prove it.

1st. I have *always recognized* my accuser wherever we met with the usual salutation.

2d. Within ten days after reaching the town, December 1st, 1869, Mr. Wellons called to see me. I was not at home, and therefore did not meet him. One week after that I *returned his visit*, found him at home and remained half an hour. The interview passed off very quietly—but he *never came to see me again*. If I was not sufficiently entertaining to justify farther visitation, I hope this reply may show some improvement. Question—*Did I drop him, or did he drop me?*

3d. Pastors who are in the regular work of the ministry rarely have an opportunity of meeting each other in Church, except at funerals. A few days after reaching Suffolk, by invitation, I preached the funeral (this is the customary phrase) of Major Benj. D. Smith, December 6, 1869. This occurred previous to the visit paid to me afterward by Mr. Wellons. Up to that time I had *never seen* any of my associate pastors in Suffolk, and, therefore, did not *know* them. If any were in the house on that occasion I have never heard it up to this day. I mention this to show that so soon as I *became acquainted* with my assailant I availed myself of the very *first chance* to recognize him publicly as an accepted brother. It was my sincere desire to live with all my brethren in the ministry upon the friendliest terms; and, with the exception of Mr. Wellons, all the pastors who have resided in Suffolk since it became my home will cheerfully testify that such has always been the courteous treatment they have uniformly received at my hands. On the 27th of December, 1869, by request, I preached the funeral of Elisha Norfleet,

at his residence. There I met Mr. Wellons, and at the close of the sermon I called on him to conclude the exercises with prayer. Was not that recognition and ministerial courtesy?

4th. Two weeks previous to the assembling of the General Convention of the "Christian Church" (of which Mr. Wellons is a member) in May, 1870, I personally approached him and offered him the use of my Church for public worship during the session of that body. It was accepted, and on the Sabbath Day, May 8th, 1870, my pulpit was occupied by two ministers of that denomination. Was not this an act of courtesy?

5th. The next time we met publicly, and indeed the first time in any Church, or on any occasion where I had a right to expect from him any ministerial recognition, was at the funeral of Mr. James R. Darden, preached by Mr. Wellons in the Christian Church, in Suffolk, September 26th, 1870. I sat near the pulpit, and looked the preacher in the face. He did not invite me into his pulpit. By so doing he set me a bad example. What wonder that in my youthful simplicity, I should have been willing to imitate it. Self-respect demanded that from that day I should not take into my pulpit a minister who declined to receive me into his. Since that time we have occasionally met in Church, but it is certain, that I have never been seen in his pulpit, and as a consequence, he has never been seen in mine.

These are facts which no man can gainsay or deny, and it is my painful duty to pronounce the emphatic statement made by Mr. Wellons to be a deliberate falsehood.

II. Again, my accuser contrasts my conduct, with that of my predecessors in the pastorate of the Methodist Church in this town. He says: "I have lived in or near Suffolk for a quarter of a century, and am now among the older citizens of the place. A number of ministers of your denomination have been stationed here during this time, many of whom are now leading men in the Virginia Conference. With all of them I have lived in peace—have received at the hands of them all much of christian and ministerial courtesy and have tried to treat them all with a proper christian and ministerial regard. Our social and christian intercourse was always pleasant. You have proved the only exception." The charge of absolute discourtesy on my part I have already disproved. After the publication of the pamphlet of my antagonist, I wrote to every living minister who had served the Methodist Church here during the past twenty-five years. I have received answers from eight—from the remaining four I hope soon to hear; and it is proper for me to say that for this reason solely my reply has been delayed ten days longer than I desired. In justice to Mr. Wellons I wanted to hear from all these former pastors.

The eight from whom I have heard all speak very respectfully of Mr. Wellons, and confirm the fact that he "lived in peace" with them all. But the question arises, were his relations with them so much more fraternal than his relations with me as to justify the strong contrast he draws to the injury of my character, if his language be true? Let us see: One writes: "I do not think he ever called to see me." Another writes: "We never met to my recollection but once, then I was holding a protracted meeting." Another writes: "From my present recollection I am not certain that I was ever in his company; therefore there could have

