

# THE MASONIC REVIEW.

VOL. XX.

CINCINNATI, JANUARY, 1859.

No. 4.

## MASONIC JURISPRUDENCE.

BY THE EDITOR.

WE have seen that a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry must neither be an atheist nor an irreligious libertine; and that the latter is one who does not believe in revealed religion, or in the obligatory nature of those moral precepts and injunctions which are found in the Holy Scriptures: in other words, one who does not receive the Holy Scriptures—the great Light in Masonry—as a Revelation from God. It is entirely conclusive to the mind of the writer that a belief in the divine authenticity and supreme authority of the Bible is *required* of every one who would become a Mason, and that to initiate a man who ignores that Book is to violate the fundamental principles of the Order, and to pour contempt upon every thing that is deemed sacred and valuable in Masonry. The entire Masonic structure, with all of historical value connected with it—either for doctrine, precept, ritual, or usage—rests upon the Bible as its foundation, and from that source alone derives its sanction and authority. If the foundation be a fiction—a phantom—a creature of the imagination purely, or if it be the product of priest-craft—the well-devised scheme of some artful contriver, then the whole superstructure which has been raised upon it with so much care and at the expence of so much labor, must crumble into fragments or dissolve in air, and—

“ Like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind.”

When a man is initiated into the mysteries of Masonry, certain facts are communicated to him, which he is expected to believe are true. Such, for instance as that there was, some three thousand years ago, on Mount Moriah, in the land of Palestine, a Temple erected by Solomon, King of Israel, of unequalled splendor and magnificence. That this house was built by the express command of

VOL. XX.—13.

excuse; especially as, at the present time, extraordinary efforts are being made, by men claiming to be wondrously learned and skillful in Masonry, to remove this corner stone of the Order. To please the atheistical and free-thinking, these mistaken brethren would rob our Temple of its light and glory; while they would stretch its fancied "universality" until it embraced the most repulsive, degraded and abominable of human kind!

It is true, that Masonry does *not* ask whether the candidate for its mysteries is a Jew or Christian; or to what particular sect or church he may belong, if any; or in what country or clime he had his birth: but it *does* ask, and *require*, that he be no atheist nor irreligious libertine; that he recognize and obey the moral law; that the Book which contains it is the gift of God; that he be a good man and true—a reverent, devout, praying man: and how he can be all this and yet believe the Bible to be a fiction, is more than we can comprehend. It would require a much greater credulity to believe in the purity and integrity of one who denies the truth of the Scriptures, than to believe in *their* claims to a divine origin! We must leave the question, however, as our plan does not comprehend an extended dissertation on each particular principle in masonic jurisprudence.

---

REV. OBADIAH JENNINGS, D. D.,

AN AFFILIATED MEMBER OF LODGE, NO. 54, OF WASHINGTON, PA.

---

BY M. P. ALFRED CREIGH, GRAND MASTER G. C. R. AND S. M.

O Life, thy name is happiness and hope,  
Thy days are bright, thy flowers are sweet,  
And pleasure the condition of thy gift.

TUPPER.

On the 25th day of June, 1792, A. L. 5792, the R. W. Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania granted a charter to the constitutional number of brethren to establish in the town of Washington, Washington county, Pennsylvania, a Masonic Lodge, which was numbered 54. This Lodge continued in operation, diffusing the sublime principles of our institution and performing acts of pure benevolence and charity until an *alarm* was given at the door of the Lodge—where the Brethren were peaceably assembled *at work*—and the thrilling intelligence was communicated that the representatives of the people in Congress assembled, had declared war against Great Britain. The members of 54, regarding their obligations to be true to the government of the country in which they reside, for a season bid farewell to the masonic altar—

their firesides and their friends, and fought nobly in defence of the great principles for which our country contended. Our army was triumphant, and the Star Spangled banner floated on high respected by all nations—while the Craftsmen repaired to the temple, to build up her walls, practice charity and disseminate her principles. By these and other influences, Lodge 164 was brought into existence, and is justly the pride of her members—for the influence she holds in this masonic jurisdiction.

