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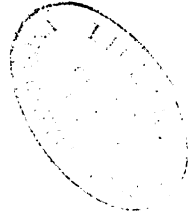


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COLLECTION



OF

LETTERS ON FREEMASONRY.

IN

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.



BOSTON :

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.

1849.



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## LETTERS ON FREEMASONRY.

REPLY OF HON. JOHN C. SPENCER,

012-10-42-2K Special Agent for the State of New York, against the abductors of William Morgan, to and by the request of Bolling Hall, Samuel S. Graham, and Absalom Jackson, a Committee appointed by a large meeting of respectable citizens of Autauga, (Alabama,) and adjoining Counties.

Canandaigua, N. Y., July 15, 1830.

Messrs. BOLLING HALL, SAMUEL S. GRAHAM, and ABSALOM JACKSON.

GENTLEMEN:—Your letter of the 25th May has at last reached me, and I embrace the first opportunity afforded by incessant professional engagements to answer it. The most authentic sources of information I can furnish you on the subject of your inquiry, will be found in an official report by me to the Executive of this State, made in January last; and in a report of one of our Circuit Judges, in answer to a resolution of the Senate of this State. These documents are sent by this mail; and to increase the chance of your receiving them, duplicates will be sent to you in about a week. The latter of these documents proceeds from an individual disposed rather to screen from public view the faults of the masonic institution. It is the most favorable view that can possibly be presented, of the masonic obligations as developed in the trial of E. Mather. I have been compelled, from a sense of duty to the public and a sense of self-respect to myself, to resign the situation of special counsel, to which you allude,

OK.

as having furnished me an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the bearings of Freemasonry on society. During more than a year of most painful investigation, I did indeed become acquainted with the effects which that institution had upon its votaries in this quarter. *It has changed the character of some of our best citizens—men who formerly would have been among the first in bringing to justice offenders against the laws, have virtually become the apologists of murderers and kidnappers. So far from aiding in their detection, our best citizens, magistrates and sheriffs, have interposed every obstacle in their power—witnesses have been concealed and spirited away by them—the guilty have been assisted in escaping, or if brought to trial, have been succored and sustained by money, by professional aid the best the country could afford, and by the presence and sanction of their brethren—Masons, called as witnesses, have refused to testify in cases where they could not implicate themselves, and have submitted to fine and imprisonment in order to screen their brethren—others more hardy have directly perjured themselves on the stand. When sitting as jurors they have utterly disregarded their duty and their oaths, and by obstinate perseverance have produced the acquittal of their brethren, or compelled the courts to discharge them. The very fountain of justice is polluted—the conservative principle on which all depends, the obligation of a judicial oath, is corrupted. The power of the Fraternity is equal to its need. It reached our present Executive, who had once as a Judge applauded the spirit that was excited by the abduction of William Morgan, and converted him into an indifferent spectator of the means used to bring the offenders to justice. He disclosed my official confidential communications, in consequence of which my efforts were baffled and I was subjected to every species of obloquy. Nor has the Institution upon our Legislative bodies been less effectual. In renewing the act which author-*



ized my appointment, and which the fear of public sentiment forced from our last Legislature, a gross insult was offered me. Under such circumstances I resigned my station and gave my reasons to the public. *The same house of Assembly shuffled off an inquiry into a charge deliberately and openly brought before it, against the Royal Arch Chapter of this State, for having furnished money to aid and sustain the kidnappers of Morgan.* The Chapter was incorporated with a right annexed to the Legislature to repeal the chapter ; yet a House of Assembly dare not *inquire even* into the alleged facts which would justify such a repeal. In one word, I consider Freemasonry in direct hostility to the government in all cases where it cannot control it—as producing an utter disregard of all civil duties where they come in collision with its interest—as demoralizing in its very nature, making bad men and citizens of all who adhere to its obligations—creating injurious distinctions in society—giving privileges and advantages to one set of men over others equally meritorious—exercising a most potent influence upon our elections, by secret and I fear corrupt means, and altogether more dangerous to our country and its government than any Standing Army, however numerous it possibly could be. It is worse than a standing army, because its movements are *secret*, and because a more implicit obedience is yielded to its executive. It puts law and government at defiance, and triumphs in the impunity of its members for offences committed under its sanction. The late trials here have convinced every man who is impartial, that government is powerless when opposing this Hydra. That you may understand this remark, I will forward you a newspaper containing an account of the last trial, and will send the papers giving the continuation. Such is my testimony respecting Freemasonry. But it should be borne in mind that I have seen it in its worst aspect.—It has been pressed to the wall, by an adversary

determined to vanquish it. It has accordingly fallen back on its resources, and those principles and obligations which have for some time been dormant, have now been called into action with tremendous energy. Still it may be said that this shows the abuse of which it is susceptible from its very organization ; or as our zealous Antimasons would say, it shows the very nature of the beast, when aroused from its slumber.

Many excellent works have been published in this State on the subject of Masonry, which I would send to you if I did not suppose their expense of postage would be enormous. If, however, you wish them, I will comply with your request. In the mean time I will occasionally send such newspapers as appear to me to contain matter that will be acceptable to you. I have already extended this letter beyond the limits I had designed—but fear of condensing has still prevented me from going into all the facts and reasons which would belong to a proper answer to your inquiry.

Respectfully, your ob't serv't,

JOHN C. SPENCER.

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#### REPLY OF HON. RICHARD RUSH

*To William McIlvain, John Kauffet, Hugh McDonald, and Thomas C. Hambly,  
Antimasonic Committee of Correspondence, for York County, Penn.*

York, Pennsylvania, May 4th, 1831.

GENTLEMEN:—I have received the communication of the 26th April, which, as a Committee of Correspondence of Antimasons for this county, you have done me the honor to address to me, on the general subject of Masonry and Antimasonry, and making some inquiries of me in relation to it. I do not know, that the views which I entertain upon either topic can be of more importance than those of any other private individual, who may have

taken the trouble to inform himself on the passing events of the day, and to reflect upon them. But as you are pleased to invite an expression of those views, I will not withhold them. When a citizen may have adopted, on sufficient deliberation, opinions upon any public question, they seem, of right, to belong to whomsoever may think them worth asking for. My opinions having been made up neither hastily nor very recently on those which your letter embraces, I willingly proceed, without occupying time by any further introduction, to present them to you, with the grounds on which they are founded.

I see objections to secret societies, because, pursuing objects not known to the public, through means not known to the public, they act under diminished responsibilities to the public. If the objects be good, why not state them; if bad, they ought to be known. Our legislative halls are all open, and our courts; so are all the acts of our people, that may come to affect the interests of the body political or social. Not a bridge company, not a turnpike company, no bank, scarcely an association of any kind, for whatever purpose existing, whether for the advancement of charity, or learning, or religion, or any of the common business of life, and whether incorporated by the laws or not, but renders its statements to the public either voluntarily or by command of the laws. If the latter do not positively enjoin publicity, a competent share of information regarding the objects of any such associations, is rarely or ever withheld, on proper inquiry being made. Societies, then, profoundly secret, by the first element of their constitution, whatever their ostensible ends, cannot be too closely watched, in a country whose primary principles of political and social action are all in the face of day. The mystery should appear to have good cause, and be free from all suspicion of abuse. If such societies guard their secrets by strong penalties; if they have numbers and antiquity on their side; if

their visible outposts are but links of a chain stretching from nation to nation ; if the sense of affiliated attachment and union among them is perceived to be exceedingly energetic and zealous ; if their whole scheme of discipline, improved throughout ages, has become in a high degree imposing, even terrifying, their operations will naturally have the more scope, and should be watched with the more care. Freemasonry is such a society. Great and good men have belonged to it, I know, and do belong to it at this moment ; yet, recent disclosures in the United States, have, I think, shown the dangers of which the society may become the parent, through the agency of bad men. Of all governments existing, ours is the one which would be most justified in watching, with constant and scrupulous care, the conduct of societies profoundly secret. Most, or all, other governments admit the principle of secrecy, and themselves practise it, at least to some extent. Ours, never. All its operations are, sooner or later, laid before the grand, original, constituent body—the people ; the only fountain, with us, of all influence and sovereignty and power. These are obvious principles of our system. Freemasonry puts forth an exception to them. It is hence the right and duty of the people, to exercise strict censorship over a body which moves in an element so contrary to their own. They are the higher power, and entitled to the undisputed control. It is as much a general truth in morals as in government, that it is vice, not virtue, which needs a veil.

In saying that recent disclosures have shown the dangers of Masonry in the United States, let us see if I am not right. I desire to be guided by facts, and to look at them rigorously. Your inquiries are broad, and should be met broadly. But facts shall be my basis, and I wish to deal with them practically, as I have really beheld them. You apply to me as citizens, taking an actual

part in the affairs around you. I am to answer you in that capacity, and as a member of the same community.

The public all know, that certain trials have been held from time to time in the State of New York, for the discovery of the authors of the abduction and murder of William Morgan. Against this man's liberty and life, an extensive and formidable conspiracy had been laid, which ended in the destruction of both. He was a native of Virginia, and had removed into New York. It was there, it seems, that he committed a certain offence, not against the laws of his country, but the Code of Masonry; namely, that of revealing its secrets; and this is the offence for which he was made to suffer death. The conspirators neither laid against him, nor pretended any other. The case is therefore purely Masonic in its origin and termination. There is nothing extraneous to embarrass the judgment or lead away the thoughts.

When I remark, that the public all know of the trials, I mean that they have heard of them, generally; for I do not believe, that one person in fifty knows any thing more about them. I have followed up the account of them, as far as I have had the means; and especially those that have taken place at Lockport, within the last few months. I have done so in no prejudiced spirit, but with an earnest desire to understand the whole case rightly. They appear to me to unfold one of the most extraordinary incidents that has ever transpired. All the circumstances considered, I know not where we shall seek for its counterpart. It is seen from these trials, that the laws of the land cannot be executed upon the authors of an audacious and bloody conspiracy, although its entire theatre was in one of the most populous parts of the Union, although attempts have been made to enforce them in all practicable ways, for a period now exceeding four years, although the government of the State of New York, has aided, by its immediate countenance and

direction, the public prosecutions, besides having issued commissions of special investigation ; and, what is more astonishing than all, although the conspirators, with their aiders and abettors, are, in all probability, known to more than *one hundred persons* belonging to the masonic body, if not to a larger number. That they are certainly known to a great many masons, if to fewer than one hundred, is plain, from lights that must bring conviction home to every dispassionate and sound mind.

Such is the case as it meets us on the threshold. It is startling. Under a government of laws, and in a season of tranquillity, it must be pronounced an anomaly. It seems a scandal upon the trial by jury, upon the public examination of witnesses, upon our forms of presentment and indictment, upon the power of commitment for not answering legal questions, upon all the modes heretofore the boast of our judicature, for getting at the truth ; all of which have been so earnestly, solemnly, yet fruitlessly resorted to. Amidst the din of arms we are told, indeed, that the laws become silent ; but that they should so totally lose their authority, at a period of profound peace and general good order, as they have done on this occasion, must arise from some extraordinary and portentous cause. The victory of crime is the opprobrium of the law, and should call forth a spirit of determined inquiry into the cause.

It has been said, that the human bosom is not strong enough to hold the secret of a foul murder. So heavily does it press, that the stoutest heart gives way, seeking relief in the gush of its sin. Hitherto, also, in proportion as the knowledge of the fact of murder has been shared by large numbers of people, has been the ease, the promptitude, we may add, the certainty of detection. But in Morgan's case, we behold the frightful reverse. It stands, in this respect, alone, in the records of criminal jurisprudence. The law-books of ancient and modern

times, might safely be invoked for a precedent. The difficulty of keeping the secret of a Murder, operated as some safeguard over innocent life. It served in some degree to deter the murderer himself, by making him shrink from the fear of his own thoughts afterwards, and to obstruct his fell plans, from the like fear keeping away accomplices. As by stripes the flesh is made to quiver, so the whips and stings of remorse lacerate the heart. They are internal executioners, from whose torture the guilty cannot escape. But here we behold this safeguard of life put to scorn—one seated in the very conscience of man, and which nothing but the most baleful potions, administered as if by infernals, could ever extirpate. Every sober-minded citizen will be anxious to arrive at the solution of this phenomenon. If a train of evidence altogether irresistible in its direct or circumstantial application, force upon his mind the belief, that its entire and complicated horror is clearly traceable to the confederated and unholy contrivances of bad men who are masons, all his right feeling as a citizen must be shocked. He must stand confounded, at seeing human life and liberty so sported with by a power the more tremendous in its victory over the laws, as it rides in darkness. Good men who are masons, will turn from such conduct with abhorrence. Candid men of the society, on hearing the relation of it, may be disposed to ask themselves, whether all the benefits of masonry, alleged or real, can be a counterpoise for the perils which may thus spring from it, through deluded or depraved zealots, who gain admittance to its sanctuary, and who effectually silence compunction under iniquity, by flying to the misunderstood or perverted ties and obligations of the craft.

If a power shrouded from the day has been found of efficacy sufficient to interpose a fatal obstruction to the great course of public justice where guilt has been so aggravated, are we to suppose that the mischief ends

here? That it is a single, an insulated instance? It is impossible. He is weak and credulous who believes it. In the vast and active character and business of masonry; in its close and diversified connections with society at large, whose movements, from behind its own screen, it can watch and follow up at pleasure, it must happen that the streams of justice will often be tainted, on occasions less conspicuous, by the same power. A danger then exists, under the highest moral and even judicial demonstration, which ought to rivet deep attention, and awaken general alarm. Not only has the government of the State of New York lent its efforts in aid of the ordinary process of law, for detecting the culprits in this audacious conspiracy. The government of Upper Canada has stepped forward in co-operation; for it is a characteristic of the conspiracy, that there were strong suspicions of its embracing depraved members of the fraternity in that foreign jurisdiction—so extensive were believed, and on rational grounds, to have been the hideous workings of its malignant sympathies. But all has been in vain. Executive messages, executive acts and proclamations, with the offer of executive rewards, like indictments and jury trials under special courts and judges, (for these too were added,) have all fallen to the ground. THE LAW is still paralyzed by a hidden agent, that continues to prove stronger than the combined force of its machinery and its ministers; the Lodge of this agent, has become its sepulchre. There it lies, a spectacle for freemen to look at.

In the whole compass of affairs to which government is subservient, there is nothing of such transcendent importance, as the faithful and effective administration of justice between man and man, and by the body politic against public delinquents. It is of daily, unceasing emergence. It blends itself with all the wants, duties and necessities, with all the hopes and all the dangers, that belong to the political and social condition of the



world. It comes perpetually home to the immediate business and bosom of mankind, the remark so often repeated from Bacon, but which on this subject has its application in exact truth. Hume describes it as the sole end and aim of all government; and certainly, if such an administration of justice be wanting, it is not going too far to assert, that the functions of government have stopped in a point that is vital. If we have laws without the power to give them effect, we are in the condition of a people having none; which brings society to a pause. The levy of ship-money was among the causes that produced the decapitation of Charles I. and a change in the English dynasty. The tax of three pence a pound on tea, helped to bring on our own Revolution. How small such acts in themselves! yet, in union with a quick and well-understood spirit of public liberty, how vast their consequences throughout nations and the posterity of nations! I fear not to say, that neither of them was calculated to press so destructively upon the great fabric of society, as the fact before us, of a secret combination in the heart of the republic, being able to keep the laws at bay in this case of the murderers of Morgan; so long to trample upon, so long to triumph over them. The apathy prevailing under the baffled efforts to probe and fully to punish so great an enormity, is to my mind inexplicable, among a people watchful of their rights, and who would ever be ready, it might have been supposed, to embody the whole power of society, wherever any one of its members, however humble, was seen to be so ruthlessly struck down. Interposition should have been the more immediate and decided, as the blow was so bold and terrible; as it was given amidst concomitants so unusual, and indicative of so supreme, so insolent a contempt for the laws. If ever an event arose in the annals of any people, that should have made the *whole body* of the public identical with the authority of the magistrate,

by a burst of indignation and a concert of efforts, **IT WAS THIS.** No other feeling ever yet kept permanently alive the spirit of public liberty, or upheld the supremacy and grandeur of the laws. They both die as certainly under torpor, as if crushed by an open despotism. It is one of the ways in which states begin to lose their liberties. It is a deadly opiate, diffusing itself through the political system, against the instillations of which, the patriot heart should be roused by every consideration that can animate it to its highest duties. When the magistrates are seen with the ensigns of authority powerless in their hands, an appeal is made to the inextinguishable allegiance and generous devotion which should bind every citizen to the common weal. The love of public freedom must be shown in the inviolable maintenance of individual rights. We are degenerate Republicans, we are *no* Republicans, otherwise. Morgan's case is no common one. It is of great and inspiring magnitude. Looked at by itself, it may be called detached, or little, by those who little know how to think, or are determined not to think. But, properly weighed by its principles as well as its facts, it is momentous and appalling. It is no case for County Courts. It is for the nation. That is its proper tribunal. Those who will lift up their minds to an enlarged and just conception of it, instead of keeping down to a superficial and imperfect one, will see it under a connection indissoluble, with a train of public principles, with which are interwoven the interests, the safety, and the durable glory of the nation. Let the law, that sheet-anchor of society, come to miss its grapple upon public felons, banded in league together by a principle that exalts their crimes into achievements of merit, and every thing is exposed to wreck and dissolution. The daring and profligate nature of the conspiracy against the liberty and life of this citizen; the inflexible and malignant vigor of purpose with which, step by step, it was pursued to con-

summation ; the cool, the systematic, the inveterate depravity of all the actors in it, have no parallel in the previous history of our country, scarcely in that of any country. I challenge the Spanish Inquisition to exceed it. I boldly invite a search into the archives of that engine of a ferocious despotism, which for four centuries in Europe crushed its unhappy victims with a vengeance so diabolical, under color of vindicating the holy church, to produce a case that goes beyond it. Morgan's immolation was in spirit, almost in form, an *Auto da Fe*. Holy Masonry found its vindicators too. The similitude is close and shocking. It should burn the cheek of every American who contemplates it. The iron clamps that were probably prepared for the feet and hands of Morgan, aptly compare with the chains in which the victim of the Inquisition was habited, when trembling on the verge of eternity ; whilst the pictures of devouring dogs and serpents that were hung round his neck, completely prefigure the horrid gang of murdering conspirators who plunged their hands in the blood of Morgan.