been no intimacy between us." Another writes: "I never had either ministerial or social intercourse with Mr. Wellons while pastor of the Suffolk Circuit—nothing more than street intercourse, such as one citizen has with another." Another writes: "I think he called on me, and I returned his call, which was about the extent of our visiting each other. I never was in his pulpit." Another writes: "During the two years that I was pastor of the Church in Suffolk there was no ministerial intercourse between Mr. Wellons and myself. Our social relations were friendly, but not intimate. No visits were exchanged." Another writes: "I always felt kindly toward him, but we were never intimate. He made *one* friendly call upon me during the term of my pastorate." Another writes: "There was not the slightest intimacy between us. He may have called on me; I think it likely he did; but I have no distinct recollection of any visit from him. I do not think that I was ever in either his house or his office on any occasion whatsoever. I am absolutely certain that we never visited and never conversed with each other, with any degree of familiarity. I never invited him into my pulpit. The reason of my course did not rest on personal but doctrinal and official considerations. I regarded him as the representative and exponent of a creed dangerously defective and essentially heterodox; and therefore, could not affiliate with him as a minister without a serious compromise of principle. And if I were in charge of the Church in Suffolk now, I would pursue the same line of conduct toward him, unless I had satisfactory evidence that he had washed his hands of the Socinian heresy."

These letters conclusively prove that my conduct was *not less fraternal* than that of my predecessors, and they warrant me in saying that my assailant did me gross injustice by drawing such an unjustifiable contrast. If any one should question the authenticity of these letters, I will submit them to the inspection of any disinterested person.

III. And now I come to the *specific act* which seems to have been regarded by my accuser as a very great offence. I allude to the delivery of that part of the Masonic address which referred to the evils of party spirit. He says: "Judge of my surprise next morning, when one after another, to the number of fifty or more, told me of your bitter personal attack on me." Again he says: "*Not one of the incidents as distorted was true when applied to me*; (the italics are his) and yet you so clearly pointed to me in those charges that, I suppose, not a man, woman or child, in your church, failed to understand that you meant me." Again, he says I ought to "relieve an innocent man from the opprobrium arising from an admissible application of your remarks."

I reply: 1st. If he was *innocent* what made him flutter so? 2d. If the language I used did *not* apply to him, what was it that capsized his bilious temperament? 3d. If the "admissible application" was so *self evident* that every man, woman and child in the house knew that I meant him, according to his assertion, then there must have been something "rotten in Denmark." 4th. *His* friends, and not *mine*, must be held responsible for the *application* of my remarks." He says that at least "fifty" of them told him that it was a *personal* attack. *They* put the cap on his head. I am not responsible for *that*. They ought to have been more considerate of the composure of their dear old friend.

Let us come directly to those allusions in the address which Mr. Wel-



lons, upon merely hearsay evidence, construes into a "bitter personal attack."

In his pamphlet he calls them "several incidents *and things*." The classic elegance of this construction might detain a scholar of riper years, but I am too *young* to stop now.

In the beginning I shall state definitely that, while writing out that rebuke to party spirit, after referring to the occurrence in the Lodge, and its possible result, I decided, according to my sense of propriety, to select my illustrations from remote points. Every reference was founded directly upon historical or other modern events—all of which transpired at a distance. Only *four* of these allusions (I judge from the public conversation) seem to have offended my antagonist. For the information of the people I shall give all the facts connected therewith. It will be observed that in each case I used the words "I have seen"—. This phrase is explained by a sentence which occurs in the beginning of the rebuke. "With my eyes always wide open I have seen through the printed page the doings of others around me."

1st. I said that I had seen party spirit "resort to sundry methods of intimidation to force poor men into its service," thereby driving the "workman to the alternative of yielding to this influence against his conscience, or of hearing his children cry for bread when there is nothing to eat in the house." The reference here is to the oft-repeated experience of the laborers employed in our Navy-yards. If I am in error as to the fact, the newspapers are responsible for it.

2d. I said that I had seen party spirit "enter the courtroom and snatch the guilty from the hands of justice while the community shuddered at the violence done to the morals of the land." The reference here is to the sheltering of the offender in those cases where officers in the revenue and other departments of the government have been arrested for crime and their trial prevented by the interposition of party friends for party purposes. Hence the general demand for reform in the civil service of the country. If I am in error, the public journals of the day are responsible for it.

3d. I said that I had seen party spirit "drag the character of a slandered woman from the virtuous obscurity of her quiet home, and, in its eagerness to hurry on the vindictive pursuit of its chosen victim, I have seen it lift up that character and handle it with the wanton recklessness of a brute." The reference here is to the treatment received by Mrs. Wharton, of the city of Baltimore. The name of this unfortunate woman is known throughout the country. An intelligent correspondent informed me that the social antipathy of a party, leagued against her, led to her arrest. She was tried for murder some months ago and acquitted.