But who were the prominent members of 54? On the long record of illustrious names, I point out the names of Baird, Hoge, Acheson, Keppelle, Campbell, Sheaffer, Reed, Wilson, Pentecost, Jennings, Ashbrook, and an innumerable host of others, who mostly live, by their descendents being directly connected with Lodge 164. If Lodge 54, could give birth to so noble a daughter as 164, why should not our masonic fathers have upon the roll of 164, “sons worthy of their sires.” From the list of members of 54, I have selected *one*, whom I am confident your readers will delight to honor, as a man, a mason and a Christian. I refer to

BRO., REV. OBADIAH JENNINGS, D. D.

Bro. Jennings was born on the 13th Dec., 1778, near Baskingridge, in the State of New Jersey. His father was a Presbyterian Clergyman, and also discharged the duties of physician, thus uniting in his character, the piety of the clergyman and the courtesy of the physician. It was at that period of our country's history, when these exalted stations, combined in one man, were held with that reverence which was deservedly due.

After the birth of Obadiah, his father, we are informed, removed to Virginia, but believing that both his spiritual and temporal interests would be greatly promoted, removed to Fayette county, Pa. From his father's home Obadiah was sent to the Academy at Canonsburg, Washington county, and received at the hands of its Professors the best classical education, which could be conferred on those who sought science and knowledge “in the groves of Academus.” After he had finished his academical studies, he commenced the study of Law under the care of John Simonton, Esq., of Washington, and was admitted as a practising attorney in 1800, being then only in the 22d year of his age. His preceptor always spoke of his high mental qualifications—of his mind richly stored with practical information—and destined to shed lustre on his profession.

Immediately after his admission he removed to Steubenville, Ohio, and commenced the arduous duties of his profession, and continued as

a successful practitioner until 1811, enjoying not only the confidence of the Court, but the members of the bar, and the people at large, as one in whose sound and discriminating legal judgment, the client and the jury could rely with the most implicit confidence.

While residing at Steubenville, his mind was for the first time turned to the propriety of becoming a member of the Masonic fraternity; and accordingly we find him visiting Washington on the 24th Feb., 1806, and entering as an Apprentice *our mystic temple*, and on the 9th of May following receiving both the degrees of Fellow Craft and Master Mason. The officers of the Lodge at that period consisted of Bro. David Cooke, W. M.; Jacob Sheaffer, S. W.; Joseph Pentecost, J. W.; Alexander Reed, Treasurer; and James Ashbrook, Sec y: officers whose characters were above suspicion, and whose highest aim was to square their lives, according to the principles of the *First Great Light* of MASONRY.

On the 24th of June, 1806, the Masonic Hall, (on the lot at present occupied by Hon. Bro. John Grayson,) was dedicated to Masonry, Virtue, and Universal Benevolence, and a sermon was preached by Rev. Bro. Dodgridge. In the ceremonies consequent upon so interesting an occasion, Bro. Jennings took an active and efficient part; and so devotedly was he attached to the Masonic institution that throughout an eventful life, *he steadfastly adhered to his obligations*, regarding the Lodge as a school for the practice of the moral virtues, and the dissemination of those principles which form the character of a gentleman.

In 1811 he removed to Washington, and commenced the practice of the Law, being attached to the people of Washington county, among whom were not only the friends of his youth, but his brethren of the "mystic tie," who received him with open arms as a "bright Mason."

In 1812 Bro. Jennings was elected a Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church of Washington, where he discharged the duties of that office, until he was licensed to preach the Everlasting Gospel by the Presbytery of Steubenville, in 1816. After being set apart to the Gospel ministry, he received simultaneously two invitations as a Pastor, *one* at Harrisburg, the seat of government, and the *other* at Steubenville. Although the former promised great inducements, yet his *humility bespoke his merit*, for he chose the latter place, and preached his *first sermon* in the same place where he began the practice of the Law!

In 1823, the Rev. Matthew Brown, having resigned the pastoral

charge of the Presbyterian congregation at Washington, and accepted the Presidency of Canonsburg College, Rev. Bro., Obadiah Jennings, was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy. But the labors of this Church being too arduous, and his constitution requiring a southern climate, he accepted a call in 1828 from the Presbyterian Church at Nashville, Tennessee, where

“ By solemn, awful ceremony, he,  
Was set apart, to speak the truth entire,  
By action and by word ; and round him stood  
The people, from his lips deriving knowledge.”