This case, thus far, is entirely out of the track of all events in a free, or well-governed community. It befits the grim despotism of dark and superstitious ages and countries. But I am now to present an aspect of it still more extraordinary, still more alarming. How to present it, how to realize it, I am at a loss. It seems a delusion. It doubles all my amazement. I would throw it off as a phantom if I could ; but I cannot, and I sink in my feelings as an American citizen, under the mortified and abashed consciousness of its truth. Perhaps I ought to pause ere I advance further. That which I am about to touch, is on all sides encompassed with hazards. A saving energy it has, indeed, for its friends, and knows how and when to exert it ; but it can make its blast howl about the ears of all, who, with unsanctified steps, approach its precincts ; blasts as from " Boreas, and Eurus,

and Caurus and Argestes, loud." If I followed the counsels of prudence, I should bend the knee in reverence and retreat before it. But I will proceed. At your call, I have taken what I believe to be the cause of public order, and of truth, in hand, and that cause must be my shield. A saying that we had when I was at school, comes into my mind. I scarcely know how to quote it, and must hope for your pardon if I do. It was not *fiat justitia, ruat cælum* ; but TELL THE TRUTH, THOUGH THE DEVIL BE BEFORE YOU. Let it be heard.

Hitherto, when a murder, especially one attended by any startling or unusual circumstances, has been committed by unseen hands, in a country where existed a free press, that great instrument has never failed to raise and to keep up the alarm. It has done more, far more, than writs, and depositions, and search warrants ; more than the whole roll of sheriffs, and constables, and deputies, with the *posse comitatus* in their wake, to drag the perpetrators from their cover. By its universal and spontaneous activity, operating like a moral hue and cry, it helps to point aright public vigilance and suspicion. It ministers usefully to public indignation, making it strong and stirring. It puts every thing in motion, itself heading the pursuit. It sharpens scrutiny, reinvigorates flagging exertion, smites like inward fire upon the fears and pantings of the skulking felon, and throws out signals of all kinds, a thousand times more valuable, when its mighty trumpet is sounded in a good cause, than any that masonry ever planted upon its mysterious lodges. Need I instance the case of White at Salem ? Need I mention that of Thurtell, in England, a few years ago, when the unceasing clangor of their press reverberated even to our shores. Paris never had such a police ; society never such a conservative principle. It is omnipresent. Like flashes from the heavens it lights up the entire horizon. Its sweep is from the "orient to the drooping west ;" the whole nation its stage, the whole

people its audience. What a power in society when directed to proper ends ; how resistless, how awful ! But, in the case we are considering, with the exception of the comparatively few newspapers antimasonic in special name and object, the Press, as far as I have had opportunities of observing, has been shamefully silent. This best guard of a free state, better than legions of bayonets, this lion at its portals, whose noble nature for the most part it is to spring forward, enraged and uncompromising, upon crime, has been lulled to sleep ; has been chained and muzzled ; has been faithless ; has been criminal. I say criminal. Silence in such a cause, is participation. It shows, in effect, companionship with the murderers, had there been nothing more than silence. It is keeping bands with blood, when a voice, loud, simultaneous, and incensed, should have rung through the land.

May I not justly say that the whole transaction, in every feature in which the public have a right to feel an interest, is an anomaly. Generally it has been the course of the Press, as through a salutary instinct of its nature, to be too quick rather than too slow ; to fly at wrong in the remote intention and tendency ; to err by inflaming too much, rather than too little. But here, in Morgan's case, with the stain of blood before its eyes, with crime actually perpetrated, and crying for punishment, it shuts its eyes. It becomes suddenly and stupidly blind, or it turns traitor. There is no alternative. The press on this occasion has fallen into stupefaction, or turpitude ; for it cannot so utterly have lost its senses as not to know, that the crime would never have been committed and left un-avenged, but for the full and continued existence, in our country, of the masonic obligation. No sophistry can gainsay this position. The evidence of it is flagrant ; its foundation is upon a rock. Had a case like Morgan's arisen in 1776 ; had blood been so atrociously shed, and gone so long unavenged, through any acts of the govern-

ment then ruling us, or the black doings and subtle hidings of masonry within its borders, I believe that it would have acted upon public opinion like an electric shock, and that our fathers would have sought no stronger cause for prostrating in the dust an open authority or secret influence, that could so iniquitously prostrate justice. Am I wrong? Do I affirm too much? Am I giving way to feeling, in place of reasoning? No! I speak under the highest of all sanctions, before the American public. Turn to the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, that glorious charter of our liberties, and see if it be not there recorded as one of the causes for dismembering an empire, that the British King, by his odious acts, had obstructed the *administration of justice* in our country. No single case, comparable in atrocity to this of Morgan's, whether as regards the original conspiracy and murder, or the total obstruction of the laws since, ever disgraced the tyranny of that era over us. If one like it had occurred, a town meeting in Boston would have rallied New England to her duty: the fire of Patrick Henry's eloquence would have summoned Virginia to hers; the decree would have gone forth, and monarchy or masonry would have fallen. That the contest with the latter would have been the most difficult, I have no doubt; but down it would have come. Had the Universal Press of the country done its duty, in a spirit resolute and lofty as of that day, instead of sluggishly remaining quiet, or ignominiously conniving, this conspiracy against Morgan would long since have been laid bare, and public justice been vindicated. Its voice would have carried consternation into the recesses of every lodge. Its thunders would have shaken their very walls and rafters; their foundations underneath would have rocked, their turrets above would have trembled, and masonry in turn, like the suffering victim of the conspiracy, would have put up its prayer for mercy. Appalled, menaced for its existence, it would have been seen

every where in motion. Then, *then*, its activity, its discipline, its terrors, would have been at work to ferret out the deep guilt. Its conclaves would have assembled for no other object, until that object had been attained. The institution would have been placed under accusation ; it would have been arraigned before the dread bar of the nation ; where, under the majestic inquest of the Press, it would have stood, pale and breathless, waiting its doom. The spectacle would have been sublime ! And who can doubt the issue ? Who can doubt but that the truth would have come to light ? Who can doubt but that the cloud, all along so dark, would have "*turned her silver lining*" on this plot of death ? No one, surely, who has remarked the potency which this institution has ever shown in securing ends on which it chooses to bend its whole purpose, and employ all its exertions. I repeat, then, that the Press has shown a dull insensibility to the high motives and feelings by which it ought to have been fired in this case of enormity, or it has been a traitor to its trust. It ought, forthwith, to have put the masonic institution upon the defensive. That was its true position before society ; under a case of conspiracy and crime, planned and executed by those who notoriously belonged to the secret institution. . I lay this down as strict reasoning, and so let it be judged ; so would I clinch upon the Press the charge of infatuated dereliction or of accessory guilt.

The worst is to be told. For whence this infatuation, or this connivance ? Whence this most marvellous exception to all its wonted eagerness and fire ? Whence the sudden spiking of that artillery that ever, heretofore, has played its volleys upon crime ? Whence, but because the Press itself is under the deleterious enchantments of masonry, or otherwise wears its manacles ? whether the iron ones forged for it by the Institution itself, or those existing in the influence of readers and patrons, the result

is still the same. How else *could* it, have happened, that it has withheld from the people the incontestable evidences of masonic guilt, which the repeated and solemn trials in New York have afforded? Does it act in this way on other occasions? Did it even suppress from its columns the publication of the case of the wretched pirate Gibbs, with all its train of particulars, during this present spring? Has not this case—a case certainly of no novelty in its principle—been running the rapid rounds of almost all the papers of the Union? Yet no word have we of the trials at Lockport, that were going on at the same instant; not a whisper, not a breath. All is silent like the tomb. How will the Press shake off the obloquy of such conduct? It cannot shake it off. There is no other explanation of it than the one given. Will it pretend to allege that those trials brought out no evidence of masons' guilt? Will it presume to say, in extenuation, that the murdered remains of Morgan are still unfound? Preposterous, insulting extenuation! Why not publish the evidence itself, and let the people judge; as, at all events, the case had become one of great and commanding public notoriety? If the people were to transfer a portion of their indignation from the murderers of Morgan to those presses of the country that have evinced an anxiety to hush up the foul deed, they would be acting righteously. It would show the Press, by a lesson never to be forgotten, that the people were the true fountain of justice, as well as power.

I feel anxious to stop; but as yet I cannot. I must look round upon the unparalleled scene. It brings with it a weight of thought and feeling that is oppressive. I did not sit down to write a dissertation on masonry, nor am I going to give myself to this task. I dwell not upon its remote origin and long history; upon its curious titles; upon its ceremonies, of oriental mould, and celestial exaltation. I dive not into its claims to science, to



philanthropy, or to religion. All these I leave, for good or for bad, for censure or for commendation. My concern at present is with none of them. I purposely turn away, that there may be no diversion from the scene I am surveying. I am in a field by itself. There my astonished sight beholds two figures: the State, with the broken sceptre of the laws in her hand, on one side, and Masonry, with a veil over her face, on the other. My vision is distinct, though the spectacle is so portentous! I go not beyond the narrative that presents it. Keeping to that, I am guarded against mistake or confusion. I have here immovable ground under me. I take post as upon the verity of a legal record. A few facts are all that I want, and these I have. I desire to render the case irresistible, by its concentration and its simplicity. I believe that Morgan was seized, carried far from his home by masons, and by masons murdered. I believe that this was the result of a conspiracy, engendered and carried through, under circumstances of peculiar deliberation, malignity, and terror. Yet, to this very hour, the infamous deed remains unpunished. I have watched the pursuit of justice. I see how she is disheartened, fatigued, worn down, by efforts, continued throughout years, to clutch these worse than Calabrian banditti. I see her at fault: I see her countenance in despair. Masons know the whole tale of blood. Who can deny this? Masons conceal it. Who can deny this? Can, then, any sentient, reasonable being say, that masonry is *not* at the bottom of the evil? True, these are depraved masons who act in this manner, and I do not mean to judge all other masons by them; but masonry, corporate, existent masonry, is the root. The abandoned fiends of the order, who know the truth, conceal it on system. They are wicked through principle. They confound crime with virtue; murder with masonic merit. Like imps of pandemonium, they rejoice and dance in their sin. Like

the crew in the Mask of Comus, they are unconscious of their "foul disfigurement." The deeper their guilt, the more they make themselves invulnerable. You can no more grasp them, than if they sink into the earth, or mount into the air. Its spirit, inexorable as death, destroyed the life of this citizen; and, like a spirit, it became invisible. It is here—it is there—it is gone; nobody can see it; but society feels it. It is the spirit of night. The magistrate strikes, but it is into vacuity. He follows up the blow, again and again, but it falls upon a shadow. Is all this nothing? Is it to be forgotten; to be mentioned with indifference; to be sneered at as fanfaronade? If the Press has turned deserter, and gone over to the enemy, whose profligate cohorts have overthrown the laws, is that a reason why the people should not be true to themselves? Is the whole army to be given up, because the sentinels have skulked? If so, where is our intelligence? where our estimate of the popular dignity? where our stern republicanism? where our quick, our exalted sense of country? Where, we may ask, had fled our Jefferson's sagacity, when he told us, that a Republic was the strongest government upon earth, since it was the only form under which, on a breach of the law, every one would fly to its support as a personal concern? Had he heard the opposing spirit of our day, that could spurn the law? Had he heard of the spirit, creeping in darkness, that could not only cover the guilty with an armor impenetrable, but try to throw odium on those who cry out for retribution? Solon, being asked which was the most perfect popular government, replied, That where an injury done to any private citizen, is such to the whole body. The blood of a murdered Roman, of one single Roman, could once rouse that whole race of freemen, as by a voice from above. It could call down a just vengeance against all who *caused* the deed. More than once, it changed their

government. It expelled the Tarquins ; it overthrew the Decemvirs. It kindled a holy enthusiasm, which nothing could appease until the guilty authors were blasted and consumed, that thus the wounded commonwealth, a name sacred in Roman eyes, might have its propitiatory sacrifice. It was so that Roman glory, that work of ages, as Tacitus describes it, that toil of patriots, and statesmen, and legislators, and warriors, was founded and kept pure. But, in our boasted Republic, the blood of an American, who was taken from his home—bound—tortured—agonized—borne by the conspirators along the high roads with an impudent cavalcade of carriages and horsemen—cast into a fortress over which had floated the sovereign flag of the Union—and at last immolated—by harpies belonging to an organized and powerful institution, who conceal their crime under the horrible delusions of their mystic tie—all this is to go for nothing ! The institution is not to blame ! No ! it is no fault of the institution ! The immolation is to cause no public dismay. We are to sit still, in stupid gaze ; some beholding it with folded arms, others in derision ! The Press is silent, or the Press scoffs ! The institution even turns complainant. It positively grows belligerent ; it shows battle. It will not be “persecuted.” It will have no noise made ; none of all this flash, and rodomontade, and bluster. The small number who are driving the conspirators into the toils, and permanently breaking up their den, to save the future from all possibility of similar tragedies, are denounced, ridiculed ! They are *infected* with “an Antimasonic excitement,” they are demagogues, office-hunters ; the mere getters-up of a groundless party, without use, or motive, or object ! Was ever an intelligent community so treated before ? Was ever the understanding of rational men so trifled with ? Did ever corporate hardihood, in any age or nation, assume a front so brazen-faced ? Let it go on. It works in its

proper office. In this manner, let it perpetuate its power of defeating the laws. In good time we shall have some other "*affair*;" some fresh peccadillo; some new variety in the dramatics of mystery, for an evening's amusement and editors' gibes!

I must hasten to a close. The subject is too fruitful, too painful. My opinions of masonry will be collected from this letter. I would not give them without my reasons; more especially as you admonish me of your intention to publish what I write. No one better knows than I do, that we are surrounded daily by individuals of the order, whose good qualities as citizens all remain pure; whom we respect, and value, and love; and the mind of a really great man, who knows his duty to his country, will soar above all its pernicious obligations. Of this our country has afforded illustrious instances. But after the developments I have given, I must, I do, believe the evils of masonry to be stupendous; I must, I do, believe that they counterbalance, a thousand fold, any good that it can achieve. It follows that I think favorably of the exertions which you and your antimasonic friends here and elsewhere in the United States, are making to root out its bad influence from the face of our land. I hope that you may continue them with ardor. Taking care that they avoid personal slander or injustice, let them fall short of no just means that may give promise of success. You have a vigorous foe; but fact, and argument, and the force of truth, are with you. Employ these weapons vigorously on your side. If you do make up but a small band, more is the honor to your public spirit; and more the reproach to those who remain insensate under an attack so high-handed upon life and liberty, where guilt has been so presumptuous, where the bloody league continues, as malevolent as ever, unbroken, unabashed. Jenkins, the Englishman, when under torture by the Spaniards, and expecting death from those who

were mutilating him, commended, says the English historian, his soul to his God, and his cause to his country. But where is Morgan's country? Where the avenging arm for him? As yet he has found none. Unrelenting and bloodthirsty conspirators could even dare to convert a fortress of the republic into his dungeon. Monsters in human shape, they thrust him into the cavern of death. But who takes up the cause of his wrongs? I perceive tens of thousands marshalled against it; but who espouses it? There are none but you. Go on then in your course. You are under the broad banner of the law, of patriotism, of humanity, of public order, of private safety; the banner of right reason and of right feeling. You have all the motives that can urge good citizens to action. You have shown that you are not afraid of masonry, or bound by its spell; and as to those who chant its praises, say to them all, that they are as dust in the balance to the unfathomable guilt which bad men of the brotherhood have forever fastened upon it; and that the only way to stop the stream of blood and pollution, which you have detected simply in Morgan's case, is to dry up the fountain. Say that you will never cease from your endeavors to break down a power in the country, which has shown itself, in the face of millions, if they will but look, to be an overmatch for the laws. Keep up an eternal battery against its dangers. "*I like a clamor,*" said Burke, "*where there has been outrage; the fire-bell at midnight breaks your sleep, but it saves you from being burned.*" We have been told that masonry is too strong to be put down; that such attempts have been made in European countries, but have failed. Let this animate you but the more. Already it has been the glory of America to set Europe the example of conquest over public abuses, in many memorable ways. It may be her further glory to be the first to dispel the solemn folly, and break the tyrannical fetters of masonry. The day that shall wit-

ness this triumph among us, may well deserve to stand next in our celebrations to the Fourth of July.

In the momentous nature of the general principles I have had under review, I had almost lost sight of a point personal to myself, which your letter embraces, but which I must not omit to answer. It is, whether I am a mason or not? I have to say that I am not. Many years ago, I became an "entered apprentice," went to a Lodge once, —and but once. On my return from England, after an absence in the service of the United States, I voluntarily withdrew from the body, by a letter to that effect. My separation from it was in 1826, before the murder of Morgan was known to me, and had no connection with the just indignation which that deed excited among a portion of the citizens of New York. I am happy to find that this feeling is shared by some of the citizens of our State; yourselves as a portion of my immediate neighbors and friends amongst the rest.

I remain, with great respect and esteem,

Your friend and fellow citizen,

RICHARD RUSH.

#### REPLY OF HON. RICHARD RUSH

*To Timothy Fuller, President, Stephen P. Gardner, Abner Phelps, Epaphras Hoyt, and Micah H. Ruggles, Vice Presidents of the Massachusetts State Antimasonic Convention.*

York, Pennsylvania, June 30, 1831.

GENTLEMEN :—Your communication dated the 21st of May, and bearing the Boston post-mark of the 21st of this month, reached me on the 26th instant, which I mention, as it will account for what might otherwise seem a long interval between its date and this acknowledgment.

The favorable sentiments which, as delegates of a Convention lately assembled in Boston from various parts of

the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to adopt measures for the suppression of Freemasonry, you have been pleased to express of the views which I have given to the public upon this subject, yield me a very solid satisfaction. They naturally and powerfully tend to confirm in my own mind the soundness of those views. They demand all my acknowledgments, which I beg leave to tender to you, fully and sincerely. You have yourselves presented views of the subject, other than those which I took, that are full of importance. The subject indeed is of great extent, and may be usefully discussed under a variety of aspects, as different minds may be differently affected towards it; and thus the aggregate of separate contributions will in good time make up the entire volume of light with which it ought to be encompassed.

In the letter which has drawn forth your obliging communication to me, it was my object to hold up the dangers of Masonry, as seen in the contest it has waged with the Law in Morgan's case, and the victory it has won. That part of the subject, and, in direct connection with it, the enslavement of so great a portion of our newspaper press to Masonry, were those upon which alone I meant to dwell. I thought these points plain and practical, and the ground under each so strong, that it was impossible not to stand firmly upon it. As further reflection leads me to think it still stronger than at first, and as I have now, in addition, your valued approbation, besides that of others of my fellow citizens whose approbation cannot but be flattering, I will claim your indulgence whilst I throw out a few more ideas under the same heads, and perhaps incidentally upon some others. It is of the Law of which I chiefly desire to speak, in its connection with Masonry, because it is of the utmost moment that its true doctrines should be understood. Not only do all our civil rights depend upon the true un-

derstanding of them, but also our public liberty. First, however, of the Press.