4th. I said that I had seen party spirit "stand before a jury with brazen face and undertake to destroy the testimony of a true witness by the utterance of a falsehood as black as the lie that blistered the lips of Annanias." The reference here is to the memorable trial of Mrs. Surratt for complicity in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Several of the witnesses for the prosecution were charged with falsehood in court at the time, and two of the number were afterward convicted of perjury and sent to prison. I am ready to give the history of each of the remaining allusions, which constitute this portion of the address.

And now let people read the following extracts from the pamphlet of Mr. Wellons, relating more especially to the delivery of the sentences above quoted: "But your attack was wholly personal—was made from your pulpit, and in a place which shielded you from any direct reply on the part of my friends present"—"my friends were surprised, thunder-struck, and would have called you to account at once had it not been in a Church, and had you not been protected and shielded by your profession." Do the people see anything in what I said to justify the allusion here made to *personal violence*? I have heard that threats were uttered, but I have not taken the trouble to ascertain whether they were genuine or the mere offspring of a street rumor. What must be the intensity of his hatred toward me, which could prompt this traducer of my character, not only to accuse me falsely and slander me without cause, but actually to give the hint to his friends to punish me, by *personal chastisement*, for an offence of which he declares me to be guilty. And this I can say, because I am not shielded by my pulpit always. I have walked the streets alone and unarmed ever since this disturbance began. I have not sought to avoid the responsibility of what I uttered in that address. Do not the public understand the evident meaning of the language of Mr. Wellons? He does not advise his friends against such a course; his silence *strongly endorses* what some of them may have *threatened* to do. What do the people think of such conduct in a clergyman!

In connection with the rebuke administered to party spirit on that memorable night, the question may be asked, why did I not give, previous to this publication, the historic meaning of the sentences which have been so unsparingly condemned by my antagonist? I reply: 1st. The details of the composition of an address are the *private property* of the author. 2d. No such explanation was at any time called for. 3d. My reply to the first note of my assailant was a satisfactory disclaimer; it stated that "*I did not design to assault the character of any one.*" When he refused to accept that, the prospect of a collision flashed upon me, and I resolved, henceforth, to *keep silence* and *watch the plan* of the man who evidently had an object in view. This is why I did not speak of it publicly. I did allude to it in the presence of two personal friends, and requested them to say nothing about it. Let no one blame me because I declined to give any advantage whatever to a man whose conduct toward me was undeniably hostile.

And now in the light of all that I have written about that Masonic address, how humiliating is the attitude of William B. Wellons, as he stands before that very "bar of public opinion" where he so vauntingly summoned me to appear! There he stands, shorn of his apparent strength, and stripped of the possibility of an acceptable defence! I would let fall the curtain of charity to hide the hideous deformity of his moral nakedness from the eyes of an incensed community, but I dare not interfere with the approaching retribution of the Eternal Judge. Catching, as I do, the almost universal verdict of the multitude, whichever way I turn my ear, I feel that, in the language of the courtroom, when the sentence has been pronounced, and nothing remains but the work of the executioner, I can but say to my traducer "may God have mercy on your soul!"

For the information of the people, I believe it to be my duty to give,

what I consider, *the reasons why Mr. Wellons regarded as "a bitter personal attack"* the facts which were communicated to him by "fifty or more" of his personal friends on the stormy morning which succeeded that quiet night.

1st. The poor mechanic who was prosecuted by Mr. Wellons before his Lodge and expelled, in a short time thereafter, found it necessary to *remove* from the town and seek a support for his family elsewhere. If the influence of Mr. Wellons drove him away, I have no facts to *prove* it; and therefore I am not prepared to give a *definite* opinion.

2d. During the June term of Nansemond County court, 1872, there came up for trial a case of "assault and battery," in which my accuser was immediately interested. One of the witnesses was *absent*. According to the testimony, the jury decided the case. I was not in the courthouse—have never been there but once—and that visit took place nearly three years ago. If any who were present thought that justice was not done for want of *all* the evidence, it is their matter, and not mine. Whatever my own impression may be as to the uninvestigated merits of any case, I will allow no man to bring me into collision with any legally-constituted body, when they affirm that their opinion has been rendered according to the testimony.