In 1830, the College of New Jersey conferred the degree of D. D. upon him for his eminent piety and classical attainments.

On the 12th of Jan., 1832, resting with unshaken confidence in the merits of the Redeemer, he bid adieu to life and its cares, for an abundant entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom of God, animated with a “ hope full of immortality.”

The Rev. Dr. Elliott, President of the Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny, in speaking of Bro. Jennings says, “He was a man of deservedly high reputation ; at the bar he stood among the first of his profession—in the pulpit he was a clear, judicious and instructive preacher—above all he was a meek and humble Christian.”

We rejoice as an humble member of the Masonic fraternity that it is in our power, to present the biography of a man who was both a Christian and a Mason, and whose life testified that the truths of the Holy Bible were the rule and guide of his faith and practice. Steadfastly and adheringly did he advocate the purity and principles of the Masonic institution.

“ So he stood in his integrity, just and firm of purpose,  
Aiding many, fearing none, a spectacle to angels and to men ;  
Yea—when the shattered globe shall rock in the throes of dissolution  
Still will he stand in his integrity, sublime—AN HONEST MAN.”

Through the unbounded influence of Rev. Bro. Jennings, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, when the question of Masonry was presented to them, immediately postponed its consideration for two reasons : 1st. Because some of their own excellent Divines and members were Masons, and 2d. That they had not sufficient information upon the subject : I need but add that his life, his manners, his doctrines and his teachings were such as he received, when for the *first* time, he beheld the Great Light of Masonry—and in proclaiming the everlasting truths of God’s holy Word, he was but erecting to his memory a monument around which both the Christian and Mason might meet on perfect equality, and exclaim—“ Behold ! my Brother !”

To that monument we proudly point the skeptic, the bigot and the religious man, who look with a jealous eye upon Masonry, and triumphantly claim Obadiah Jennings as a Brother—as a Mason pre-

eminently great—unawed by political and religious conflicts, and preserving until life terminated, within his breast, those mysteries and secrets which were intrusted to him as a Mason. May his pure spirit watch over our Institution, and may his virtues incite us to more noble deeds of benevolence and Charity!

---

THOUGHTS

*Suggested by the discovery of Masonic jewels in an Indian Mound, as detailed in a late Number of the Review.*

BY ERNESTINE.

BEAUTIFUL relics of the buried past—  
 What wierd and silent mystery shrouds thee here!  
 “Beautiful” said I? Even so—they speak  
 Of mystic brotherhood, encircled round  
 With golden chains of beauty, love, and trust,  
 Whose brightness cannot tarnish nor grow dim.  
 They tell of high and noble deeds; of men  
 Whose iron souls were bound together as  
 With “triple chains of steel”—whose hands had joined,  
 In solemn vows, around the mystic shrine;  
 And who with valiant hearts and purpose high,  
 Went forth to battle in the cause of right.  
 They waken thoughts, so wierd and beautiful,  
 Of ages buried in the boundless past—  
 And nations of whom e’en tradition weaves  
 No garnished tale—that round their tiny forms,  
 Chiselled from the rude stone, and to the world  
 Of small intrinsic worth, a halo bright  
 Is cast, that makes them to the thoughtful mind  
 Seem fair and full of beauty.

Whose the brain  
 That planned, the hand that carved their symbol-forms?  
 If voice, and thought, were given, what words replete  
 With interest would they speak—what tales unfold  
 Of days whose deeds the earth no record bears!  
 They tell of brotherhood—but *where* and *when*?  
 Where were their temples, where the ancient shrine?  
 And whither have *they* passed? The knowledge rests  
 In the Great Founder’s heart—and only there.  
 He wills it thus. Perchance their temples were  
 The dim old forest aisles; their sacred shrine  
 The mossy rock up-springing from the earth;  
 And corniced roof, or templed dome, may ne’er  
 Have smiled upon them—still we know their hearts  
 Were loyal; full of love and trust to all  
 Who bore the high insignia; and we feel  
 That when the mystic veil is rent apart,  
 That shrouds the present from the future now,  
 Hearts will respond to hearts, and hands clasp hands  
 That ages severed here; and then, and there,  
 The mystery that shrouds these emblems pure,  
 Will fade away before the One Great Light  
 Whose beams are full of wisdom, strength and truth.