The thralldom of the press was evinced by its general silence under the foul deed of Morgan's abduction and murder ; or by the absence of that decided indignation with which it ought to have followed it up, such as the press is sure to manifest in other cases where great crimes are perpetrated ; or, what was more disreputable still, by not unfrequently treating the whole subject with levity, making it the occasion of coarse ribaldry and unseemly merriment. The friends of the press will have cause to blush, as often as this part of its history in our country is recalled. They will feel shame in recollecting, that when the liberty and life of a citizen were struck down by a conspiracy of extraordinary boldness and malignity, an immense majority of the American press, as far as I had any means of knowing, to repeat the expression of my former letter, if it spoke at all, would not speak out ; that against all its nature and habits, it grew tame ; or even if at first, to save appearances, it did make some demonstrations, and show a guarded indignation, that it soon drew in, becoming indifferent, becoming blind, to an unspeakable outrage, that it knew to be still unavenged. In fact, that it laid down its vigilance, its intelligence and its spirit, at the footstool of Freemasonry. More reprehensible than all ;—that, reversing its true duties, it absolutely exerted its spirit and launched forth its virtuous horror only against those who embarked in the pursuit of justice, by branding that pursuit as an unnecessary "*excitement* ;" and that finally, in effect, it passed over—the necessary consequences of its measured step against the crime in the beginning—to the side of the offending party, where now it is seen in full juxtaposition, administering to Masonry the comfort which it needs in this remarkable fellowship. Such, in a word, has been the course of the press. Often, in other times and countries, it has been silenced by ar-



bitrary will, or bought up by corrupting gold ; but in this country, it has been bestrodden by Masonry. Servitude under any circumstances, is humiliating ; but in the lowest depth, there is a lower deep ; and that our press should have bowed down in worship to this idol, is the step into that deep. A late writer on the "Principles of Morality," Dymond, whose early death those who stand high in letters in Britain deplore as a public loss, whilst discussing the subject of newspapers, utters this striking opinion ; *"that there are some creditable editors who do harm in the world, to an extent, in comparison with which robberies and treason are as nothing."* I give the passage in his own emphatic words. If this searching writer, as he has been called,—he was of the society of Friends and an honor to that society,—could have witnessed in the United States the subjection of a large band of editors to Masonry, he would not surely have revoked his opinion. On the contrary, astonishment and disgust must have taken possession of his bosom at perceiving how the press in a country proud of its freedom, could have come under such a yoke ; and, being under it, how it could pass from absurdity to absurdity, at one time losing itself in a confusion of the understanding, at another in a tornado of passion in attempts to excuse itself for not doing its duty to the public under an event as authentic as ever arose in any country, for drawing out all its honest and most uncompromising indignation.

The National Intelligencer of the 11th of this month, now lies before me. This newspaper has long been published in the capital of the Union. For high and various merit, I do not believe that it is exceeded by any journal in this or in any country. Its conductors do honor to a profession as noble and useful in its honorable exercise, as it is mischievous and unworthy in its abuse. Elevated in mind, they never, whatever their own views of subjects, fail to state fairly the views of those from whom they

differ, and never, to my remembrance have they, in the whole course of their career, soiled their columns with personal indecorums. Yet, what do my eyes behold? This paper, candid as it is, faithfully as it disseminates all other information, ably as it discusses all other questions, will not touch that of Antimasonry. It will not permit itself "*to be instrumental in fomenting an excitement, which, prevailing extensively in some parts of the country, had its origin in the indignation justly excited by the abduction some years ago, of a person by the name of Morgan.*" A PERSON BY THE NAME OF MORGAN!! Thus do these experienced editors speak of the case, as if it were still new to a large part of their numerous readers; which, probably, was the fact. It seems to have been the first time that they had meddled with it, and it is intimated that their press will meddle with it no more. Is not this enough to shock us? Will more proof be called for, except by the infatuated, of the bowing down of the press before the unseen, wide-sweeping scourge of the Masonic Institution? The estimable citizens no less than accomplished editors to whom, and to whose press, I here venture to allude in furtherance of the principle I have in hand, may be well assured that it is done in not the slightest spirit of personal disesteem. They are themselves, I dare to say, unaware of the controlling influences under which they labor; they do not perceive how they breathe them in with the social atmosphere; how they are dripping with the deleterious damps of Masonry, without knowing how they come, any more than the damps of the night.

As to the Law, never in any age or nation was it more completely laid prostrate by any power, than Masonry has done it in the case of Morgan. If this be not enough to consign it to reprobation in a free State, there is nothing else that will. We have been wont to talk of the Law being SOVEREIGN with us; but it is MASONRY that is sove-

reign, as things now stand. This is no unconsidered assertion. I shall proceed to the proof, with a confidence than which the human mind never would be justified in feeling more, on any moral proposition. It rests on evidence strong as adamant, though it be not all technical evidence. It rests on principles co-extensive with the civilized world; principles out of which empires have arisen, and will arise again. Did our fathers of '76 consult Gilbert's law of evidence, or the chapter in Hawkins, to know if every act of oppression against them could be technically proved in court? Did the English of 1688, or the French of last July, stand upon such doctrine? The public safety is not thus to be cavilled away. It is not, as Lord Chatham said, to depend upon books with the leaves turned down in dog's ears. Every successive day, that finds the murder of Morgan unavenged, marks a continuation of the outrage which the longer existence of Masonry in our country, carries with it; as the masons who committed it, or who knew of it, still elude punishment by clinging to their masonic obligations, which they hold to be superior to the law. Though it be even admitted, that this arises from fanaticism in them, which perverts the true intention of the masonic obligation, society equally suffers and is equally outraged. When the institution, affecting to complain of "*persecution*," exclaims, "*punish the guilty but not the innocent*," it falls into mockery, which affronts society anew; for it is the very masonic obligation itself, which never would have place but for the institution, that enables the guilty to elude the law. When, too, the institution, rearing its presumptuous crest to a parallel with Christianity, tells us that crimes committed in the name of the latter are not allowed to recoil upon religion, and claims for Masonry the same indulgence, it advances a claim more audacious than absurd; a claim that no unbiassed mind will notice, unless to remark upon its greater sacrilege than sophistry;

as if the oaths, and grips, and mysteries, and titles, and the whole train of antics, in alliance with which Masonry finds it indispensable to perform her charities, were all of sacred origin ; all *jure divino*, like the claim of monarchs of old to their thrones. The thoughts of such a parallel, make Masonry doubly hateful, showing that it is blown up by impious inflation ; that not content with causing murder upon earth, it is for mounting up afterwards into heaven.

But its pretensions to religion form a branch of the discussion into which I did not go, nor do I desire to go. The only concern that society at large can have with Masonry politically, is on the ground of its doing a positive injury to society. What its predilections may incite it to cherish in theory or enact in practice, within its own walls, those outside need not care about. Let it employ itself as any other benevolent, or festive, or theological brotherhood, if any or all such it constitutes, with its own duties and pastimes, as long as it keeps within its own limits. But the line must never be passed. It exists permissively, under the license of society. The continuance of its charter, depends upon its innocent conduct. This must be unequivocal and invariable. There must be no exception collaterally, any more than directly. The moment it is discovered that persons belonging to this brotherhood can conspire against the liberty and life of a citizen who had broken no law of the land, but merely some of its own edicts, and when these persons can escape detection by persuading themselves that the voluntary oaths and other self-assumed obligations which bind them to the brotherhood are of higher authority than the laws, no matter under what mistaken notions of those oaths and obligations they act, from that moment the whole institution, from which such rank delusions and tremendous perils proceed, assumes a new relation to society. It is placed in the attitude of an aggressor. It

rides over the laws. It is *guilty*; constructively if you will, but obviously and legally guilty. It stands responsible for the blood of a citizen. In vain it may allege that its precepts inculcate obedience to the laws, whilst its ignorant or wicked members violate them through a feeling which the institution generates, in their minds at least. The cry that it is "*persecuted*," is a contradiction to common sense. It can no longer claim protection like other bodies of men, united for their own purposes. Society and such an institution cannot exist in safety together, and the latter must give way. The first principles of society, all the securities that keep it from flying asunder, stamp this reasoning with truth. It springs from the first impulses of the mind, and is ratified by the covenants of every code. No lawyer, no judge, no publicist, in whatever clime he may live, unless his understanding be subdued by Masonry, can gainsay its force. The master is answerable for the servant, the superior for the inferior, the party paramount, for him who acts under influence. The very dog unchained, who does injury in the streets, fixes liability upon the owner. These are primordial maxims of jurisprudence, locally and universally. They lie at the foundation of individual, social and political safety. No governments, no communities, none of the links of civil life, could hold together a day without their shield. They are the cement of each within itself, and of all to each other. Let it not be said that the responsibility is for civil misconduct, not crime. This is a distinction that can avail Masonry nothing. Nobody dreams of indicting innocent masons for the murder of Morgan; but only of putting an end to the institution for the sufficient reason that guilty masons took his life through an ignorant misunderstanding or corrupt perversion of their ties to that institution. It is this that brings legal guilt home to the institution, on the question now raised as between itself and society. It shows the insti-

tution to have been the moving spring to the crime ; the influence paramount that instigated it ; the superior power, I do not say that commanded—this is not necessary to the argument—but that *caused* the crime. Here is enough, (unless indeed this fungus of human device, this mere craft of man, is to go on with its claim to co-equality with Christianity,) quite enough to bring it under the broad conservative maxim of the law to which I appeal. We must look at the maxim in its highest reason ; not merely as one to be pleaded in a court of common law, but designed, in the far wider range of its dignity and justice, to throw its protection over mankind. We make Masonry amenable to it, in the only way in which the American people in their collective capacity, can apply its saving efficacy, viz ; by insisting that the institution which caused the crime, be dissolved. The great coroner of the nation—such would the press have been on this emergency if it had not shamefully deserted its post—holding an inquest over the dead body of Morgan, could render no other verdict, if the verdict covered the whole ground, than that he came to his death by Masons, *and through Masonry*. If the verdict were qualified by saying the *bad* spirit of Masonry, not its good, what difference would this make to the nation, seeing that Masonry in some form or other, was the source of the whole transaction. To the nation, therefore, is Masonry, upon the soundest principles of law, accountable for his death. The safety of the people is **THE SUPREME LAW**, which will disdain all shadowy distinctions in a case of this magnitude and concern. It is from Masonry that the Commonwealth has received detriment in the destruction of a citizen, and the old custom of Rome should be revived ; the people must take care that it receives no more.

This conservative maxim of jurisprudence, is seen in its broadest application when in force between nation and nation. The entire family of independent nations, ac-

knowledge its indisputable validity. Hence governments, and consequently nations, are held responsible for a mere indignity offered to the person of a citizen of another nation, although the nation, collectively within whose limits the indignity may have been committed, be free from all imputation of an intentional guilt. History abounds with such facts, and with accounts of wars, followed up to the overthrow of nations, growing out of them. I might mention, as a very fresh illustration of the general doctrine, the course just pursued by France in despatching a squadron to the Tagus, to avenge the degrading treatment shown to a French subject in Lisbon, although it would appear to have been denied that the Portuguese king (Don Miguel) had given any sanction to the outrage; for the French minister's note of reclamation, does not undertake positively to say that it had his sanction. Had Lisbon even been bombarded and its innocent inhabitants suffered, it would be nothing more than we have seen, in effect, in analogous cases among independent nations. Yet masonry, in defiance of all this, in defiance of the absorbing and transcendent nature of public rights, whether as claimed and exercised so invariably by states within themselves, or internationally, affects to think that it is not to answer for an offence committed by the immediate members of its own body, *acting from a spirit infused into them by that body*. The latter ingredient makes the case far stronger than the one just cited, or any other likely to occur between states; not to mention other enormities in the case of Morgan that recoil *de jure*, and, as we shall see presently, *de facto*, too, upon the lodge. But what am I saying? Why do I forget myself? With governments masonry will hold no parallel; with nations it will hold no parallel; nothing but Christianity is its compeer! The Lodge and the Church, are ever in celestial glory coupled. Christianity is not answerable for the bad deeds of Christians; therefore, masonry must not be

answerable for the bad deeds of Masons! Such is the consummate blasphemy of masonic logic. Sometimes, indeed, it will stoop a little. It will transiently condescend to compare itself with the senate of the United States; or, being fond of old things, to the old Revolutionary Congress. It is in the matter of *secrecy*, that it thus comes below its heavenly aspirations. The comparison purports, that as nations sometimes transact their affairs with closed doors, the *nation of Freemasons*, have also a good right to close theirs eternally, with the super-addition, *en bagatelle*, of eternal oaths, and penalties, lest they come to be opened.

Let us look into the moving spring of all this self-exaltation. It may not lie so much below the surface as that common penetration cannot easily get to it, if it will but be exerted. I am unwilling to transgress upon your kindness by making my letter too long; but the subject is full of interest.

The public have so long been familiarized to the name of Freemasonry, and it urges its claims upon the public so imperiously, that we have not yet learned to treat it as it deserves to be treated; that is, with nothing more nor less than justice. Through the same cause, its own sensibilities have got into the worst state of morbidness, so as to be vulnerable to the slightest touch. Wrapping itself up in its exclusiveness, it has no ear for the truths of this world. It seems as if neither its understanding nor its moral faculty, could be reached by them. It asks a standard by which to be judged applicable to no association of individuals of subordinate and secular organization, in existence. If this standard be denied, it puts forth complaints of hardship, and anon falls into paroxysms of fury, as if the foundations of the world were struck at;

Assumes the god,  
Affects to nod,  
And seems to shake the spheres.



This is ever its magisterial port. Remote ages are invoked, and names of renown among the quick and the dead; the cardinal virtues are marshalled as testimonials, beaming like the fires of Eleusis, to overpower the skepticism or silence the contumacy of all who presume to breathe a doubt against its purity or raise a finger against its sway. It is fit, says Bacon, that we sometimes burn incense where bad odors have been raised. So it is with masonry. Thousands who join it by crossing the threshold of a lodge but once in their lives, because they find that once enough, know no more of what passes there afterwards, than of what is going on in the regions to which Ulysses descended. But by setting out these names, by dwelling upon by-gone centuries, and unrolling the faded catalogue of its other merits, which the uninitiated are to take upon the credit of its own knights in buckler, it seeks to draw aside the understanding from a scrutiny into its more recent achievements, and all its existing deserts. It may be profitable to detach ourselves, for a moment, from these demands upon our reverence, and look at the case before us under a change in the outward circumstances, but of none whatever in the real substance. This mode of viewing it, may open an avenue through which the judgment can pass, without the common hinderances, to right conclusions on the character and deeds of Masonry.

Let us suppose, then, that a new society had been formed in the United States about five years ago, under a name before unknown to us, and modelled, we will also say, after one abroad; for example, in Constantinople. For convenience, we will give it a name. We will suppose it to have been called, "*The Brethren of the Sun and Moon, companions of the Stars, and Knights of the crimson turban.*" Let us suppose that some of the members of this society, a dozen we will say, had, with the aid of certain signs known among themselves, and to all moslems, but of which others knew nothing, laid a

conspiracy against the liberty and life of one of our people and destroyed both, for breaking some of its own self-created rules. Our supposition includes the idea of secrecy, as fundamental to their rules; and it regards the society as composed of Americans as well as foreigners. Let us further and lastly suppose, that these titled and turbaned associators had then, by virtue of certain cabalistic vows that bound them to their society and to each other, with an energy as if inscribed on the banner of the prophet, continued to defy, for full four years out of the five of the society's existence, all our courts and juries to convict them of this conspiracy and murder, although their guilt was so flagrant that no intelligent mind would think of doubting it:—what would not have been the feeling of the people every where against such a society, and what lawful means would have been left untried for its suppression? Now, here is the case of Morgan and Masonry, simply but substantially stated. The only defect is, that, for brevity's sake, I concede too much to Masonry in the case assumed.

And, is there any thing in the masonic society that should exempt it from the fate to which such a new-born society would have been exposed? What is it that gives to the former, privileges beyond any other association of men, that we should not honestly and fearlessly denounce it, and trample upon it, as its own adherents trample upon the law? What is the meaning of the statutes of *præmunire*, of which the horn-books of the law give us an account? Do we not know, that the essence of the offence at which they were levelled, consisted in introducing into the land a power above the law; something that prevented its fair execution? And has not masonry done this very thing in Morgan's case? Who will say that prohibitory statutes might not be enacted against the Institution in New York? There would have been little hesitation, we may be assured, in bringing the Turkish

society, the case of which I have put, under the sharpest penal legislation, if it had not been made to disappear under more immediate bursts of public detestation. And on what plea should masonry escape? Its antiquity? This is precisely the strongest reason for putting it down. Ancient abuses are sure to be the most formidable, in every community disfigured by their existence. They make a claim to sanctity on this ground, like the English rotten-borough system, and work evil the more fatally under every form. Time is a power which the artful play off upon the credulity of mankind. Do we require the proof? How else could it have happened, that masonry has stood even to this day in a country like ours, whilst indulging itself in pageantries and taking to itself titles, that have not only been banished from European countries, but that surpass all Asiatic exaggeration, and have been forced to seek refuge in the uncivilized or ruffian tastes of such courts as Timbuctoo and Algiers? Positively, there is an excess in them, a picture of elaborate burlesque, revolting to all rationality, and that might well startle the fabled Momus, could he raise his visor to behold them. The explanation is historical, but where is any longer the excuse? Whatever the more recent date of its regular formation in Britain, Masonry rose up in Europe, in times full of barbarism. It has remained at anchor, surrounded by its prejudices, whilst the current has borne the rest of society onward, enlightening it in all ways, but in none more than in getting rid of mysticism and pomposity, not only in government, but in all the concerns of life. To these two attributes masonry clings with an especial tenacity. She would have the world imagine, that the charity which other societies can dispense with a simplicity befitting this virtue, and which heaven teaches every man to bestow with open palm upon his brother man, though he be no brother mason, must all be performed in conjunction with mimic signs,

the memorials of a rude and tyrannous age. It was an age when the strength of the human understanding was displayed by its belief in astrology ; when freedom was shown by the vassalage of the common people ; and when barons and bishops not being able to write their names, made their significant marks instead thereof ; after the fashion, we may suppose, of some of the still enduring symbols of freemasonry ! Such was its peculiar age, such the advancement of intellect, such the condition of civil liberty in the atmosphere of which it inhaled its nutriment. An appropriate and beneficial pattern, for moulding the principles and warming the affections of American republicans !