3d. In the trial to which allusion has just been made, the evidence of my assailant, touching a *vital* point, ran directly *counter* to the testimony of one of the purest and best men of this whole country—a man who has sustained a spotless character from his boyhood—a man who would rather die than vary from the truth—a man whose integrity reminds me of Joseph Reed, of Revolutionary memory, who, when approached by bribes of British gold, nobly replied: "I am poor, very poor; but poor as I am, the King of Great Britain is not rich enough to buy me." This man gave in his evidence deliberately and positively as to the facts; but his statement was *unqualified* in any way so as to recommend it to the *credence* of the jury. When Mr. Wellons gave in his evidence, he used the following language, or words to this effect: "I am a *christian* man, and a man of *prayer*—on the night when the fight took place, I was *just from my knees*. I could not have been *excited*, and no such words were used as appear in the testimony of Mr. ———." Let me say, by way of parenthesis, this is the *same* fight in which my accuser and the sheriff of the county met—an event which has been previously described. As to the probability of *excitement* under the circumstances, I am not perhaps a judge; for since I grew up, I have never been in a fight, unless I except some of the battles of my country during the late war.

Now, leaving out of view the relative moral standing of these witnesses, if we place side by side the *manner* in which these two men gave in their evidence we will not fail to see that the two statements *cannot* be put upon an *equal footing* in the estimation of disinterested people. One gives the *naked fact*. The other gives in his testimony too, but he covers it with a coat of *varnish*, composed of sundry *pious* reflections about his being a "*christian man*—a man of *prayer*—and just from his *knees*." A spectator would draw but one inference from all this, and he would express it in this way:—"Therefore he is so *good*, that what *he* says *must be true*, although the other witness is *noted* for his *veracity*."

The rock on which truth stands is broad and strong—high as heaven,



and deep as the nether limit of the universe. It needs no *prop.* Truth is not bashful—it needs no *introduction* to take off the wire-edge of sudden contact with the world. Truth is not so *bitter* as to require *religious sugar* to help men to swallow it. In plain terms; evidence that is strong enough to meet counter evidence and overturn it, need not be backed by any personal reference to sanctity, coming from the *lips of the witness himself!* If what he says is sufficiently credible to be believed by the jury, why baptize it in unnecessary allusions to personal piety? The jury want nothing but the unvarnished facts in the case, and the conduct of the man who flanks the plain path, appears to just so much the greater disadvantage, if he happens to be a *minister* of the gospel.

This occurrence, according to the best of my knowledge, is the only one in the life of my accuser to which he could have supposed a part of my language to refer.

4th. In my reference to the treatment of a “slandered woman,” my language was supposed by those who applied it to Mr. Wellons to refer to the following event: In a Masonic trial which took place February 14, 1872, at a special communication of Solomon’s Lodge, Mr. Wellons, the prosecuting party, while attempting to prove the unworthiness of a brother Mason, who was at that time Junior Warden of the Lodge, did publicly ask a question which associated the name of that Mason with the name of a married woman in the town in such a way as to announce to all who were present that the woman referred to had been guilty of adultery. The *name* of the woman and the *nature* of the crime were then and there *publicly mentioned* by Mr. Wellons.

I call attention to the following facts: During the summer of 1871, a rumor sprang up detrimental to the character of this woman, who was then and is now a communicant in my Church. It came to my knowledge for the first time September 29th, 1871. On that day I returned to Suffolk after an absence of nearly a month spent in the country. I at once instituted an inquiry into the truth of the report, and I found it to be *false*. I made known this fact in *public* and *private conversation*, and the rumor began to die out. I am prepared to prove by affidavit that it was disproved and suppressed prior to December 1st, 1871. And yet during that trial, which took place February 14th, 1872, Mr. Wellons digs up the slander which had been killed and buried, and handles the name of that poor woman *publicly* in the presence of the Lodge! For this conduct there can be no justification. If she had been a member of the Church of my accuser, would he have treated her in this way? I have heard him talk of his *love for the poor*. She was poor—the wife of a poor man more than seventy years old. Here was an opportunity to show his love for the poor, and to defend the character of one who had been grossly wronged; and yet, after the slander had been suppressed, he brought it up again, and resorted to such a desperate expedient to secure the conviction and expulsion of a Master Mason from his Lodge! These facts and dates shall speak for themselves. They need no comment from me. Let the people utter their own sovereign protest against the conduct of the man who has deliberately attempted to crush me. If there is any other event of this character in the life of Mr. Wellons to which he could make my language in any way refer, I know nothing about it.

I have chosen to make public these events, because of the fact that,

although I based every reference in that Masonic address upon remote illustrations, under the advisory counsel of that necessary caution by which I hope all my actions are guided; yet as Mr. Wellons has accused me of "distorting incidents and things," I thought it best to give some of them for the public benefit, that I might reveal the immediate application which was made by the people, and show that *they* did not *distort* the incidents which are a part of the conduct of my accuser. This I do because I have a right, as the victim of a wanton, public attack, to make such an exposure of the character of my antagonist as shall *protect* me in all time to come from the poisonous touch of his slanderous tongue.