The follies over which time throws its mantle in the case of this Institution, are egregious and grotesque. Any mind that will contemplate them in the abstract rather than the concrete, must get awake to their exorbitancy. But these might be overlooked perhaps, on the principle of leaving all men to the fruition of their own tastes, did not time do much more for masonry. Its awful hoar becomes a cover for its downright enormities. This is a strong expression, but not too strong—not strong enough—as what I am now to state will prove. The fiends *who actually took the life of Morgan*, have not, as we know, to this hour been discovered ; but some of the brotherhood who had a hand in the conspiracy, have been convicted and sent to prison. Will it be credited, that these convicts are still permitted to retain their membership in the New York lodges ? *This is the fact.* They are the companions of felony in the jail, and of masonry out of it ; one day consorting with the brotherhood of malefactors ; the next, with their own brotherhood ! You, gentlemen, are probably aware of this fact. I derive it not from the antimasonic newspapers alone, but, recently, through other channels ; for at first I thought there must be some mistake, and abstained from mention-

ing it in my former letter. It seemed too much for belief. Would not language have failed to convey the sense of universal indignation, had any other society than that of ancient freemasonry fallen into such conduct? Would not any other have been blasted by every tongue, every pen, every *press*, in the nation? Let the presses devoted to masonry answer. But how many of them have blazoned to the world this *Masonic* enormity? Perhaps they have not known of it? Benighted sentinels, they are always in ignorance. Perhaps they wait for the technical evidence? Cautious sentinels, they are never too quick in firing! no, not *at* masonry, for the world; but O how prompt, how valiant, how terrible, the discharge at its foes! how the trumpet of war sounds! how the clans assemble! how the towers of the Lodge-universal are manned! what signals are given out! what chivalry is poured forth! how

Masonic drums, enthusiastic,  
Are beat with types, instead of a-stick.

The last conflagration itself seems approaching when masonry is threatened. This is all in virtue of its antiquity. Its liege subjects bow down in homage, and being "ungirt and uncovered" after the olden time, pledge to their Idol "life and limb and terrene honor." This is ancient masonry. This is the Institution that claims respect for its antiquity, reverence for its purity, and support because it is "*persecuted*;" the Institution that takes convicts to its arms, receives them into its holiest places! If a Juvenal should rise up among us, here is a masonic scene worthy of immortal verse, or there is none such to be found in the satires of the Roman bard.

A few more reflections and I will conclude. When masonry calls the name of Washington to its aid, it commits a profanation rivalling, in its way, the murder of Morgan as a public crime. It is difficult to speak of it

and maintain a proper decorum ; as if that matchless patriot and hero, he who founded our Republic and therefore gave it its laws, who led us through the countless trials of a seven years' war without a single violation of the law, as if he, could he have lived to see the day when a band of conspirators from the brotherhood would ferociously murder a citizen and then defy the law, under oaths and salvoes which but for masonry they never would have dreamed of,—as if he would not have been the very first to uproot all its foundations, could he have witnessed this spectacle. As surely as he always vindicated the supremacy of the law, so surely would he have given up masonry when he found it stronger than the law. As surely as he tore to pieces his oath of allegiance to George III., that once bound him to monarchy, so surely would he have given to the winds all the extrajudicial and bombastical oaths that once bound him to masonry. There are some persons belonging to this Institution, who cannot or who will not reason upon the subject of it ; but from enlightened and candid masons we may hope otherwise ; and before the great body of the public we have a right to expect, that it will be considered and treated like any other source of danger to the public. Its charity, like all other virtue, would survive the stroke of death, and find other channels through which to diffuse its relief among the sons of men. Above all, masonry is out of place in the United States. It is a hideous exotic. It is foreign in its original conception, and in all its present habits. Its complication and concealments are not American, nor its ceremonial, nor any part of its hyperbolical nomenclature. An atmosphere of political freedom and openness, is not its element. It has nothing fairly to do here, and as its spirit is active, it will be doing mischief. The wonder is, that it should have existed as long as it has done under institutions so totally opposite, in genius, to its entire creed and opera-

tions. It is too exclusive, too demanding, too intense in its sympathies within its own orbit, to have favor with a people jealous of all movements apart from their own body, where no oaths tie down, no mysteries darken the path of conduct. It has escaped the hand of American reform chiefly because, to the bulk of the people, it has remained unknown ; but now that a stupendous crime against society committed *through masonry*, and remaining unpunished *through masonry*, has inexorably fastened public scrutiny upon the Institution, its numberless other incongruities with our system, political and social, are driven one after another from their lurking places, and the glory of its overthrow, it is hoped, will be added to the many other victories of American good sense, over ancient abuses. May it be swept from our land, like the rotten borough system from England ; which, in its time, has had as stout defenders. The privileges of such a relic of other days as Old Sarum, the ultra aristocracy used to say were as valuable there, as some amongst us would have it believed those of the lodge are here ; but as they are about to have their jubilee in England for the extirpation of the one monster, let us have ours for the extirpation of the other. Each celebration would attest the triumph of reason over folly, tyranny, and craft ; and their simultaneous echoes, could they be heard together, would alike redound to the honor as well as durable advantage of both nations.

I have the honor to remain with great respect, your obedient servant,

RICHARD RUSH.

## REPLY OF HON. RICHARD RUSH

*To Amos Ellmaker, John Bear, Samuel Wagner, J. F. Charles, Adam Bare, H. G. Long, Samuel Parke, E. C. Reigart, George Heckbert, Z. McLenegan, T. H. Burrowes, George Mayer, H. Mehaffy, in behalf of themselves and the Antimasonic citizens of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.*

York, Pennsylvania, August 13, 1831.

GENTLEMEN:—I have received your letter of the 9th of this month, in which, among other things, you are pleased to express a wish for yourselves and other antimasonic citizens of your vicinity, that I would allow my name to be considered as among those from which a candidate for the Presidency is to be selected at the National Convention representing this party, intended to be held at Baltimore in the month of September next. I am most gratefully sensible to the signal confidence and good will on the part of those with whom the intention of offering this distinction to me, has originated; and from the nature of the offer I cannot content myself with only a formal reply to it. The antimasonic party itself, is of comparatively recent birth in our country, which prompts me the more, under the relation towards it, in which your kind letter would place me, to speak of its principles and its object.

When I first gave to the public, for whatever they might be worth, my sentiments on Freemasonry, in the month of May last, my aims were exclusively public. Personal advantage I did not seek, and least of all, office. In my letter on that occasion, and in a more recent one, I expressed myself with a zeal and fulness appropriate to the extraordinary importance of the truths which I believed myself to be maintaining on a momentous public question; the most so in my opinion of any which has ever yet, as a home question, engaged the attention of the American people. But when I did so, I could not but know, that the time at which my antimasonic fellow-



citizens contemplated nominations for the two highest offices in the union was very near at hand, and the public opinion appeared to be still at large as to the individuals who might be selected. Hence, I must unequivocally be considered as out of view for either nomination, lest a doubt should be thrown upon my motives. The bare existence of such a doubt would be unworthy of a cause which, pure as any that ever arose in any country, ought not to be sullied by the breath of suspicion resting upon the person who is to have the high honor of being associated with it, as you would propose to associate me. Under a different train of circumstances, I would have acceded to such a distinction, though with a proper distrust of myself, as the proudest of my life ; it being one of which names far higher than mine might be proud. But although I necessarily and unequivocally withdraw from it, I shall be thoroughly with you in your cause ; and in giving my reasons, I will take occasion to say something of the approaching Presidential election, which for the first time is to present, as the face of your letter shows, a new element to our politics.

I have examined the grounds on which your cause rests, dispassionately I am sure, as with an absence of every thing selfish. I have seen a frightful crime committed by masons, the most so, all things considered, that has ever stained our country ; and committed under the instigations of a masonic spirit. This diabolical spirit may not have been founded on rightful masonry ; but from *masonry* nevertheless, and nothing else, it sprung. The crime was of a die no less deep than murder, with every aggravation that a bold conspiracy could superadd ; whilst the provocation to it was simply that of breaking one of the rules of masonry. I have seen this crime go unpunished for nearly five years, because the oaths which masonry enjoins have bound down the masons who were privy to it, with a power stronger than the law, so that

detection has been rendered impossible. I have seen our press in a state of vassalage to this institution, to an extent that is appalling. I have seen the institution steep itself in pollution so that no waters can cleanse it, by retaining in full membership criminals legally convicted of having had a hand in this crime, though not absolutely the main actors, and still I have seen the press silent; still seen it cringe, still bow the knee to masonry. I have seen the same press inveighing against publications that aim at exposing these enormities, whilst, insensible to the first rule of justice, it excludes the publications themselves from its columns. To this practice, by which the moral condition of the press in any community may in general be well ascertained, I make a few honorable exceptions; so few, however, that they still leave the narrow spirit and fierce passions of masonry, responsible for this spectacle of moral degradation as regards our press. Another spectacle I have seen not less ominous in its political, than this last is, in its moral bearings. I have seen presses long at war on all other points, long the opposing combatants of public measures and the highest public men, strike up a masonic league, as if by electric impulse, and bandying shouts of masonic rage and devotion, sally forth as co-belligerents against those who arraign the institution for such dangers and enormities as I have mentioned. I have watched their rivalry in bluster and malignity. I have seen how their former wrath against each other has, under this new bond of adhesion, worked itself into explosions of rival fury against the common foe; how a rabid appetite—a match for the canine—and that would *Morganize* if it dared, an appetite as loathsome in its tastes as it is deadly in its purposes, has broken forth from this confederacy of types against those who denounce the lodge. Seeing these things and more, the demonstration to my mind is complete, is irresistible, that masonry has shown itself a

tyrant over the Press and a tyrant over the Law. These are evils in the highest degree alarming. As I view them, there are none others comparable to them, whether as they may come to affect our most important political interests, or our dearest civil rights.

It is therefore my deliberate opinion, that the existence of the masonic institution in our country, is, at this present juncture, a public grievance greater than any other that we experience. *There is obviously no mode of getting rid of it, but to bring public opinion to bear upon it at our elections.* This would be a peaceable, lawful, and would prove in the end an effectual mode. It throws the whole question open to argument, and the people will pass upon it properly. They form the tribunal in whose intelligence we believe, in whose purity we confide, and from whose decision there is no appeal. To enter therefore zealously, and with unshaken purpose, upon the work of effecting the overthrow of masonry through the ballot-boxes, I hold to be a political duty of primary obligation. This is the well-understood object of your party, whilst other objects of public good alike binding upon all parties, are necessarily associated with it. Under every free government, complaint will always be heard. Much will be ideal, having its root only in the discontent of the mind ; a portion will be light and transitory ; and not a little will arise from causes inseparable from the human condition, which no frame of government nor policy of administration can cure. How many disputatious topics have engaged the passions of contending parties since the federal government has been in operation, which in their day were dwelt upon with an emphasis as if the very being of the nation had been at stake ; yet how little do most of them seem when now calmly reviewed ; and how steadily has the nation been advancing in prosperity in the midst of them all. But the evils lately come to light, of which masonry is the

parent, are new and startling. We grow amazed as well as alarmed at contemplating them ; not through the medium of a heated imagination, but under the severest scrutiny of the understanding. They strike at the vital springs of public and individual safety. They entwine themselves round the whole body politic, poisoning at the fountain head, principles indispensable to its welfare—its existence. Is this merely to declaim ? is it to deal only in assertion ? Let the following plain queries answer, if there were no others. Upon **FACTS** do I desire to stand—these are my weapons—with these I feel myself an overmatch for the institution, though it had a host in its service ten thousand times stronger than any it has yet paraded. 1. Have not the courts in New York decided that a mason is an incompetent juror, on the trial of a brother mason ? [Here I know what masonry will say—for I know how it creeps into crevices—it will say, so are members of other corporations, where a fellow member is party to the cause ; I answer no, not unless you show a pecuniary interest at the bar ; but let us pass this by and proceed.] 2. Have not masons when sworn in open court, refused to give evidence that would bear unfavorably upon brother masons, *preferring to be committed to prison for a contempt of Court* ? 3. Have not other masons from the same cause refused to be sworn at all when brought before the court, they too preferring a jail ; *by both which contumacious refusals the administration of justice has been brought to a stand, in the case of a public crime of unparalleled audacity, terror and guilt* ? 4. Has it not happened, that on a prosecution by the whole people of New York against a public delinquent who was a mason, a single jurymen who was a mason, stood out against a conviction, whilst to the mind of the eleven not masons, his guilt was considered to be established ; and was not this delinquent one of the persons charged with being accessory to the murder of

Morgan ; present when he was immolated? 5. *Have not these obstructions to justice grown out of the terrifying oaths which masonry imposes and the penalties coupled with them ; whereby the consciences of weak men are overcome, and the consciences of wicked men hardened in their villainy ?* 6. Have not masonic lodges, with a total insensibility to shame, such as none but the abandoned fall into, and which casts a portion of the disgrace upon the whole public where it is tolerated, *retained in close fellowship wretches of the fraternity who were pronounced by the laws guilty of having had a share in this horrible conspiracy against the liberty and life of Morgan ?*

Who can deny the facts, or any of them, to which the foregoing queries point ? Nobody. The Lockport trials, or other developments, have blazoned them to the American people. They are solemn and awakening. They have marked the progress of that mastery over the law which masonry has gained in this whole case of Morgan, whose blood shed by masons, and concealed by masons, still cries for vengeance. Am I wrong then in pronouncing such things paramount evils ? Do I go too far in declaring a sober conviction that in conjunction with the apathy of the press under them all, or its intentional and servile shrinking from their indignant exposure, they transcend any others that weigh upon us ? Do they not directly tend to lay open the very "veins and arteries of the social system ?" to control the highest movements of the political system ? Can men hear of them and continue unmoved ? Can they wish for the longer existence of such an institution ? Can they, as citizens firm in their duty, any longer truckle to it ? say that it is harmless, like any other society or club ? like the Methodist society, or the Colonization society, or a Presbyterian society, or that of St. George, or St. Andrew,—as is sometimes pretended ; confounding all distinctions, and

unwarrantably libelling these societies? The defenders of masonry allege that it is not political. Where do they suppose our senses to have fled when they say so? It may not be political by its express constitution, or any of its formal rules; but if it be not so in *fact*—if it be not so by its *influence*—there is no truth under heaven. It can vanquish the law, and silence the press, yet it is not political! It can tower over the first, which holds the body politic together—it can stop the second, by which the political universe is moved—yet it is not political!! This is to mock, not reason with us; it takes us for blocks—stones—not able to see what is before our eyes. And since masonry has already done all that I have enumerated, who so dull in thought or wilful in infatuation, as not to feel sure that it will, in some form or other, go on with its foul transgressions as occasion may incite, if permitted longer to have foothold in the land. I thence lay it down with a confidence that in my mind admits of no qualification, that the multiplied and proven dangers of masonry, render the effort for its extirpation the highest public duty which our citizens can be summoned to perform at the approaching election of a President.

The contest in which a large and growing number of the freemen of this Union have embarked for pulling down this relic of a tyrannic age, is both animating and ennobling. It will mark a point in history, and impart fresh renown to the American name. We are sometimes prone to imagine that Europe will be directing its eye across the waves to the scenes of our Cabinet or social squabbles, anxiously inquiring into their causes and waiting their issue; when Europe will care no more about them or our other local strife, than of occurrences in the most remote of the planets. Not so will it fare with the onset we have commenced, for such high cause, upon Masonry. In this new battle, our blows will tell

every where. Often indeed has it been attacked before, but not as we are attacking it, through the unbiassed suffrages of an inquiring and intelligent people. Its abuses have often excited the suspicions and its harlequinism been the laughing stock, of the most enlightened portion of the old world ; whilst from its revelry, it is well known that persons who have the opportunities for a better kind of festivity, have withdrawn in silent but significant disgust. Nevertheless, from the slowness with which old prejudices are shaken off in that hemisphere, where so much of what exists in their institutions still depends upon the force of prejudice and the delusions of time, the masonic institution has continued to stand. As interested in keeping alive all such delusions, the name of a solitary king or prince may still be seen as its titular patron in the almanacs. But the example of its overthrow in this rising Republic, not by arbitrary edicts, but the power of public opinion at the polls, will be hailed by the wise and liberal in whatever region dwelling ; most especially at an epoch when the spirit of real reform over every species of cant and imposition, is abroad in the world. It will eclipse every other achievement now going forward in this inspiring race. The overthrow of masonry, will be the overthrow of the accumulated folly of ages ; of the most revolting scheme of social prostitution ever known to mankind, because one that may and often does place the *chevalier d'industrie*, the very pirate himself, side by side with the honest man, and this under sanction of oaths and penalties ; of a system of imposture that may compare with the performances of Hindostanese jugglery ; of an organ of charity, calculated to throw disrepute even upon that virtue ; and of a source of danger to law and government which makes masonry, as by its late deeds in this country, a just object of horror. Of its social prostitution, we have the beaming proof in our day ; proofs as incontestable as deplorable, in the fact

*of convicts from a jail*, in Morgan's case, being allowed to resume their seats in the Lodge as the boon companions of its other inmates. What a fraternity ! what pretensions, what practices ! Our victory over it, besides rendering incalculable benefits to ourselves, will redound to our glory abroad, if we thirst for such glory, beyond any event since the declaration of Independence. No other can stand out in such bold and bright relief. It will become the watchword to other countries. In good time, we shall see the institution begin to totter. Our victory will be akin to those we won upon the ocean, in this—that it will be seen of all nations and send its echoes among all ; for the ocean is not more the common highway of all nations, than masonry is their common reproach, if not for its crimes, at least for its folly. It is remarkable that the peals of triumph in each case will have been consecrated, in our victory, to the maintenance *of personal rights*. On the ocean we fought against impressment ; and we were first roused against masonry, from detecting its fell spirit in the murder of an American citizen. By holding the institution responsible for the life of Morgan, we give to the world a noble pledge of the immeasurable price we set upon personal security ; a principle denoting the fame of the most illustrious nations of the earth, and chiefly of Republics like our own, where the *Ægis* of the State should ever be ready with its protection, if the meanest citizen be wronged in but a hair of his head ; where all should rally round the Law, as the majesty and only earthly majesty that all worship. This is the true democratic principle of our institutions, their most exalted attribute ; and such conduct, would be acting with a resolution and a spirit worthy of the principle.

Yielding to the moral force as well as political obligations of such considerations, far inferior in urgency do I account all other causes upon which the approaching



Presidential election can turn, in comparison with that of fully suppressing this great source of public mischief ; this new discovered *imperium in imperio*, gnawing at the heart of our political system. I am not, and have not been, the advocate of the present occupant of the executive chair ; but the public evils, real or alleged, of his administration, are as nothing, in my sight, the sum of them, to those which may spring from masonry—this power of darkness that fights against the rest of society, and fights unseen ; that throws its bolts whilst the hand is hidden. As his successor, I was, and desired to remain, friendly to the claims of a distinguished and highly gifted citizen of the West, whose maxims of public policy I approve, and towards whom I would never wish to abate in the feelings of personal respect and attachment. But all the benefits which in other respects might be augured from his abilities and patriotism, and I render a free homage to both, would be no compensation, in my judgment, for the longer existence among us of this baneful institution ; this vain-boasting despot, that grows more exacting as it is more criminal ; that would sacrifice every thing to its own selfish and desperate passions ;—this TYRANT, that stalks over liberty, life, the law, the press. I therefore go with you in your cause, from my genuine conviction of its deeper and broader foundations than any other. It seeks the extirpation of an evil of over-shadowing magnitude. Other evils have their day and are gone ; but this is permanent, this will be fastened upon us forever, unless we resolutely determine to remove it by our votes. Your cause too, full of invitation to exertion, presents a collateral inducement from which patriotism may gather hope. Being less exclusively bent upon all the exasperating topics that agitate the other parties, it may the better be enabled after triumphing upon its own principle, as triumph it must, to regard those topics with something of a calmer

spirit, and approach the task of their adjustment under auspices more propitious. I place your cause foremost then, of all, at the coming election, in its principles, its objects, and its character : foremost in its elevation and range ; foremost beyond comparison in its direct aim ; and even foremost in the incidental good that it may have the opportunity of accomplishing. In this decision, I perform what I take to be my highest duty to my country. I am glad to perceive from your letter, that you will expect your candidate to be decidedly opposed to the masonic institution, in addition to other requisites in him to which you will naturally look. I dedicate myself to such a cause as of justice supreme ; of dignity supreme ; supreme in its connection with the public good. And may its increasing adherents, as the power of reason and truth goes on-daily to swell its numbers, soon vindicate the authority of the law outrageously prostrated by masonry, the claims of humanity barbarously trampled upon by masonry, the independence of the press fearfully undermined by masonry, and the repose of society grievously invaded by masonry. Then will our country have abundant and enduring cause of joy, at seeing her borders freed from this " whole dark pile of human mockeries."

Renewing the expression of my sensibility to the very gratifying tenor and object of your letter, I remain, gentlemen, with great respect, your most obliged and faithful servant and fellow-citizen.

RICHARD RUSH.

## LETTER OF HON. RICHARD RUSH TO HON. JOHN C. SPENCER.

York, Pennsylvania, November 8, 1831.

DEAR SIR:—I very much regretted that I lost the pleasure of seeing yourself and friends from New York who did me the favor of a call as you passed through this place on your way to Baltimore. I came down stairs a moment after receiving your cards, and was truly sorry to have missed the opportunity of taking you all by the hand.

Had you again taken this route on your return from Baltimore, as I cherished the hope you would do, it would have given me the opportunity of saying to you in person what I have been happy to say to others, whenever I have had the opportunity; viz: how highly I was pleased with what you did in the Convention. A better selection than Mr. Wirt, could not, in my opinion, have been made. With genius, as well as high cultivation, the true elements of greatness unite in him. It is known to me from the highest source of information, that when Mr. Jefferson was about to retire from the Presidency, to be succeeded by Mr. Madison, he expressed a strong wish that Mr. Wirt would consent to come into the House of Representatives of the United States, that he might assume the ascendancy in that body, and with it the influence in our national affairs, then growing critical, to which his commanding abilities and probity would have destined him. But, little ambitious of public honors, the road which then lay open to him under auspices the most brilliant, he declined. His services during twelve years in the executive department of the government since, has identified him with the course of public policy pursued during those years, whilst to no part of it does he stand in the attitude of a partizan.

It is for the same reason that I like his antimasonry. He has taken it up as a statesman and a patriot, not as a partizan and persecutor. He was startled at seeing the administration of the laws stopped by the secret power of the Masonic Institution, and felt at once the duty of seeing them restored to their supremacy. He knew nothing of the fatal agency of this institution in robbing the laws of their efficacy, until the assembling of your Convention at Baltimore. How should he have known it? Did the press in Baltimore where he lived, or in Washington to which he sometimes went, inform him? Never. You and I know, you better than I, that it was simply because the old established newspapers of the land refused in almost every instance to publish the facts brought to light by the trials in the courts of New York demonstrative of the dangers of masonry, (shame on their ignoble fears of this institution,) that antimasonic newspapers were set up *for the special purpose of publishing them*. And was Mr. Wirt, busied in the highest walks of an exalted profession, which he exalted still higher by his genius, eloquence and worth, to hunt these up, hundreds of miles off, and most of them in the interior, whilst the boasted sentinels all around him—those sentinels that seldom failed to serve up to him the particulars of every case of the least note in the police annals of Bow-street, or the Mansion House in London—were silent? These vigilant sentinels indeed, would perhaps, admit the mere word antimasonry into their columns, but most commonly with a fling at its “*fanaticism*,” lest they should be thought weak-minded. But from which of them would he have learned those details of the Morgan trials that go to show, in the words of his excellent letter, that masonic oaths “*are not considered by those who impose and take them as mere idle and unmeaning words, but as solemn obligations, to be practically enforced* ;” that the audacious conspiracy against the life of a citizen “*was not, as has been commonly supposed,*

*the act of a few ignorant men alone, but was engendered in the lodges themselves, enforced under their direction and supported at their expense ; the conspiracy embracing within its sweep, men of all degrees, with too much reason to believe that the secret energy of the masonic spirit had entered and polluted even the temple of Justice ; and with the most demonstrative proof that the persons who had entered into these unhallowed oaths, considered their allegiance to the Lodges as of higher obligation than their allegiance to the laws of their country,"* from which of them could he have learned these things, or any of them ? From none, I confidently answer, that he either saw or had an opportunity of seeing. When the lights of your Convention brought these convictions home to him in ways too authentic to be refuted, his mind, accustomed to investigate, weigh and decide—a mind not to be deluded by fallacies, but able to see truth and not afraid to speak it—did not hesitate to pronounce such an institution "*at war with the fundamental principles of the social compact, as a wicked conspiracy to the laws of God and man,"* and therefore "*to be put down."*

It is said, that for all this he is still a mason, and that we have got a mason for our candidate. It may be so. All governments have their own laws, and so has the government of masonry. The latter can execute them too, which is more than can be said of the government of New York, at present ; with a population already nearly equalling that of the province of Holland, in the day of all its grandeur. The British government held all our fathers to be British subjects long after the declaration of independence ; up indeed to the peace of '82, for we know that it was only then that our independence was acknowledged by Britain. Mr. Wirt has got himself into this sort of dilemma. He has taken up arms against masonry, but what of that ? He is nothing but a rebel. Some British

jurists even hold, that the *anto nati* are good British subjects to this day. By this doctrine, our President Jackson is one, and the venerable Carroll into the bargain. This British doctrine of perpetual allegiance mainly drew us into a war on the question of impressment, in 1812. It was a sovereign right, a sovereign claim, that Britain could not forego. So masonry, like a true sovereign, also sets up this sovereign claim. The government of the United States, unfettered by feudal maxims, we are taught to believe will allow expatriation ; but once a *mason*, always a *mason*, it seems, unless they expel you for *unmasonic* conduct ; which, (be it remembered,) to be leagued in with murderers, is not, for masons convicted of this petty kind of business in Morgan's case are still retained in the lodges. You cannot shake off your allegiance. You cannot resign of your own accord, as I have come to learn latterly, in whatever decorous and parliamentary terms you may lay your resignation at the feet of this lord paramount. This would be to leave you too much to the exercise of your own free agency, should you happen to change your mind after having for once in your life put on the livery of the lodge ; and if you arraign it, O ! if you arraign it, for an outrage tenfold worse than any single one Britain ever committed against us, why what a wretch you are, what an apostate, what a perjured traitor, what a vile rebel, and I know not how much in addition, that might be called from the courtly vocabulary of masonic vengeance. This is Mr. Wirt's predicament, at the present juncture. Such is the manner in which the champions of this order or their bottle holders, insult the good sense of the community ; such some of the fruits of its wild and hideous oaths. They would excite nothing but the superlative, unmingled derision of all sensible men, were it not for the tragic consequences to which they lead. We may laugh at a conclave of mummers, dressed up in their antics ;

but we cannot laugh when we see it become a deliberative assembly for the shedding of human blood. It is then time to be roused to action.

On the point of masonic oaths, I must beg you to turn to Livy, 10th book, section 38. Reading him a few evenings ago, I was much amused with falling upon a passage, the whole of which I would copy, but that it is too long. It is one in which he describes the *linen legion* of the Samnites. From this legion, those who contend for the antiquity of masonry, may, if they think fit, date its origin. It may at least supply their antiquarian researches with some good hints, for although not making quite such a stretch into backward time as the days of king Solomon, it leaps over John the Baptist. The Samnites being at war with the Romans, assembled their whole force at Aquilena. A piece of ground in the middle of the camp was enclosed with hurdles and boards, and covered over head with a linen cloth, the sides being all of an equal length. Within this enclosure sacrifices were performed, according to directions read out of an old linen book. When these were finished, the General ordered a beadle to summon every one of those who were most highly distinguished by their birth or conduct. Besides other solemnities calculated to impress the mind with religious awe, there were altars erected, about which lay the victims slain, and centurions stood around with their swords drawn. The soldier was led up to the altar, rather like a victim than a performer in the ceremony, and was bound by an oath not to divulge what he should see and hear in that place. He was then compelled to swear, in a dreadful kind of form, containing execrations on his own person, on his family, and race, if he did not go to battle whithersoever the commanders should lead; and if either he himself fled from the field, or, in case he should see any other flying, if he did not immediately kill him. At

first, some, refusing to take this dreadful oath, were put to death round the altars, and their mangled remains lying among the carcasses of the victims, served as a warning to others not to refuse. At length the requisite number was obtained, and this legion, says Livy, sixteen thousand strong, was called the linen legion, from the covering of the enclosure. Its soldiers were furnished with painted and gilt shields, and plumed helmets. The Romans laughed at their empty parade, and were horror struck at their abominable oaths and sacrifices, polluted as the latter were with human blood mingled with that of cattle : and under Lucius Papirius Cursor, the renowned Roman leader, made quick work with the "linen legion," part were cut to pieces, and part put to flight.

May this prefigure the defeat of Masonry at the polls, under Wirt, as our Papirius Cursor ; for surely it is alike ridiculous by its empty parades, alike odious by its abominable oaths, and has alike been polluted with human blood. In my opinion, we could not have a better leader. I wholly mistake his character, if he be not found as resolute and undaunted, as he has heretofore been unobtrusive. Yet how is this accomplished and gifted man already treated ? Liberal, candid, unanswerable as are the sentiments of his letter, how has Masonry begun to deal with them ? Reason away their force it cannot ; but what epithets are too coarse, what denunciations too bitter for it to employ against their author ? This conduct is in unison with the fierce and intolerant spirit of the order ; with its exclusiveness, with its anti-social pledges, under sanctions both unnatural and unlawful, to a common support and to common resentments. That men of refined and elevated minds who may be Masons, act under such pernicious influences, nobody will pretend ; but who will pretend, that the great bulk of the Masons of our country are made up of such men, or that



it is they who give impulse to the order? It is notoriously otherwise, for men of this cast have least to do with Masonry, even if Masons. It "*drops from their minds,*" as it did from our Wirt's and from Washington's, who did not enter a lodge, I believe, for thirty years. Such men are rarely, very rarely, of its counsels; they become shy, though nominally they may be upon its lists. Let Masonry alone, bow down to it, permit it to do as it pleases, without impeachment of its ways, and it will be at peace with you; but when its portentous oaths, acting upon ferocious or infatuated bigots, become the direct means of tremendous crime, we are not to raise a manly voice against its dangers, but at the peril of proscription! We must not discuss the question of its demerits; all mouths must be closed, and peaceably to refuse our preference in the ballot-boxes to those who cling to an institution that in a long and fairly contested battle with the laws, has absolutely overcome them, and to this hour remains in possession of the victory,—is persecution! We must merely leave the institution to go down under the operation of a quiet, harmless, unspeaking public opinion! Admirable theory this, for all who belong to the school of the murderer Thurtell, or the pirate Gibbs! Offend as much as you please, and with the more enormity the better; we visit you with no disqualification, no penalty, no act of any kind; only just leave you to your own reflections, and the gentle, silent corrective of public opinion;—go on, we have no fears that your *clique* will hold together against this corrective! This is the enlarged and philanthropic theory that pronounces the decrees of rank injustice, even "*fanaticism,*" upon all *political* antimasonry. It would have any thing but that. It would not for the world have the lodge pursued as an offender, or those who uphold it, not voted into office. It would leave it to die of itself, by an *anthanasia*, a sort of *easy death*, such as Hume predicted for the exit of the

British constitution. I dislike the cant of Puritanism, and all cant; but the cant of Masonry and its *neutral auxiliaries*, is the worst we have ever had. They give us cant about its religion and about its charity, in the midst of the terrible inroads upon the peace of society and the authority and sanctity of our jurisprudence, of which its furious and misleading spirit has demonstrably been the parent.

Let us, then, with Wirt as our leader, dedicate ourselves to its overthrow. Preposterously confounding all distinctions, it tells us that it is no more responsible for the murder of Morgan, or for his blood being still unavenged, than the Catholic religion is responsible for the crimes of the inquisition. But let us put down their sophistry on the election ground, as it has been a thousand times answered in argument and by facts. They say that our cause is a narrow one; too narrow to form the basis of a cause that can be national. And is it in the country where the stamp act was resisted, and the tea tax, that we hear this language? Too narrow! The laws have been prostrated, they are still under foot, they cannot be executed; it is masonic oaths and penalties that cause this disgraceful spectacle; we have proved it in a manner clear as light; we want to remove the superincumbent pressure, for Masons will not do it themselves by giving up their charters, which we should prefer. This is our great, our only aim. We want to raise up our laws from their fallen condition; we want to take Masonry off of them, to haul it away now and forever for so unparaleled, so absorbing an affront on the body politic. Die of itself! What tyrant ever gave up power, until forced to do it? No. It must be expelled by the spirit and perseverance of the people; it must be done at the polls; there is no other way; it is reasonable, it is just, it is indispensable that we should so expel it; it is an imperious duty as well as a constitutional right. The press wears its

chains, or bent upon nothing but party and personal squabbles, blindly overlooks all principle at stake on the antimasonic cause, and the real facts on which it is founded. The people must rise above the press, and make it blush for its past subserviency, and its past apathy. The civil magistracy must be restored to its efficiency, for five years ingloriously lost among a people boasting of their freedom. Call such a cause narrow! Why, its foundations are as broad as the civilized world. No question of tariff or anti-tariff, nullification or anti-nullification, has half its breadth or strength or dignity. These are fleeting topics; questions of what sort of laws we are to have. Our cause presents a question of whether we are to have a master over our law; for Masonry now stands triumphant over them. This is our cause, plain, simple, majestic. It is a cause that in the best days of Rome would have rallied every citizen to its support, and in better days of our own republic would have asserted its rightful ascendancy over every other, until its triumph was secured.

Your Convention was fortunate, if I may venture an opinion on this point too, in fixing upon Mr. Ellmaker as a candidate for the Vice-presidency. In Pennsylvania we know him well. He is a man of abilities and learning; possessing innate strength and excellence; prompt, energetic, yet calm-minded. To the nation he is not yet known, but will be appreciated when he is known. He was one of General Jackson's prominent supporters, but left that party at its height of success in Pennsylvania, to aid in putting down an institution that had put down the laws. He is of inflexible honesty; in his opinions very decided, in his conduct, liberal, forbearing and just. He has never sought, but on the contrary avoided public distinction, when within his reach, though so eminently worthy of it. Classically educated, he is fond of literature. This, in conjunction with his legal acquirements and pursuits, has placed him high in the circles of private

and professional life ; which hitherto has filled up the measure of his ambition. May the theatre of his exertions be enlarged, and his country have the benefit of his talents and virtues.

Apologizing for so long a letter, I remain, dear Sir, with great respect and esteem, very respectfully yours,

RICHARD RUSH.

# REV. HENRY TATEM'S REPLY TO THE SUMMONS OF THE RHODE ISLAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER.

[From the Boston Daily Advocate.]

THIS communication is particularly deserving the attention of all candid men, and especially professors of religion. It is not our province or wish to interfere with the opinions or discipline of any class of Christians, and we present this document (which has recently appeared in the Providence Advertiser) to our readers, not only because it has an immediate reference to the duties of religious men who are masons, but because it presents forcible arguments against Masonry, as an institution of an immoral and irreligious tendency. Many people say they are opposed to Masonry, but are unwilling to carry that question into politics. Here then is a view of Masonry, wholly divested of all political considerations, other than the preservation of wholesome morals and sound principles in a community, which are essential to the preservation of all political institutions, that are worth preserving.

The character of Mr. Tatem, and the circumstances under which his views of Masonry have been published, present the subject as he has discussed it, in a new and interesting light. Mr. Tatem is a Baptist clergyman of Rhode Island ; a man of acknowledged piety, unimpeachable integrity, and great influence with the class of Christians among whom he is a preacher. It may be said with truth, that there is not a Baptist clergyman in that State, in whose assertions more entire confidence would be placed by the numerous denomination to which he is attached.

The views of Masonry, presented by Mr. Tatem, as a minister of the gospel, and not as a politician, were not volunteered on his part, or drawn out by a call from Antimasonic Committees, as has been the case with most renunciations. It is a reply to a summons from Masons themselves, preparatory to inflicting upon him, what they regard as a disgrace, expulsion from a Masonic Chapter. In most cases these summonses have been passed over in silence by those they were intended to disgrace. The Royal Arch Chapter of Rhode Island doubtless anticipated a similar result in the present case. They expected to hear nothing from Mr. Tatem, and intended to proceed to his expulsion, which they would hold up to the world, and to his Christian brethren, as an evidence that this clergyman had done some act to discredit his character as a man, and a minister. The salutary example he has set of vindicating his conduct, in withdrawing from the Society of Freemasons, will, we think, operate as a check upon Masonic bodies in their attempt to exercise jurisdiction over individuals who have spoken the *truth* about Masonry, and quietly withdrawn from the institution. Here is an instance of a Mason who merely claimed the privilege of quietly withdrawing from a Society, which he had become convinced was injurious to morals and the laws, being arraigned before a Masonic body as a criminal, though he had not visited their Lodges or Chapters for seven years, had made no public renunciation, and had done nothing more than put his signature to a paper, at the request of a brother clergyman, stating that that clergyman had given the terms of the penalty in the Entered Apprentice oath correctly. For this offence alone, he was summoned to answer before the Chapter; an offence, admitting it to be one, which he had committed as an Entered Apprentice and not as a Royal Arch Mason. This fact shows, that though Masons pretend there is no dependence existing between Lodges and Chapters, yet the latter, charge upon a Mason as an offence against *them* the violation of his oath even as an Entered Apprentice, thus establishing a *concurrent jurisdiction* between the Lodges and Chapters over members of the Lodge, as high as the Master's degree, who are also members of a Chapter. The Rhode Island Chapter here lays down the principle of Masonic discipline, that a Masonic offence, committed in the capacity of

Entered Apprentice, is a crime cognizable not only by the Lodge, but by the Chapter also.