No; it was not necessary to distort facts which contained hemp enough to hang any man. When the people learned that my antagonist had refused to hear me when I said: "*I did not design to assault the character of any one,*" they demanded to know why it was that this apostle of peace, who ought to have accepted my letter and shut his mouth—why it was that he continued to wince and writhe and squirm so terribly! I can tell them now: it was because he felt that his soul was most fiercely scourged by the scorpion lash of a restless conscience! It was because the untrammelled indignation of the community pointed its accusing finger at the graceless heart of a man who could not hide from the public eye the shameless sins which had stained, as with the blackness of darkness, a portion of his past life! That is the reason why this pretended personification of unearthly piety would not rest until he could unsheathe his blade and drive it to the hilt into the character of a brother Mason, who had simply performed his duty according to the judgment and unsought approbation of his Lodge!

Go out in an open field and turn over a rock, and how the ugly mud-worms will begin to crawl and scamper to get away from the light. Rouse a wolf and oust him from his lair, and how ferociously will he spring to devour the traveler who may have unwittingly disturbed his repose. And just so—try it when you will—uncover, by the most unexpected accident, the wickedness of a bad man, and, if he cannot burrow like a mole until he buries himself in congenial darkness, he will most assuredly swear eternal hatred toward the champion of truth who tore away the curtain from the bed of sin; and with the fierceness of a wolf, he will not hesitate to plunge his savage fang into the hand that dared to do the deed!

Once more—if a minister of the Gospel is a public teacher of the truth according to the Scripture idea, can he ever safely venture to smother a public evil by a sacrifice of conscience? Can he neglect an imperative duty because it seems difficult to touch the offence without enraging the offender? Sometimes the sinner and the sin are so thoroughly identified that they are inseparable, and it is impossible to strike the one without staggering the other. In such a case, must an honest man dodge the responsibility lest some one should get angry? Must I stop preaching the truth because of the probability of coming in contact with some lurking antagonist, who, by his conduct, acknowledges that he has been collared and throttled by *the truth*? No; I am only one poor servant of the Master, but *preach the truth I will*, and there is no way to stop me but to take my life; and even then I will not stop, if God will only give my

soul the storm for a chariot and the lightning for a weapon to do his sovereign will!

It is a sad thought to be entertained by those who knew Mr. Wellons in his better days, when he was supposed to be a man of piety—but still it appears to be painfully true, that the reckless wrath and the disgraceful conduct of the man is beginning to find its literal interpretation in the prophetic adage—"whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad!"

IV. My task is nearly done. Nothing remains but to strangle a few falsehoods, and then to review briefly several random statements in the pamphlet of my antagonist.

1. He charged me with using angry gesticulations in the delivery of that address. This is a *falsehood*. I was earnest, but not angry.

2. He says, "the grinding of your teeth could be heard all over the house." This is a *falsehood*. No such thing occurred. This I can prove beyond the possibility of a merely quarelsome contradiction. It is my duty, however, to remind Mr. Wellons of one thing that will take place in connection with *his* teeth, if he does not correct the habit of uttering that which is untrue. I refer to the *gnashing of teeth* which St. Matthew offers as a seasonable warning to mendacious preachers, as well as other people.

3. He says "all the *extreme politeness* (the italics are his) which you are attempting to show toward my personal friends and christian brethren, will only cause them to feel the more contempt for you—a contempt which their christian refinement may not permit them to express in such language as you used in your pulpit, but which will ever be felt in their hearts." To this I reply: 1st. The declaration that I have attempted to show any extreme politeness to the "personal friends and christian brethren" of my accuser, is an *unvarnished falsehood*. I have always exhibited a becoming courtesy in my behavior toward every one in Suffolk, without regard to social or Church distinctions. Moreover, this difficulty is a *personal matter* between Mr. Wellons and myself—not between me and his *Church members*. I have not undertaken to identify his church in any way with the controversy; although the "resolutions of sympathy and endorsal" which appeared in the *Norfolk Journal* of August 4th, 1872, contained a decided *act of interference on the part of his Church* in his behalf. But it is certain this dispute has *never* been a Church matter with *my people*, nor shall they follow the example which has been set in the resolutions to which reference has been made. Fortunately I need no *sympathy* just now, and then my attitude in the collision does not convince me that the case is so *hopeless* as to push me to *call on my friends* to apply the balm of pleasant resolutions to numerous bumps and bruises!