Another fact is of importance in this transaction. It shows that Masonic bodies are determined not to suffer their members to withdraw quietly from them, but will arraign them, if they utter a single word against Masonry, and exert upon them their power of expulsion, which is all the power they *now* dare to exercise in the infliction of Masonic penalties. How striking, too, is the fact, that Masonic bodies are so eager to expel Masons who speak against their Institution, while in New York they retain murderers and man-stealers as honored members, and every where else continue to fellowship the Lodges and Chapters that hold these felons in their embrace, who are entitled to all the privileges of *worthy visiting brethren* in every other Lodge and Chapter in the Union? If a Clergyman tells the *truth* about Masonry, they arraign him as a criminal; but they take no notice, and make no inquiry as a Lodge or Chapter, into the conduct of Masonic bodies, with whom they are in full fellowship, though they know those bodies have approved and sanctioned masonic homicide!

The conduct of the R. I. Royal Arch Chapter in this business, as late as the 22d of March, shows how unavailing it is to hope that Masons will abandon their Institution. They are resolved to maintain masonic jurisdiction and discipline to the last. The advice of the Investigating Committee of the Rhode Island Legislature to abandon their institution, as not only useless but dangerous and pernicious to society, *criminal* in its oaths, the incentive of *murder* in one instance, and liable to be used for a repetition of a like crime, produces no impression. They are resolved to go on, arraigning and expelling every man who will not submit quietly to seal his mouth forever, or yield his entire homage to Masonic despotism!

Whether the Rhode Island Chapter will now expel Mr. Tatem, remains to be seen. His letter, we learn, was presented to the Chapter on the 22d of March. Not a word has been heard from that body since. To meet any attempts that might be made to injure his character, Mr. Tatem, finding the Chapter would not publish his letter, has published it himself, in his own vindication. The public will decide whether the reasons given

for what he has done, are not sound and unanswerable. Masons have called upon him to answer for his unmasonic conduct, and at *their* instance, and not his own, he has fairly presented his views of the Institution, and his reasons for withdrawing from it.

## LETTER

*To Barzillai Cranston, High Priest, C. Cheney, Secretary, and the other Officers and Companions of the Providence Royal Arch Chapter.*

**GENTLEMEN:**—I have received two communications, of which I here give a copy. The first was not received until several weeks after its date, in consequence of its having been placed in the Providence post office, and not coming in the *Natick* mail to my residence.

*Providence, Feb. 27, 1832.*

**REV. COMPANION TATEM,**

*Dear Sir:*—Several members of the Royal Arch Chapter deem the course you have pursued in relation to Masonry, as inconsistent with the character of a worthy Companion of the Order. It was therefore voted at a meeting of said Chapter, on the evening of January 19th, that you be informed of the existence of this charge, that you might appear, if you should see fit, and answer to the same.

Agreeably to the above vote, I hereby inform you that the Chapter will hold a meeting on the evening of 22d March, at Mason's Hall, when it will be pleased to receive any communication from you that you choose to offer upon the subject above named.

Most respectfully your friend and ob't servant,

CHARLES CHENEY, *Secretary.*

With the polite terms of this note I find no fault, but as a specification of charges against me, which I was arraigned to answer, it is certainly very defective. What course had I pursued in relation to Masonry, inconsistent with the character of a worthy Companion? Was I charged with doing any thing inconsistent with the character of an honest man, a good member of society, a professor of religion, and a minister of the gospel? If so, how was the charge made against me? These were in-

quiries, the perusal of this note or Masonic summons was calculated to produce. Before I received this note, however, I was informed by the High Priest of the Chapter, that it had been sent, and I soon after received from him the following :

*Providence, March 13, 1832.*

ELDER H. TATEM :—Mr. Cheney, Secretary of the Providence Royal Arch Chapter, informs me that the notice which I mentioned to you, was forwarded through the post office, about three weeks ago. I presume his letter contained the vote of the Chapter, the purport of which was, as near as I can now recollect, to notify you to appear at the next meeting, which will be on Thursday evening of next week, (if you see fit,) to answer to certain charges preferred against you. Any other information which I can give you, previous to the meeting, will be cheerfully given, that is, so far as it relates to the subject before the Chapter, and as may be necessary to give you a proper view of the charge or charges against you.

B. CRANSTON, *High Priest.*

Here, again, the charges against me, are left to be guessed at. Why were they not committed to writing, that I might be prepared to disprove them if they affected my standing as a member of society or of the church ?

What had I done worthy of stripes or bonds ? In one of these letters, I am permitted to make a communication to the chapter. In the other I am told it is a summons to appear personally and answer to charges. I shall prefer the former course, and will proceed, as I trust, in a spirit of humility, forbearance and Christian charity, to reply to the summons :—

I am surprised that I should be considered a member of your Chapter, or in any way coming under your laws. It is now about seven years, according to the best of my recollection, since I have visited a chapter, and though I have not formally renounced Masonry, yet adopting the law of liberty as I found it laid down in the Constitution of my country, and in the gospel of salvation, I have latterly spoken with freedom of the evils of Freemasonry



and the dangerous character of the oaths and principles it sanctions and inculcates. I have been brought to a full sense of the awful and wicked responsibility of assuming such oaths, to heap upon my conscience, calling God to witness, and taking his holy name in vain to help me to keep and perform obligations which, upon examination, I am entirely convinced no man can live up to, without a frequent violation of his duties as a citizen and an awful departure from his views of his Maker, as a member of a Christian church. I trust, therefore, and believe, that I am not the only one among you who can be charged with not living up to their Masonic oaths, if that is my crime, for I believe many of you to be men who have not only done your duty to society, but adorned the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by an upright walk and conversation. If you have done this, you must have lived in a practical disregard of your Masonic oaths. Let us bless God, my friends, that we have been preserved from using our Masonic oaths in their *genuine* and *literal* meaning, to salve over our consciences when tempted to commit the violation of law and gospel, which they sanction, and enjoin upon us to do, at the call of a wicked and designing brother, or at the urgings of our own depraved and evil propensities. And in view of this, when we see how many men who were once respectable and useful members of society, have through the *influence* of the *same Masonic oaths* that we have sworn to, been guilty of crime; yea, even of bloodshed and murder; of violating the laws of their country, of giving a preference to their Masonic oath over their civil oath, of *aiding man stealers* and *murderers* to escape from justice, and screening them from punishment by refusing to tell the *truth* under oath, or to convict the guilty upon evidence that must convince every honest man; ought we not to 'come out and be separate' from such men, who *still are retained* in lodges and chapters, and with whom, if we adhere

to Masonry, we are compelled to fellowship as with worthy brethren? 'Touch not the unclean thing.'—Ought we not, when convinced, as we now must be, *if we will candidly and prayerfully look at Masonry* (the same Masonry we have solemnly sworn to maintain,) what it has done in New York ;—ought we not, I say, in the language of the apostle—"TO RENOUNCE THE HIDDEN THINGS OF DISHONESTY, NOT WALKING IN CRAFTINESS NOR HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY, BUT BY MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH, COMMENDING OURSELVES TO EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD."—2 Cor. iv. 2.

My friends, if you are the children of God, as I trust many of you are, look at this text, and see if it does not speak directly to your conscience, as it has to mine. In the first place, are not the principles of Masonry *dishonest* which enjoin it upon us to conceal all the crimes or faults of a brother master mason, murder and treason only excepted, and they left at our option? Are they not *dishonest* in their *tendency*, in requiring us to apprise a brother of *all* approaching danger if it is in our power, whether it be lawful or unlawful to do so ; and to obey his summons, to fly to his relief when we see or hear the grand hailing sign of distress, whether it be lawful or unlawful to assist him? Are they not *dishonest* in restraining the sensuality of a master mason *only* so far as the wife, mother, sister or daughter of a master mason is concerned, thus seeming to *imply*, that it is not "unmasonic" to violate the chastity of any other female. Is this honest? Suppose I should preach a sermon, inculcating the virtue of chastity in my congregation *only* so far as the immediate members of the church were concerned, leaving them to do as they pleased out of the church ; what would be thought of me as a teacher of morals and religion? Are not these oaths *dishonest* in requiring us to conceal and never reveal anything relating to Masonry,

though we may be called upon by a legal tribunal to do so? Have not some of you, my friends, discovered lately, that the yoke of Masoury was not easy upon your consciences, nor its burden light? Have you not just been called upon, under a civil oath, to tell the *whole truth*, to reveal what you consider the secrets of Masonry, and have you not found your Masonic oath to *conceal and never reveal*, staring you in the face, and constraining you to obey the laws of Masonry rather than the laws of your country? Am I wrong in this construction of Masonry? In Webb's Monitor, edition of 1818, page 2, of the second part of that book, is found the following among "Rules for the guidance of *Christian* Freemasons." "Be faithful in fulfilling *all* that thou hast engaged as a Freemason; keep always in sight the vows of secrecy: shouldst thou ever violate it, thou wouldst find the torturer in thine own heart, and become the horror of all thy brethren." Here, then, the *Christian* Freemason is enjoined not to 'renounce,' as the apostle exhorts, but to adhere 'to the hidden things of dishonesty,' not 'by manifestation of the *truth* to commend himself to every man's conscience,' but by *concealing the truth* to commend himself to every Mason's conscience!

*Secondly*, to do this; to conceal the *truth* when called upon as a member of a church, as a witness in court, or as a neighbor, to disclose it, must not Masons be continually "walking in craftiness?" Some of you have labored under this evil. Look at the evasions, denials, asseverations and *constructions* resorted to for the last six years for the purpose of concealing what the oaths of Masons actually were. Was not this a *constant* "walking in craftiness?" Is there one of you, my friends, who to avoid an inference from silence, have not, when hard pushed, used some "craftiness" to conceal the terms of your oaths? Happy is that Mason, whose conscience is clear in the sight of God even from the sin of falsehood

in denying the oaths and secrets of Masonry, as he knew them to be faithfully disclosed to the world. *If we* are free from this, my friends, let us bless God for it, who has kept us from falling in the slippery ways wherein we have trodden. Freemasonry would have led us into the pit of sinning against light and our own consciences by denying the truth, instead of making it manifest; for her monitor tells us, "You must be cautious in your words and carriage and motions, so that the most penetrating stranger may not be able to discover what is not proper to be intimated; and the impertinent or ensnaring questions or ignorant discourse of strangers must be prudently *managed* by Freemasons."

These are the rules laid down by Masonry, which directly militate against the injunction of the apostle to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, not by *management* to conceal the truth, but by the "*manifestation* of the truth."

And now, my friends, am I not summoned to answer before you for nothing but a manifestation of the *truth* in the sight of God? Some of you are the very cause of my making this manifestation. I shall speak to you plainly the words of truth and soberness. Though my mind had long been severely tried on my Masonic oaths, and I had felt them a heavy load on my conscience, I had endeavored to avoid openly renouncing the "hidden things of dishonesty," not making the truth manifest to my Christian brethren who would come to me to know if Morgan's disclosures of Masonry were true. While I was in this state of mind, almost persuaded of my duty to God and man in this trial, and yet dreading in the weakness of the flesh to endure reproach, and scorn, and reviling, and the loss of friends, by commending myself to God and my own conscience "by a manifestation of the truth," at this time the grand lodge published a solemn appeal to the great Searcher of hearts that they knew of no oath which

sanctioned the sacrifice of life, as the penalty for disclosing Masonic secrets. The name of the High Priest of your chapter was subscribed to that declaration. Here was to my mind a "walking in craftiness" which shocked my whole soul, for I knew that all my Masonic penalties said death and nothing but death. In reply to that assertion, Elder Ray Potter published the penalty of the Entered Apprentice oath which he had taken, sanctioning the cutting of the throat, &c., for a violation of the oath. He appealed to me for the truth of what he had said. Here my trial was brought to a head. I must either continue "walking in craftiness," or make the truth manifest. It was a severe struggle between the pride of the heart and the duty of a Christian as I viewed it. If ever I was anxious to know my duty, it was in this matter, and when I had done my duty, and made the truth manifest, I felt as if a guilty load had been taken from my conscience.

For what I then published I am no doubt now called to answer, because it is all I ever have published. I was called on by Elder Potter to say if he had stated the penalty of the entered apprentice oath right. I then signed the following certificate, with several others.

*Warwick, July 25, 1834.*

We the undersigned have read a communication signed by Ray Potter in the American of the 19th. From our own personal knowledge, the account therein given of the penalty annexed to the obligation of an entered apprentice mason is correct. Nor have we ever understood or heard any mason express any other meaning of the penalty than that which is plainly expressed by the words of the same, previous to the publication of the address of the grand lodge.

(Signed,)

HENRY TATEM and others.

In this thing I commended myself to my own conscience in the sight of God by a "manifestation of the truth." That I *did* manifest the *truth* instead of "walking in craftiness" to conceal it as some had done who *denied* that such was the penalty, is manifest from the

fact that afterwards the grand lodge and some of you, my friends, stated this very penalty almost verbatim, and swore to it before a committee of the Legislature. Your High Priest did this, and if *I* am guilty of any thing "inconsistent with the character of a worthy companion of the order," *he* also is verily guilty of the same offence. *I* stated the penalty on my own word without an oath. *He* has sworn to the same penalty before a committee of the Legislature. Let *him* then first be tried before you for breaking the Masonic oath "ever to conceal and never reveal!" When I learn what sentence you pass on *him*, I may better determine whether I will acknowledge your right to condemn me for making TRUTH manifest. How is this, my friends? Suppose I had lied to my own soul, as Ananias did, and declared in the sight of God that I *knew of no such penalty!* Would you have summoned me to answer for *that* offence? I think not, for I have heard of no censure cast by Masons on the committee of the grand lodge. Is it then so, my friends, that Masonry does *not* call her members to account for denying the *truth*, but summons them as criminals and expels them for a "manifestation of the truth!"

*Thirdly*—Is not masonry verily guilty, in the words of the Apostle, of "*handling the word of God deceitfully?*" I can here only acknowledge, in deep humility, my own sinfulness for so long continuing a member of an institution which as I now am convinced, thus deceitfully handles the word of God, and makes a mockery of solemn and divine things. I acknowledge my error, and ask your forgiveness, the forgiveness of my Christian brethren, and the forgiveness of my God, for this blindness of mind, and hardness of heart. Verily have I sinned and come short of the glory of God, in continuing so long a member of an institution which handles the word of God deceitfully, and which brings upon the minds of its members a

“strong delusion that they should believe a lie.” 2 Thessalonians ii. 11.

Nay, I have gone farther, and when I judged of masonry by its *members* who were upright men, and not by its principles and the awful tendency of its penalties, as shown in the murder of a citizen in the State of New York, I even spoke favorably of the institution, thereby justly exposing myself, though ignorantly at the time, to the denunciation of the prophet Isaiah, “woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness.” Isaiah v. 20.

I might attempt to excuse myself by saying that I received the oaths, (which I confess with shame I have taken, up to the degree of Knight Templar,) under such circumstances as rendered it impossible to understand them as they really are. That my conscience was quieted, at the time, by assurancy that they would not interfere with my religion or politics, and that I did not *investigate* masonic principles. That I visited the Lodge or Chapter, but a very few times after taking the degrees, and never after the ceremony in the Knight Templar's degree of drinking wine out of a human skull, and imprecating the sins of the owner of that skull upon my own head as the sins of the world were laid upon the head of the Saviour, if I ever violated my masonic oaths; a ceremony which shocked me at the time more than I can express, and which I view as a terrible “handling of the word of God deceitfully,” for who but the blessed Saviour could ever bear the sins of another and make expiation and atonement therefor! I might also say that I was encouraged to go on in taking the degrees from a persuasion given me by professors of religion who were masons, that there were certain parts of the Scripture which were more clearly explained in the several degrees than was possible to be met with in any other way. I was told of the great antiquity of masonry. That great and good men had

belonged to it in all ages, that it was the handmaid of religion, the parent of benevolence and good will to man, and that it would enable me to do more good as a preacher of the gospel. I believed these representations, and went on.

It was about fourteen years ago that I was first initiated into the lodge. Within a few months after, I advanced to the Royal Arch degree, and some time after, I took the degrees of Knighthood as they are called. I well remember the horror of my feelings, when the bandage was taken from my eyes, and I found myself partly naked, with men standing around me, pointing at me the implements of death,\* and a human skull was handed me to drink from, and I was required to repeat words awful in themselves, and which I cannot distinctly recollect, but which I believe to have been the same I find given in the explanation of that ceremony in Bernard's *Light on Masonry*. From *that time* I absented myself from the Lodge and Chapter. My mind was afterwards led by degrees to an examination into Masonry, which I am now satisfied is repugnant to the spirit of the religion of Christ. I seek not to justify myself in thus being led blindfold into the mysteries of Freemasonry. As a minister of Christ, I feel that instead of excusing, I ought to accuse myself in this thing. I would hereafter walk softly all my days. I would say, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united." I would pray earnestly for my brethren who are still held in the bonds of Masonry, that they may be led by the Spirit who can alone lead them into all *truth*, not to *love* but to confess and forsake their sins; for we read, "He that *covereth* his sins shall not prosper; but whoso *confesseth* and *forsaketh* them, shall have mercy;" Prov. xxviii. 13, —that they would resolve as I have done, by the blessing

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\* Drawn swords, or muskets with fixed bayonets.



of God, "to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather *reprove* them,—for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret ;" Eph. v. 11, 12. But now "all things that are reprov'd, are made manifest by the light," and we no longer have the excuse of not understanding the nature and tendency of masonic oaths and ceremonies to harden the heart, and bring the Scriptures into ridicule by wicked and blasphemous ceremonies. "Be ye not therefore partakers with them," my brethren. "Let no man deceive you with vain words" about masonry explaining the Bible, and giving you a key to the white stone with the new name, and being the handmaid of religion. For though before *examining* and reflecting on this subject, "ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light ; walk, (therefore,) as children of the light ;" Eph. v. 8; and no longer walk in the craftiness of masonry.

Time would fail me to explain the whole wherein Masonry stands charged with "handling the word of God deceitfully." In pretending to give the white stone with a new name, wherein a mocking is made of the Scriptures, by handing a stone to the candidate, on which is written the letters, Hiram Tyre, widow's son, sends to King Solomon. In turning into a play the miracles of Moses in the Royal Arch degree, respecting the Tabernacle and the Holy of Holies, with Aaron's rod that budded and was turned into a serpent. Putting the hand into the bosom, which becomes leprous, and again putting it in and restoring it—while at every mock miracle the High Priest and King exclaim, "Holiness to the Lord," which is also written on their caps or mitres!! But above all, the awful exhibition of God appearing to Moses in a burning bush, where a man attempts to act the Deity and addresses the candidate from behind a bush which is made to burn up with the spirits of turpentine, or some other way, and is not consumed. The man behind using the language of

Jehovah, says, "I AM THAT I AM. Approach not, but take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy"!!! The candidate's shoes are taken off. His bandage is taken from his eyes. The bush blazes up, and he is again blinded, and is told, "and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." These are some of the handlings of the word of God deceitfully with which Masonry is guilty. My Christian brethren, who are masons, you know that I speak the words of truth and soberness, and I ask you, is this the way to build up the kingdom of the Redeemer? Ought these things so to be? If we have done wrong in so long winking at these things without proper reflection, let us, now that we are in the light, acknowledge our faults. Let us confess and forsake the ways of evil.