2d. It seems that I entertain a higher opinion of the Church members of Mr. Wellons than does their veritable pastor. By insinuation he charges them with hypocrisy. With all my *youthful* indiscretion, I have never been so naughty as to do anything like this. He tells us plainly that they feel in their *hearts a contempt* for me which they do not *express*. Now I affirm that, from the very beginning of this disturbance, the members of that Church whom I have met on the street or elsewhere have invariably exchanged with me the salutation which is customary between citizens of the same town. They have not treated me



impolitely—at least, I have never seen anything of that sort. True, I am never eager to search out and to notice abruptness of deportment in any one—still, nothing of this character has been witnessed by me.

Now, place the conduct of his people beside the words of their pastor, and it will be seen that he evidently charges them, although unintentionally, with a deceitfulness of behavior which I have never seen and therefore flatly deny.

And now, with becoming reverence, I desire to place these three falsehoods upon the memory-string of their venerable author, hoping that the act will be regarded as something better than sacrilegious familiarity.

In this connection I might give a catalogue of the innumerable *false reports* which have been recently circulated through the country, prejudicial to my friends as well as to myself—but I will not. What part Mr. Wellons has taken in the manufacture or in the handling of these atrocious falsehoods I am not prepared to say. But I am prepared to prove by affidavit, that he has sent out into the country one letter, if no more, in which he has *specified by name* four of my personal friends, and identified them with my conduct by saying they “applaud him.” One of them is a well known physician; the remaining three are prominent merchants in Suffolk. What authority had he to *assign* any man a *place* in a controversy with which that man had nothing to do? What right had he to designate any of the merchants of the town, when he must have known that the *evident effect* of such an act could be nothing less than an underhanded interference with the trade of honest men? Mr. Wellons has yet to learn that “the end does *not* justify the means.”

Moreover, a *handbill*, containing an extract from that part of the address which relates to partizan influence, was printed here last Saturday, August 3d, 1872—the very day it appeared in the *Norfolk Journal*. This handbill, with a characteristic heading, was freely circulated *outside of the town*. None were distributed here, so far as my knowledge extends. A copy was brought to me from a distance in the country. Why could not the author of that handbill reprint *all* that I have said together with the *whole* address? And why not let the *people of the town* know what is going on? It cannot help a cause to work for it in the dark.

In his pamphlet, Mr. Wellons says: “Whenever an opportunity offered, in private or in public, and through my paper, I have seized upon it to speak kindly of you.” To this I reply: 1st. If he has ever *spoken* one kind word about me, I have never known it. It is said that “kind words never die,” and I am sure, if the statement of my assailant were true, that some solitary expression of esteem, no matter how thin and emaciated from scanty grazing upon the barren soil of his own hard heart, would certainly have been borne to my ear during the long period of time which has elapsed since December 1, 1869. 2d. If he has ever *written* anything kind about me I have never seen it. In the weekly newspaper of which he is the editor, I have read a few communications copied from other sources—these extracts were complimentary—but they did not come from the pen of my accuser. It is one thing to *copy*; it is another thing for a man to *commit himself* in an article emanating from his own *hand and heart*. Such an article I have never read in the paper of Mr. Wellons. On the back of this assertion, however, I must be permitted to record what appears to be a single exception. In justice to my

antagonist, I must acknowledge that once he did allude editorially to a *boil* which embarrassed the use of my left foot. For this *distinguished* mark of respect, I have always been *profoundly* grateful! Whenever I recur to it, in memory, I feel that I have not been *altogether* slighted by this cruel world! I hope the "little favor" which this reply is designed to confer will be regarded by him an amply sufficient remuneration; and if it should prove to be the timely exposure of a chronic ulcer upon the character of my accuser, I hope he will consider himself fully compensated for all past attention!

Although Mr. Wellons has never wasted any brotherly love on *me*, it is very certain that in the distribution of complimentary notices he has never slighted *himself*. Sometime ago he wrote a long editorial telling the world what a great work he had to do, and, by inference, what a tremendous man it took to do it. When I read it I happened to be in the office of another editor, who glanced at me rather quizzically, and said, "It is so nice to be a *wonderful* fellow in *one's own estimation!*" I made no reply, for when I can do nothing more than pity the faults of men, I prefer to compassionate their weakness in silence.