They will tell us, as some of you will, probably, tell me, that we cannot be sincere now in leaving Masonry, because we continued so long in it, and did not discover its evil nature of which we now complain. How long, my brethren, did we continue in an unconverted state as children of darkness, rolling sin as a sweet morsel under our tongues? Was this a reason that we never should have acknowledged the error of our ways, and sought until we found peace in believing? When we exhort sinners to repent, ought it to stop our mouths because they can say to us, you continued in sin for years. You had the Bible, but you saw no wickedness in what you did, you were doing as we are now, and if it was wrong, why did you wait so long before you found it out and repented? We cannot believe you sincere now in condemning sin because you was *yourself* so long a sinner. Would this cause us to cease making truth manifest? Should we now continue to go on in sin, because at one time we did not look upon sin as sinful? For the same reasons let us take shame to ourselves that we have been so long deceived by these masonic "handlings of the word of God deceit-

fully," and let us resolve to do so no more. In all that we have sworn to do or not to do as masons, we have sworn *ignorantly*, not knowing what was meant. Now what says the divine law on this subject, which is better than masonic law:—"And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of *swearing*, and is a witness, whether he hath seen it or known it, *if he do not utter it*, then he shall bear his iniquity." "Or, if a soul *swear*, pronouncing with his lips, to do evil or to do good, whatsoever it shall be that a man shall *pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him, when he knoweth it*, then he shall be guilty in one of these. And it shall be when he shall be guilty in one of these things, *that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing.*" Leviticus v. 1, 4, 5.

With the blessing of God, and in the spirit of Christian meekness, I have endeavored to confess. That I am now constrained to do so more openly than I should have done otherwise, is owing to your call upon me to vindicate my conduct, as I suppose previous to expelling me from the Chapter, from which I have long since withdrawn. I was willing to have left masonry as quietly as my own conscience would have suffered me to do. True, I should speak of it with freedom, and when called upon by my Christian brethren to make manifest the truth, I should no longer walk in craftiness. But I had not designed putting my views on paper, or publishing them to the world. I supposed that every mason must know why another mason now left their Lodges and Chapters; and they must know that it would be an idle attempt to exercise jurisdiction over him, and try to compel him to come again into their secret assemblies. The spell of the oath that bound him to obey all signs and summons is broken, and when masonry has once lost her power over the conscience, she can never regain it. If then, my friends, I have used any expressions herein, that may wound your feelings, it is owing to your own course in calling me to answer before

you, as I probably otherwise never should voluntarily answered so plainly in public. While I condemn and renounce your institution, I say to you, as men, that I do not judge you, but leave you to be judged by Him who alone can judge in all things right. In withdrawing from you, as I have done for some time, I felt no hardness, and I trust I feel toward you now, nothing but the spirit of the Christian, instead of the wicked oath-bound ties of masonry. Personally all that I know among you, have never treated me with unkindness to my face; although I have heard of much personal abuse, uttered in my absence, by members of the fraternity. If you now consider it your duty to slander my motives, to revile and denounce me, to accuse me of perjury, falsehood and baseness, I can only say I shall be more sorry for you than for myself. I shall submit in Christian meekness, I trust, and though reviled, revile not again; and I shall see in this influence of masonry upon the minds of men like you, in leading them to speak evil and unkindly of their neighbors, a still stronger evidence that the principles of such an institution must be bad and dangerous. I shall bless God that I no longer call any man "Master," but that one is my Master, even Christ.

Finally, my friends, if you have considered me, up to this time, a member of your institution, I pray you would consider me so no longer. If you charge me only with a violation of my masonic oaths, here is my answer; and I bless God that the spell of those oaths on my mind is broken. If you charge me with any other offence than this, which men who are not masons will consider derogatory to my character as a man or a Christian, I desire you to let me know of what and by whom I am accused. I boast not, but I fear no open attacks upon my character.

While my humble endeavors have been directed—and I trust will continue to be—to edify and instruct my fellow-beings in the cause of the Redeemer, I could not be

insensible to any thing passing around me which had a tendency to withdraw the mind from his pure and holy precepts, and that would cause unnecessary divisions in society, without doing any good, or which tended in any way to mar the happiness which is essentially derived from moral order and universal good will to man. Such I consider to be the nature and tendency of masonry. It is the cause of many of the dissensions that exist in Church and State; for nobody opposed masonry till masonry set up its power to oppose the laws. Society has found this evil existing. They did not bring it here, and shall they be blamed for any inconvenience that arises in the removing of the evil from the land? Were our forefathers chargeable with the disturbance of peace, the divisions between friends and families and churches and societies which were caused by their rising against the despotism of a foreign government? Was Washington a villain, a *perjured wretch*, for violating his solemn oath of allegiance to the king of Great Britain? Let us, my friends, who have contributed to fasten this evil and useless institution upon our country, come forward and abandon it to its fate. If all good citizens who are convinced that it is useless, and who cannot wish to use it for improper purposes, will leave it, the rest—who make it a means of promoting wicked and evil designs—will not long be able to keep it up, and many of the dissensions that are caused in Church and State, by this society, will be removed.

I have thus spoken of masonry without intending to say aught against the motives of those who still adhere to it, but as I trust, in the spirit of Christian charity, and as became one whose life was devoted to what he conceived to be for the good of his fellow-creatures, and the advancement of their souls' welfare. To my Christian brethren, who are still masons, I would say, that my object in thus addressing them—if I know my own heart—is, the purity of Zion, the glory of God, and the good of man. And

will you not, dear brethren, instead of censuring me for making the truth manifest, adopt yourselves—as I have done—the injunction of the Apostle, “renouncing the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by a manifestation of the truth, commend yourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” Pursue the gospel course, and ease a thousand aching hearts. Suffer me to entreat you by the mercies of God, for the peace of Jerusalem, and the relief of your own consciences, to investigate, reflect and pray that God may direct you to those things which make for peace and holiness; to do your duty to yourselves, your brethren, and the cause of the blessed Redeemer.

Yours respectfully,

HENRY TATEM.

Warwick, March 22, 1832.

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#### REPLY OF HON. RICHARD RUSH

*To Henry L. McConnell, William W. Irvin and George G. Barclay, Committee of the Young Men’s Antimasonic Convention of the State of Pennsylvania, at Harrisburg.*

Sydenham, (near Philadelphia,) August 10, 1833.

**GENTLEMEN :—**Your letter from Harrisburg of the 25th March, conveying to me the unanimous resolution of the Antimasonic State Committee of Young Men, in which that body unite my name in gratifying commendation with Mr. Adams’s, in reference to Antimasonry, was duly received; and I beg you to believe that the delay in its acknowledgment has arisen from no insensibility to the honor done me by the terms of the resolution, or your kind manner of imparting it; and least of all from any diminution of zeal in the principles and objects of our cause. Your letter first reached me in the city of

Washington, where I had gone on private business ; soon after which I changed my residence from the county of York, to the place whence I now date—circumstances, with the mention of which I would not trouble you, were it not that they created, in conjunction with others, an interruption to the regularity of my correspondence, all which I pray you to accept as my apology for seeming neglect. The resolution being before the public, I have taken the liberty of giving my answer in the newspaper, as well as the liberty of publishing your letter, lapse of time having in all probability separated you as a committee from the place whence you wrote, leaving me at some loss at the present moment where to send my answer with the hope of its reaching you with equal convenience.

How, gentlemen, can my zeal in Antimasonry abate ? I take from one of the letters of William Penn, the great founder of this Commonwealth, the following sentence : "*that a government is free to the people under it, when they are party to the laws, and when the laws govern.*" This is a fine axiom in a republic, expressed with clearness and brevity. But who can say that the laws govern in this republic while Masonry exists ? True, that in a thousand cases occurring all around us, the administration of law goes fairly on, and we never hear of Masonry obstructing it, or any thing about Masonry ; why, then, it may be asked, any alarm about it. But what does this prove more than that it is harmless, as long as its belligerent spirit is not called out ; but excite that spirit, tell the secrets of the institution, *bring it, by any means, into conflict with the laws*, and who that has examined the case of Morgan but must see that it is stronger than the laws. Hence Antimasonry. It avers that the laws cannot be executed, when Masonry wills that they shall not be. It has beheld a systematic conspiracy by Masons against the life of a citizen, and that citizen murdered,

whilst the murderers, though well known to full fifty or more of the brotherhood, were screened by its power, despite the whole power of the judiciary, exerted for six years, to get the better of it. What a victory was this ; how novel, how awakening.

The champions of the Lodge cry out **PERSECUTION**. They say that any other society or corporation would, from the natural *esprit de corps*, protect a member in the same manner ; that it is only a common case ; that moreover it was a perversion of true masonry to shed blood, and in all other ways prostrate and deride the laws. So they talk, and say besides, that every good thing may be abused, and that the innocent ought not to suffer for the guilty ; forgetting that it was the illegal oaths of the institution that dictated the act mentioned ; forgetting the abundant proof we have, that whilst intelligent and good masons interpret the oaths innocently, others read, understand and act upon them as their words import. Show us any other society or corporation bound together by similar oaths, with the train of imprecations and penalties annexed, and meditating all their purposes of revenge in secret, and then the premises being the same the conclusion will be the same ; but until this is done, it is a calumny upon other societies to confound them with one the very root of whose existence and source of whose power, are laid in these oaths. Thus, whilst we admit that it has an orbit for charitable deeds, which good masons perform, its field for nefarious ones is equally wide, and stands equally justified to the consciences of men who choose to construe the words in which they are made to swear, and swear, and swear again, "*and thrice again to make up nine,*" as all words in all languages are usually construed ; that is, according to their most obvious meaning.

Other champions ask upon what part of our constitution *Antimasonry* is based, and how you are to carry it



to the polls? as if a stronger principle of political organization can be conceived under a government of laws, than a determination to root out a brotherhood that overthrows them. If Great Britain, under what she calls her rights of allegiance, were now to impress one single American and hold him in captivity, would it not rouse the whole country against her, and become, if she refused us justice, a political rallying point? Would those who defended or excused her conduct, or even refused to take part against her, would any such persons have the least chance of being voted into any political office? And why should it fare better with Masonry? Masons under their allegiance to the Lodge, seize a citizen and murder him. Acting under obligations which they believe to be imposed by their oaths, they refuse to give testimony against each other, or utter a syllable against masons or masonry; whilst the Lodge, instead of bringing its power and just resentments to bear upon the murderers, tries by its influence and funds to get them off, reserving its resentments for that portion of the community who pursue them. If to extirpate such an institution by voting it down, when it is found that nothing else will overcome the force of its oaths, be not a sufficient ground of political organization; then is not impressment, nor even nullification. Nor was the claim of Britain to tyrannize over our fathers, an adequate ground of political organization, for Masonry is a tyrant as long as its oaths raise its impure votaries above the law.

I repeat, then, that my omission to answer your very obliging and gratifying communication with more promptitude, must be ascribed to any other reason than diminished zeal for antimasonry. On the contrary, my zeal in it increases. The more I examine it, the deeper do its foundations appear to be laid in principles of justice, and obligations of public duty. I publicly expressed myself in its favor more than two years ago.

I thought, at that time, that the conspiracy against Morgan, by masons, and his immolation, was the most diabolical crime, all its circumstances considered, that our country had ever witnessed. I saw justice baffled in her pursuit. I saw masonry, by its oaths, effectually triumph over judges and juries, over government and law, over executive proclamations and legislative ordinances, over all the efforts and power of society—the main province of which is, to protect the weak against the strong. When, at that day, I also heard that some of the participators in this matchless deed of terror and death, although not the actual murderers, were permitted, *after solemn conviction by juries of the country*, to resume their seats in the lodge, I could not, did not, believe it. Direct as must be the tendency of the terms in which masonic oaths are couched, as of many of the ceremonies of the institution, to weaken the sense of public decorum, and that of self dignity in the individual man, I did not believe that these feelings could yet be so totally extinct in any Lodge, and I wrote to New York to ascertain the fact. It proved to be literally true. My zeal then must necessarily increase in our cause, when I find that the perpetrators of the crime have, through the persevering devices of bad masons, which the oaths and spirit of the institution put into their hearts, absolutely passed away unpunished. I now regard as a perpetual outrage in the whole corporate body, every new day of its existence, and much more every year, since the blood of a citizen, *butchered through its oaths*, is unatoned for. The seal is put to the irreparable mischief it has done. It now stands irretrievably condemned. Self-dissolution it owes to the whole American people for having cut off one of their number, and contrition to itself. Instead of the one or the other, it remains audacious and hardened, contending against the great community it has so wronged. It continues its meetings; continues its barba-

rous emblems, nomenclature and publications ; even its nocturnal deliberations, under guard of the drawn sword of its tyler, as if to give society a new threat ; continues its parades in open day. In all this there is that kind of destitution of shame, with which the Roman statesman and orator, roused by the fires of incensed eloquence, branded Cataline on his appearing in public, when all Rome knew of his guilt. Let me add to this record of cool, exulting obduracy, something to crown it all ; the convicts continue, up to this hour, to enjoy the fellowship and bask in the confidence of the Lodge !

In this new hemisphere, there are at work moral and political elements that are to exert an influence on mankind, and which, therefore, demand the whole attention of those who reflect. The very contest against masonry is one of these. It may become those who view this contest as I do, namely, as of exceeding magnitude, to remark, that in our great, growing, and, in so many respects virtuous, country, we are falling into an alarming stupor under the commission of murders. The causes, it behoves us anxiously to probe. None should be overlooked, near or remote. Here I must aid in bringing to public light, an important but painful fact. I wish that it had no foundation, but truth ought not to be kept out of sight, and the first step towards removing national as individual causes of reproach, is to be conscious of and acknowledge them. The Rev. Dr. Cathcart, of York, a learned and enlightened clergyman, kept an account of all the murders in the United States in 1831, and found that they amounted, as far as he could ascertain, to *one hundred and nine*. The fear is that this list fell below, rather than exceeded the truth, as he put down none of which he had not an account. Others may have been committed that escaped him ; but his aggregate, which I must add did not include those of the Southampton insurrection, or the individuals killed in the public affray in

Rhode Island, probably exceeds the whole number of murders in both France and England for that year. The number in the latter country for *seven* years, ending with 1830, appears by their parliamentary returns, to have been *one hundred and three*, or about *fifteen* for each year. What American, solicitous for the reputation of his country, but must feel deeply at a difference so amazing; however, the sum total of all other offences may place those in our land at a lower point in the comparison. I do not charge Masonry with swelling up this appalling amount of murders, because it murdered Morgan; but I say unequivocally, and I say it careless of fresh abuse, that if any one thing could tend more than another to lessen the salutary horror with which that highest of crimes ought ever to be regarded in every community, it was the behavior of our *presses* under the murder of Morgan. How seldom did they touch upon it, how gently! How it escaped even *any* notice from some, for entire months! How fruitful a topic was it of irony and jeers to others! Who, with pretensions to candor and a particle of recollection, can gainsay this; and who but sees in it all, the influence of masonry?

What else can explain such a moral phenomenon? What else can explain the sudden closing up of the tongue, and honest indignation of the heart, under that most remarkable occurrence? The institution has, therefore, this foul sin at its door. It prostrated the moral sense, as well as the laws; it stifled indignation against murder, strove to eradicate conscience, as well as outrage justice. It worked with the arms of a strong man, and cunningly as boldly, to debauch the public mind; to blunt public sensibility to all the circumstances of the enormity. Here was a new element foisted into the national feeling by masonry, and as portentous as new. The purpose was fruitful of future crime, and if such has been the result, it has done no more than follow the

purpose. Masonic presses made light of the deep and terrible atrocity of the act. With these it was a mere every day affair ; some of them palliated, almost justified it, significantly hinting that the fellow had got his deserts—his base neck wrung off—for telling secrets, that was all. Other presses, under impending terrors to their subscription list, would not, dared not, speak out with the energy, and go on with the perseverance, that so frightful a public crime demanded. They were passive, timid, in effect muzzled. They could see nothing uncommon in a vast plot by a ferocious band, linked together by the most extraordinary oaths ever taken by man, oaths sanctioned by an extensive and potent brotherhood—nothing in dragging a man from his family and home—transporting him a hundred miles through a populous State, under an impudent cavalcade—then confining him in a dungeon—then murdering him. They saw nothing uncommon in all this ; no, there was no occasion to make a noise about it—it was a mysterious affair, beyond the usual province of newspapers—to be cautiously mentioned, perhaps, in a paragraph or so ; but nothing more !

I here repeat the accusation, I re-asseverate the truth, the press failed in its duty from fear ; or, through the opiates of masonry, it fell into a senseless lethargy. For, let it be remembered, that this recreant shrinking, or disreputable torpor, *was prior to the existence of the anti-masonic party, or the least intention of forming one.* It cannot, therefore, be ascribed to hatred of that party and its objects. There were exceptions, I know, to this shameful dereliction ; but they were as few as honorable. The general press, following the impulse given by the lodge, opened chiefly upon those who formed the array against the banditti ; but where was its true patriotism, where its rightful chivalry, that ought to have arraigned the guilty monster ? that ought to have confronted

masonry ; told it to its face, that its own oaths caused the murder ? There was nothing of this, or next to nothing ; and antimasonic presses were first set up *exclusively* for the purpose of giving circulation among the people to the astounding facts of that whole transaction, from the publication of which other presses of the country silently hung back, or, when called upon, openly refused. The former were thence called **INDEPENDENT PRESSES** ; a proud appellation, which they strictly merited. Let the other presses turn to their conduct in Avery's case, and blush. How quick, how universal their outcry then ! Swift's commonwealth of dogs, (I claim your pardon, gentlemen, for the illustration, but I can think of no better,) never congregated and went off with more eagerness, all in a pack. All manner of accounts of that offence were given, and in all manner of ways—private letters, rumors, and I know not what ; special reporters were sent from the large towns—the gentlemen of the press, you know, are always accommodated—and to Rhode Island they posted as if "*racing and chasing o'er Canoby Lea ;*" every jot and tittle of the trial was put into type, with the speed of lightning, when masonry held not up the finger of caution, or rod of rebuke ; for will it be credited, that all this sensibility under the shedding of blood, this daily serving up of "further particulars"—this simultaneous zeal and uproar among the "*public sentinels*"—came from presses, in not one out of ten of whose columns, I venture to affirm, will any thing be found of the Morgan trials at Lockport, unless indeed a meagre paragraph, or sneering jest ! The contrast of such conduct can hardly be dwelt upon with composure of face, even in the midst of its tragic ingredients. Could a Moliere appear among us, masonry and its knights-errant, whether true liege men, or those auxiliaries who declare they are no masons, but will not persecute the lodge, would be embalmed for the amusement of

every body ; even masons themselves, who relish a dramatic scene.