In his pamphlet, Mr. Wellons ostentatiously tells the public who he is, and what he has done during the past twenty-five years in Suffolk. He informs me that "many of the members" of my Church were converted under his "ministerial labors," and that he has always taken a "fatherly interest" in them. I reply, the "*many*" are not to be found. I know a *few* who were said to have been converted in his Church, but they have never been so mindful of that "fatherly interest" of their would be patron saint as to *allude to the fact* in the company of their pastor or any body else. It never would have been known abroad nor repeated at home but for the inordinate self-esteem of my assailant. Whether they were converted under *his* ministry or under the ministry of the *Spirit of God*, is a question to be decided by a power superior to the self-conceit of Wm. B. Wellons. In the great vineyard, our Saviour tells us, "One soweth and another reapeth," and generally the real work is done by the sower. But my accuser seems to be altogether blind to that fact; for I notice that in his pamphlet he acknowledges no assistance whatever from either earth or heaven. His conduct reminds me very much of a certain old gentleman who stood at the corner of a street in Jerusalem, and blew his trumpet until the self-inflation reached the limit of complete satisfaction. But perhaps I ought not to jostle the saintly repose of such an amiable disposition by writing in this strain about the "ministerial labors" of my traducer. Possibly he hoped to number *me too*, among his converts ere long. On the last page of his pamphlet, he tells me that if I will only confess a few things which I never did, and seek forgiveness with true and hearty repentance, he will be the first to open his arms to *take in* my slender form and press me—O so gently—to his fatherly bosom! If I were to do it, I might not be the first one who was ever *taken in*, in that way. But I have no idea of any such thing. When I get ready for a bear-hug, I shall go to the Dismal Swamp and try a good-natured old Bruin that never wrote any bad words to injure the reputation of an innocent man. I would not willingly distress any human being—but I must tell Mr. Wellons plainly he has lost his last opportunity to obtain that brotherly hug!

My antagonist writes : " You say a partizan spirit has crept into your Lodge. If so, I am not responsible, and *had nothing whatever to do with its introduction* (the italics are his). I had nothing to do with it, either directly or indirectly." I reply : I did not *charge* him with it in any part of my address. Is it not time enough to *answer* an *accusation* when it is actually made ? There is an old saying that tells us, " a guilty conscience needs no accuser." But we will not bother with that now.

Again, he relates a nice little story about a disconsolate brother who came to him " with tears in his eyes," and told him about the superfluity of sauciness which somebody saw in that troublesome address. Who this sympathetic individual was, I have been unable to find out. One thing is certain, however, since that melting interview he has so effectually *dried up* that no lingering evidence of his misery has yet led to the disclosure of his name. After all, it may not have been a *decided case* of weeping: His eyes *may* have been affected by the fur which flew from the lacerated hide of some " poor unfortunate," upon whose silent grief we will not intrude now.

Again, my assailant states : " Suffolk is my home. All my temporal interests are here." Yes, this is true ; and if there is a man who knows what *temporal interests* mean, Wm. B. Wellons is that man. He is a partner in a store in Suffolk, and in a printing establishment, and in how many other financial matters, I am not able to say. God designed that a minister of the Gospel should be *consecrated—set apart absolutely* for the work of the ministry. He must be, without qualification or evasion, a *man of one work*. And Mr. Wellons *writes* according to this faith in his paper ; but his *preaching* and his *practice* differ vastly. A man at a distance who did not know the facts could easily be deceived by his sanctimonious whining about a consecrated ministry. If the Saviour of the world were to revisit His great spiritual temple on earth to-day, I think I know one trafficking parson who would be very apt to get a merited rebuke from that whip of " small cords " which was used so effectively upon the defilers of the temple at Jerusalem !

I would not have noticed this feature in the ministerial life of my accuser had he not given this as one reason why I ought not to have fired into the nest of his nice little arrangements ! He asks me so pathetically " why did you wish to engender a strife between you and me, and your brethren and my brethren, which will live on and do its evil work when you shall have found a home in another and perhaps a distant place ? You are here only for a short time, according to the government of your Church."

Ah ! he need not refer so confidently to that prospective removal. That event *might*, probably, coax one little spot of blue sky to break in upon the cloudy future of my assailant. But he must remember that—

" This world is all a fleeting show  
For man's delusion given."

He had better not build any hope upon the prospect of such an occurrence. For if the authorities of the Church find out that I am actually essential, as an apostolic thorn in the flesh, to save the soul of this venerable patriarch, and that he is necessary to complete the number of the " just men made perfect," they may decide, as Shakspeare says, to



“stretch the law a little and do a great right.” And, then, I can stay in Suffolk forever, with the specific understanding that I am never to cease ministering to the saints, and especially to the spiritual comfort of that “beloved brother” whose perversity of disposition has already become the object of my prayerful solicitude.

Just at this point I think I ought to improve the opportunity by offering a few words of encouragement; and I know of nothing better calculated to produce contentment, despite the pressure of uncontrollable circumstances, than that wholesome advice which St. Paul gave to the Hebrews: “Now, no *chastening* for the present seemeth to be joyous, but *grievous*; nevertheless, afterward it yielded the *peaceable* fruit of righteousness unto them which are *exercised* thereby.” To this mark of filial respect I must add one brief suggestion: If Mr. Wellons has the time to spare just now, I would advise him to buy a copy of the life of George Washington, and study carefully that little story about the hatchet and the cherry tree. I think he might obtain some novel views respecting the value of veracity, which, perhaps, would assist him hereafter in the formation of character.

But in relieving my antagonist of all anxiety about that anticipated day of separation in Suffolk, I have branched away from the text previously quoted. “Suffolk is my home,” saith the oracle. By some strange mental hallucination, Mr. Wellons seems to have become possessed with the idea that the town of Suffolk is located, geographically, at the extremity of his coat-tail. It “followeth after” him, according to the hypothesis. When *he* moves, in the estimation of somebody, the *town* moves too; and when he sleeps, the town is supposed to absorb his sweet spirit and gently subside in peaceful slumber. The dome of his clerical hat is the cradle of *imperial* thought, and any expression of opinion which may chance to come in conflict with his own, is an act of insurrection which must be summarily suppressed. If all the clocks and watches of the people could be adjusted so as to correspond with his never-varying chronometer, he might, with propriety, regard it as a sure sign of the approaching millenium! But unfortunately his constitutional modesty will never be called upon to blush gracefully at the consummation of such an improbable event. Indeed, such a thing is impossible. And yet, while the rose-colored vision lasts, it is, doubtless, *just a little* flattering to the vanity of a great and good man to feel that he was predestined to be the hub of a whole town. I would not ruthlessly dispel the gilt-edged dream. But I must remind Mr. Wellons that “the past is in the eternal past.” The bubble which required so much *blowing* has collapsed at last! Henceforth it will be possible for a conscientious chicken to crow at daybreak without obtaining his royal consent! It will be lawful for a man with a bad cold to sneeze without a written permission from his gracious majesty! The sun and moon will no longer revolve with trembling around the tip end of his nose! The fitful fever is over! The crown and the sceptre are gone! The giant rests calmly in his castle! No sound is heard to disturb the solemn stillness of the scene save a strain of music, which seems to be borne from those same fatherly lips to my own unappreciative ear. The ruling passion appears to be strong in death; and still the patriarch sings to that prodigal youth: “Come rest in this bosom, my own stricken dear!”

But I cannot regard the plaintive appeal. Thorns have sprouted since the olden time. The people know *who harnessed his fiery temper to this controversy*, and literally dragged it out to be a spectacle for the public eye to gaze upon. They stood by me and saw what was done when I had no alternative but to accept the wager of battle. And they have already fastened the responsibility of the result upon the shoulders of the man who presumptuously supposed he could grind me to powder.

I affirm if strife has been introduced into the community, I did not do it. If ties of friendship have been hopelessly destroyed, in each separate case, the blood of the transaction will forever stain the character of my accuser. He has sought in vain to shift the responsibility. He ought to remember that this black record must be met again at the judgment bar of God! I cannot relieve him; *nor can anything save him except a public confession and a radical reformation!*

His past conduct toward me, and his recent assault upon me, I will not rehearse again. I hasten to the end. But I cannot let my traducer go until I summon the people to look once more into the face and upon the character of Wm. B. Wellons! This is the man who sought to ruin me. This is the ecclesiastical assassin who hunted out my path and crouched in the dark with drawn dagger, waiting the time to strike! This is the would-be murderer of my reputation, who snuffed my track and followed my every movement with the stealthy step of the panther! The man who would slaughter my character might be driven to take my life too, did not the hangman's rope lie in the way. But I care nothing for threats of vengeance. I scorn the shelter of any refuge. Conscious of my own integrity, I commit the issue into the hands of God. And now I am done.

W. G. STARR.

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#### ERRATA.

- Page 10, 7th line—Leave out “and” in “gate and down.”  
 “ 11, 29th line—For “*trincket*” read *trinket*.  
 “ 16, 38th line—For “*doings*” read *the doings*.  
 “ 19, 28th line—For “during military life” read “during *the*,” &c.  
 “ 24—In the second letter of Mr. Wellons read “remark *made*,” &c., for “remark by you,” &c.  
 Page 26, 23d line—For “any time” read “*at any time*.”  
 Page 34, 15th line—For “I can say” read “*I saw*.”

mss. coll. 006 2:1

2006. 26. 1





H. H. Wallace