I fear that I run a risk of fatiguing you by writing only of things with which you are familiar. The proceedings of the Convention that you represent, abundantly attest how well you understand the principles, facts and objects of our cause. But your letter has furnished me with the occasion of reviewing some of them, now that they have passed, in some sort, into history ; for which I presume to hope I shall have your excuse. The brief summary I have called up, comprises, in my mind, the ground of justification for making antimasonry political. That against which it wars, has shown its mastery over the law, and its tyranny over the press. The former involves the highest considerations of government and public administration. It goes to the very foundation, existence and safety of civil society, and therefore affects all politics. Hooker, personifying law, eloquently exclaims, "her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world ; every thing on earth does her homage, the highest as not beyond her control, the least as claiming her protection." Masonry has overset this primordial system. She has dethroned this image of God upon earth. To reinstate it over so insolent a victor, we must have a political organization. There is no other way of assaulting, there is no other hope of vanquishing, there need be no other dream of humbling such a foe. It fights with desperation. It murdered Morgan by force of its oaths ; it beat down the law by force of its oaths ; and, like any other murderer on trial for life, it will resort to every means that these same oaths can engender, to escape the doom it deserves. It is itself an organization the most tremendous, and for political as well as other purposes, when it may see fit to aim at them, though this, as many things besides, be kept out of its written code. It is, therefore, incontestibly proper, to attack it *politically*. It vehemently protests

against this course; says that it is disfranchised, degraded; but it refuses to repeal its own illegal oaths that murdered a citizen and degraded the laws! It is callous to this kind of degradation, affecting the whole community, but alive to any that may touch itself. It is selfish and intolerant; charitable at one time; boastful, presumptuous, destructive, at others. Proscriptive it must be, on some occasions, through the unavoidable tendency of its obligations. Laud it, or be silent, and it is meek; raise but a whisper against it, and it grows fierce, though raising its own hand against human life, and trampling the laws under its feet.

If to rescue the law from the usurpation of such a brotherhood, be a primary ground of political organization, to disengage the press from its shackles stands next; the press, so interwoven with all political operations, but which dares not give the rightful, honest utterance to its real opinions and feelings when it remembers the lash of the lodge, in the dangers to its subscription list.

These, then, are the grounds on which I would have antimasonry political; and, I frankly own, that they are the *only* ones. Other and broad objections are made to the institution, which I leave to the discussion of other pens; the two on which I stand—the law and the press—being ample. Its religion or irreligion, on which I pass no judgment, has, in my humble opinion, nothing to do, under our system, with politics; and as to its mummeries, if these surpassed, as in sober certainty they equal, any of which the Landers give us an account in Africa, Masons have a full right, whilst they do not injure others, to practice them. Few men of a high order of intellect or taste in any country, have much to do with the institution practically, however the shield of such names, given in most instances when young, may be held up as props in a season of alarm from popular scrutiny. This is the case in the United States. Men of this stamp among us,



who have been at the pains of examining and understanding the existing state of the institution, and the crimes of which its oaths have been the parent, come almost invariably to the conclusion that it ought to go down. But it is notorious, that neither the counsels nor the spirit of such men govern in the lodge.

I cannot conclude my letter without offering a felicitation on the progress of our cause. Among the judicious and excellent documents which your Convention sent forth, none afforded me more satisfaction than the report of the committee appointed to devise the best means of diffusing information on the subject of secret societies. This is the true way to promote antimasonry, and render it political. Unless it be political, it is absolutely nothing. Let the people understand the real character of the lodge, with its late deeds, and they will be sure to vote it down. This they are coming to do more and more, notwithstanding the fears that still hold in chains, or the infatuation that still steep in drowsiness, nearly all the same presses that deserted their posts when Morgan was butchered. In our own State, I see, with pleasure, that the independent presses are increasing in power and circulation. I see an evident increase of their numbers in other places.

In New York, looking to the interior, all is firm; nor will that great Commonwealth, whose intelligence and spirit first dared the institution to political battle, justly provoked by the stupendous outrage within her jurisdiction, discontinue the noble fight. As she led the way, let her's be the glory of the first great triumph, unless we in Pennsylvania should be foremost in that glory. In Massachusetts we gain strength decidedly. Within her ancient borders, there are giants in intellect and Fenelons in virtue, now ranged upon our side, who have illustrated our principles, and shown the public dangers from Masonic oaths and penalties, with a depth of political philosophy and a power of general argument, rarely equalled,

and never surpassed. Never before have the essential vices of the institution been so laid bare by genius, knowledge and eloquence; sustained by an elevated fearlessness. Masonry does not notice these discussions, because unable to cope with them. The lodge is mighty to hush up murder, and wrench from the tribunals the sceptre of the laws; but here its might ends. It has not the might of reason or mind. It *skulks* from the club of the intellectual Hercules of the north, who had dared it to the field, who has shivered its sophisms, and exposed to alternate reprobation and derision its fooleries, and the unmitigated horror of its recent deeds. His pieces are unanswered, because unanswerable. They are even unpublished almost totally, especially in the large cities, through the inveterate sleepiness or still unmanly fears of the same "*public sentinels*," that give instant circulation to the other masterly productions from the same source; a new and emphatic confirmation of the manner in which they are hoodwinked by the cunning, or kept down by the despotism of the lodge. In Vermont and Rhode Island, the flag of antimasonry may almost be said to wave in ascendancy; and if these are small communities, so did the little Hanse towns, and Holland, and the small states of Italy, set the first examples of public liberty in another hemisphere. Those who have enlisted under this flag, are, I rejoice to say it, seen to be persevering, resolute, inflexible; the noble earnest of success.

The indications to which I have adverted, with others in other parts of the Union, give assurance that our cause towers upward from its adamantine base. Go on, then, gentlemen; be ardent, be untiring. Do not abuse Masons personally, as they do you, in the absence of arguments; but do not spare the bloody institution. Do not fear to impute the highest of all crimes, and the most formidable of dangers to the body politic and social, to the *necessary* operation upon weak or wicked minds of its vile, illegal,

and terrific oaths. Our cause must triumph. Its foundations are of inconceivable breadth, dignity and duration. It claims precedence over all others; therefore let us not mix it up with others. Let us scorn to be tributary to any other political organization or party in the nation. Ours is no secondary place. We shall betray the great trust we have in hand, if ever, for an instant, we consider it so. Representing the sovereign power of the laws, in which the people's majesty in every stage of civilized existence is mainly seen where freedom is known, let us take that lead to which such a cause is foredoomed. Already do we see other parties splitting into fragments, because at fault about their principles, or wrangling about their leaders. Not so ours; not so the party of the laws. Not so the party that writes on its banner the principle that holds all society together, and which, although it demands other requisites in those which it trusts politically, will trust none who do not avow political anti-masonry. Even now this great party is more predominant in this State, than any of the fragments or divisions of other parties; and by the mere power of truth, unaided by patronage, incapable of intrigue, it is making its way to superiority over all. The streams that join it, must flow in as to a conquering river, and form part of it.

Returning you my grateful thanks for the terms in which you communicated to me the resolution of the Convention, I beg you to believe me, gentlemen, with great respect, your obedient servant and fellow citizen,

RICHARD RUSH.

## LETTER OF HON. RICHARD RUSH

*To James Moorehead, Secretary of the Senatorial Convention at Meadville, Pennsylvania, August 28, 1833.*

Sydenham, (near Philadelphia,) Sept. 11, 1833.

DEAR SIR:—Your letter of the 30th of August, transmitting me a copy of the resolution of the convention at Meadville, assembled for that senatorial district on the 28th of the same month, in which favorable mention is made of my name in connection with the cause of Antimasonry, reached me a few days ago ; and I beg to return my respectful thanks to that body for its good opinion ; nor am I less sensible to the very cordial manner in which you have had the goodness to impart it to me.

It is with the greatest pleasure I perceive, in common with our Antimasonic friends every where, that not merely the reasonableness, but absolute necessity of political Antimasonry is becoming more and more apparent to all who dispassionately examine the grounds of it. The cunning of masonry seemed for a while to have partially succeeded in raising against political Antimasonry the cry of illiberality—even of fanaticism. It saw that the institution, with the whole foundation of illegal oaths on which it is built, could never be overset except at the polls ; and therefore it went industriously to work to denounce the only formidable assailant it ever yet met with, and towards making converts in this work of denunciation. But it has failed of its purpose. The battle indeed continues to rage ; with the fullest assurance however of final victory on the side of that portion of the people who have determined not to bow their necks to the yoke of this institution. Masonry, as its champions all knew, was precisely what one of its chosen delineators described it to be a year or two before the murder of Morgan, viz., an institution comprising “men of rank, wealth, office, and talents, in power and out of

power, in almost every place where power is of importance, and among other classes, large numbers of effective men united together and capable of being directed by the efforts of others, and with means of knowing one another, and co-operating in the dark, in the legislative hall, on the bench, in every gathering of men of business, in every party of pleasure, in every enterprise of government, in peace and war, and in one place as well as another."

This is only part of his impressive description, and true enough it all was. How preposterous, that such a body should complain of a political combination against it, seeing that by the very principle of its existence, it can combine, and does combine, against the community at large, whenever it thinks fit to accomplish a political, or any other end! The people first effectively discovered its cloven foot in Morgan's case. Being armed with full proof from all the circumstances of that memorable combination, of the power of the Lodge to trample upon the laws by force of its illegal oaths, they have resolved to put down such a power by their legal rights of suffrage. Tyranny has always had a *cant* of its own. In particular it is prone to trumpet its own good deeds and complain of encroachment upon its rights. An ancient historian has remarked that if one only looked at the preamble to the proscriptions during the dictatorships and triumvirate in Rome, he would almost imagine that nothing could be more just than those proscriptions. The preambles were sure to contain most specious reasons, most moral arguments. So it has been with masonry, if we look to the pleas it has set up for itself since it has been put upon its trial at the polls; that is, when it has entered the field of engagement at all, which has not been often, as it generally satisfies itself with abuse. Yet the power of its oath to commit murder and baffle justice, to tyrannize over the law, and hold in degrading vassalage the press throughout our country, equals any tyranny known to the days of

Rome, and transcends any ever practised over our fathers by George the Third.

Happily, hundreds of thousands of the freemen of this republic have already taken up arms against this tyrant of our day, and the indications seem clear, that as further investigation continues to shed light upon the great principle of the contest, the rally in behalf of freedom will grow strong enough to prostrate the tyrant in the dust. Then, not sooner, will some little atonement be made to the great body corporate of the American people for the loss of one of its members, butchered through masonry. Then, not sooner, will our nation achieve a second independence; inasmuch as a tyrant that rides over the judicial tribunals and commits, stalking in the dark, aggressions the most insulting and frightful upon society, is even worse than one who openly sits with a crown upon his head; for the latter being seen, may be the more easily stripped of the instruments of his tyranny. Masonry has been charitable, and may be now; but prince Potocky used to say, that the *magnanimity* of Catharine and the *moderation* of the king of Prussia, made him detest both magnanimity and moderation. So masonry would bring charity itself into disrepute, if any thing could, since the injunctions to it come from the same polluted source that engenders deeds the most abominable in the minds of weak or ill-disposed men; who interpret in a manner to justify such deeds, the barbarous, the lawless and the shameful oaths in which their masonic obligations are couched.

I beg to reciprocate assurances of the friendly respect with which I am, dear sir, yours, &c.

RICHARD RUSH.

BENEDICT ARNOLD A FREEMASON, AND HIS ESCAPE CAUSED  
BY FREEMASONRY.

It was asserted in the Boston Evening Transcript of May 14th, 1846, on the authority of Past Grand Master, R. G. Scott, of Virginia, that fifty at least of those who signed the Declaration of Independence were Freemasons, and that every Major General, of the revolutionary army was a member of that fraternity save one, and that one was Benedict Arnold. And it is asserted by another masonic authority, that fifty-two of the fifty-six signers were Masons.

Although Freemasonry was fashionable in 1776, the disproportion in the latter declaration seems very improbable; and at this late period, (1849,) for the lack of evidence, it cannot well be controverted. It is obvious that Freemasonry wishes to get rid of Arnold, and to have it believed, that if he had been a Freemason, he would not have been a traitor. And it has expressly declared that "in the treason of Arnold, never mingled Freemasonry." Of the Major Generals of the revolutionary army, in our limited sphere, we find that Gen. Lincoln of Hingham was a Freemason; no evidence can be obtained that Gen. Heath of Roxbury was one; that Gen. Ward of Shrewsbury had *never* been one of the order, see H. D. Ward's Antimasonic Review, Vol. 1, No. 10, p. 295. This last case sufficiently disproves the declaration about Major Generals. And it is well to recollect here, that Aaron Burr was a Major General, and since the revolution became a traitor to his country, and in his treasonable correspondence, *made use of the Royal Arch Cypher*, proving that Freemasonry does not purify.

Now we say that ARNOLD WAS A FREEMASON, and that his treason did "mingle with Freemasonry." Here is the evidence, taken from the Hartford [Conn.] Times of

December 18, 1841, which copied it from the New Haven Herald, which says, "An old book has accidentally fallen into our possession, which proves to be the *Records of a Masonic Lodge*, held in this city, the first entry in which is the following :

"At a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, held at the Fountain Inn in New Haven, 18th April, 1765,

Present—R. W. NATHAN WHITING, Master.

GEORGE MILES, S. W.

ANDREW BURR, J. W.

Br. JOHN HOTCHKISS, Treas.

Br. TIMOTHY JONES, Sec'y.

Br. ROBERT BROWN.

Br. BUCKMINSTER BRINTNALL.

Br. BENEDICT ARNOLD, V. B.

Br. CHRISTOPHER KILLEY.

Br. BENEDICT ARNOLD is, by R. W. proposed to be made a member of the R. W. Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons—accordingly was ballotted for and accepted, and is accordingly a member.

Expenses for the evening, £1 0 0."

The fact being established that Arnold was a Freemason, it leads us to reflect and examine how much our National Independence was endangered by Freemasonry. Instead of its disowning and ridding itself of any connection with Arnold, it seems to be impossible not to believe that it was the cause and instrument of his escape.

Marshall, in his Life of Washington, says : "André, the prisoner, requested Jameson to inform his commanding officer Arnold, that Anderson was taken." Sparks, in his Life of Washington, says : "Jameson examined the papers, and *knew them to be in the hand-writing of Arnold*, and that he was amazed and bewildered."

His conduct was so strange, there seems to be no other way to account for it, but to some unseen influence, and that, we think, since the disclosures of Freemasonry by



William Morgan, has become visible. The source and cause of this apparent bewilderment were his masonic oath, "*to apprise a brother of all approaching danger.*" Masonry and his country were the conflicting agencies, and he chose to be governed by the former. Although seemingly perplexed by this sudden position, Jameson's mind was not unhinged. "There was method in his madness." We see a directness of purpose, at all events to save Arnold, and perhaps André. Sparks, in his "*Life and Treason of Benedict Arnold,*" says, Jameson committed to the charge of Lieutenant Allen and a guard, the prisoner, John Anderson, to be delivered to Arnold, and a letter describing the several kind of papers found under his stockings; adding also, that the *papers were of a dangerous tendency, and that he had sent them to Gen. Washington.* What could be plainer than this addition, to warn Arnold of his danger?

Major Tallmadge, next officer in command under Jameson, had been absent during the day, and on his return was informed by Jameson of what had taken place. He was astonished, and expressed his suspicions of Arnold, "offering to take on himself the entire responsibility of proceeding upon that ground." Jameson would consent to nothing implying distrust of Arnold. He yielded, however, after much expostulation from Major Tallmadge to have the prisoner brought back, but *persisted in sending the letter to Arnold.*

At the commencement of the treason, it was the express wish of Arnold that André should be Sir Henry Clinton's agent with whom to make the arrangements. Thence it may be inferred that they were known to each other as members of the fraternity, and also that Jameson intended André's liberation. Probably from the lively suspicions and remonstrances of Major Tallmadge, he feared a too great exposure to public censure in permitting both the traitor and the prisoner to escape, therefore per-

mitted the recall of the latter. But whether André was a Freemason or not, it affects not the argument for the agency of Freemasonry.

After this we see and hear nothing further of Jameson. He not having been tried by a Court Martial, will it be presumptuous to suppose his excuse to Washington, was his masonic obligation to Arnold? For the last thirty years of his life, Washington became indifferent to Freemasonry, and may not this implication of it, be one moving cause of the injunction in his farewell address, to avoid certain "*combinations and associations*."

We have no positive evidence that Jameson was a Freemason, and have sought for none. His conduct, in this case, is sufficient. It conformed precisely to masonic obligations.

ONE OF THE SUFFOLK COMMITTEE OF 1829.

*Henry Sasser*

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#### HON. EDWARD EVERETT'S OPINION OF SECRET SOCIETIES.

"The Supremacy of the Laws," is the fundamental principle of civil society. "The allegiance due to his country is the highest human obligation" of all men who enter into civil society; and I conceive the Institution of Freemasonry, in its tendency, to be at war with both these principles. With respect to this Institution, I came to the conclusion, and expressed it repeatedly in public, several years before the present controversy arose, that its pretensions to antiquity are unfounded. It is probably the growth of the last century and a half. It has frequently been admitted to me, by respectable members of the Society, that it is useless; and that as such it had better be abolished. Its only avowed objects—charity and knowledge—can be much better promoted by public associations. If it be useless, it must be worse than use-

less, because it occasions a waste of all the time, attention, and money—necessary to keep up its organization. The titular and ceremonial parts of it, as displayed before the public, appear to me strangely at variance with good taste, particularly in a republican country.

But the great objections to the Institution lie much deeper. All secret societies are dangerous, in proportion to the extent of their organization, and the number of their members. A secret society, so widely diffused and connected as this, puts a vast power, capable of the most dangerous abuse, into hands irresponsible to the public. The secret ceremonies and rites, as they have been disclosed, appear to me, on many grounds, highly objectionable ; and the oaths and obligations are open to the most weighty exceptions, on the score of religion, morals, and good sense. I am aware that some of these oaths must have been taken by many great and good men. That does not alter their character. And as I cannot believe, that they could have stood a day, before the face of public sentiment, had they been openly administered and received, it is not the least objection to the Institution, that as a secret society, whose rites and ceremonies must be substantially unknown beforehand, great and good men have been surprised into giving it a seeming sanction.

The force of these objections is immeasurably increased by the fact, that within a few years, the Institution has been actually made the instrument of the greatest (the greatest because irreparable) evil, which can be inflicted on society, the destruction of the life of a citizen ; followed up by systematic and successful attempts to screen the murderers, in defiance of the most rigorous efforts, on the part of the tribunals, to bring them to justice.

July 15, 1833.

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