





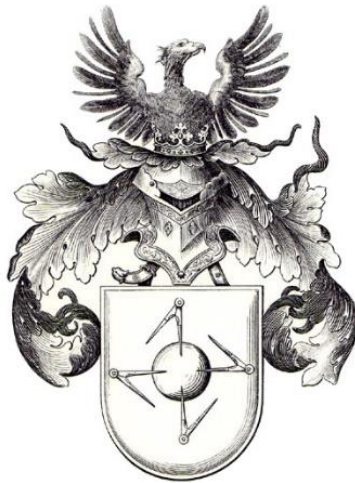
Masonic Biography of Christopher Wren

THE MASONIC BIOGRAPHY OF CHRISTOPHER WREN

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SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN

There are model Masons as well as model men; those who fully exemplify the special and practical duties of a Mason; while they adorn social life, and are examples of moral purity and integrity. A man may be as pure in his religious character as John the Evangelist; a patriot as disinterested and devoted as Tell, as Hampden, or as Washington; a scholar who has explored every avenue of knowledge, and acquired all that the human mind is capable of grasping: he may be the glory of his family, a companion and friend whom you can clasp to your heart with joy, and a citizen to whom community may point with an honest pride — and yet not be a Freemason — although he would be none the worse for being one. But, in addition to all these virtues and acquirements, he may have passed through the solemn ceremonies of our Order, and illustrated the virtues while he faithfully discharged the duties of a Craftsman; exhibiting, in his own life, the wisdom, strength, and beauty which were so harmoniously blended in the immortal three who labored in the erection of the first Temple at Jerusalem.

There have been many such in our mystic temple — magnificent pillars, towering in grandeur above their fellows, apparently perfect in their proportions, uniting moral purity with classic elegance, and blending, in their own persons, the skill of the Craftsman with the acquirements of the scholar, the integrity of the citizen, and the virtues of a friend. We love to gaze upon such exhibitions of excellence, for, alas! they are somewhat rare in the history of our race: men who seem fitted for the enjoyments of another world, while they are spared as the ornaments of this: such are rarely appreciated as they should be, until they have passed from our sphere to one more in harmony with their nature.

Such are model Masons; and such was Sir Christopher Wren, to a sketch of whose life and labors we now invite the reader's attention. A scholar of rare and varied attainments; an architect who had no equal in his day, and whose works, while they attest the genius of the builder, are the boast of Old England; long the Deputy and twice the Grand Master of Masons, he stands first on the "roll of the workmen" of his age; and a gentleman whose religious character was as pure as his intellectual achievements were glorious. To such a man we can fearlessly point as the model Mason of the age in which he lived.

The population of London, in the middle of the seventeenth century, was upward of half a million. It was the capital of the British Empire, and the commercial metropolis of the world. It was the home of merchant-princes, whose ships sailed over every ocean, and whose commercial transactions extended to every part of the world. Its business pulsations were like the throbbing's of the human heart, sending out to the utmost limits of the business world its life-current of trade, and bringing back from the extremities the fruits of all lands, and the wealth and luxuries of every clime. A vast and busy multitude thronged its streets, filled its quaint old habitations, and toiled in its shops and factories. London was then the home and the center of science, of literature, and of art. Perhaps at no period in England's history did she possess so many men of profound and varied learning, as in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Chemistry, philosophy, the mathematics, architecture, and, indeed, all the sciences, were studied as they never were before, and the achievements of mind kept pace with the progress of civilization, The human intellect seemed to be developing new energies, and putting forth powers capable of grasping all knowledge within the reach of finite capacity. Human genius approached its culmination, and the secrets of nature came forth at its bidding, as though to do homage to the traces of divinity in man, and throw a glow of unearthly light along the pathway trodden by humanity.

The sun of Cromwell, the fanatical "Protector of England" as he had assumed to call himself, had gone down in gloom, and Charles the Second returned from his exile and ascended the throne of his ancestors, in the month of May, 1660. London again became the home of royalty, and around the court were gathered the noblest of England's old nobility. The monarch, to add to the stability of his throne, endeavored to conciliate the affections of his subjects by every means in his power, and gathered around him, in his proud capital, the beauty, strength, and wisdom of his empire. Learning was fostered, learned men were patronized, and the arts encouraged. To be a profound scholar was a certain passport to royal favor, and to profitable and honorable employment. The Royal Society was organized in the fall of 1660, when the King became its Patron, and encouraged its members in their labors. This gave a new impulse to the efforts of genius, and the intellect of the nation gathered around it as wandering satellites gather around a common center by the force of gravitation. The moral power of England, at this time, among the nations of the earth, was like the sun in the solar system; and London was the heart, the center of England.

On Sunday evening, the 2d of September, 1666, about 10 o'clock at night, a fire broke out near the center of the great city, which ran from house to house, from street to street, and from square to square; all night and all day, and day after day, it burned. Wider and wider it extended its area of devastation; darker and denser were the huge volumes of smoke that rolled up from that burning capital; fiercer and wilder were the red flames that ascended from those blazing blocks of buildings, until it seemed as though the whole proud city was about to be offered in sacrifice by fire; dwelling, and shop, and warehouse, palace, and church, and cathedral went down, one after another, until the noblest mansions of England's aristocracy, and the proudest monuments of her architectural skill, lay in one black heap of smoking ruins. Ten thousand buildings were in ashes; three hundred thousand people were houseless in the fields, and a district a mile in width, and two miles in length, was covered with the burning fragments of the proudest city in the world! For five or six days the fire held high revelry; during the night its light was seen at the distance of forty miles; and when it ceased, for want of fuel, there was but one-seventh of the great Metropolis of England left standing. The whole kingdom felt the shock, and the throes of sensation ran through every nerve of the body politic, to the extremist verge of Charles's dominions.

It must be remembered, too, that the plague, which ravaged London, and made it a charnel-house — carrying away thousands upon thousands of its population, rich and poor, the opulent and high-born, as well as the peasant and the beggar, had but recently ceased its work of death when this great fire occurred. Civil war had long raged; a usurper had been on the throne, and England's heart had bled by the poniard in English hands. Added to all this, Charles the Second was now waging a fierce war with one or two of the continental powers, and needed all his resources to sustain himself in the field and on the sea. With all this in view, we shall more readily understand the magnitude of that calamity which swept like a flood of fire over London, and left its fairest and largest portion a desolation.

But Charles was a man of energy, and he determined promptly to rebuild his capital. Previous to the fire, the streets were narrow, crooked, and tortuous; and it was determined to re-map, at least the burnt district, and turn the calamity to account by widening and straightening the streets, readjusting the lines of private property, ignoring the practice of erecting wooden buildings, and thus reforming while they were rebuilding the city. In addition to all this, the public buildings were to be reconstructed, churches must be supplied to the public, and St. Paul's, a memento of the early

triumphs of the cross in England, must be reconstructed in a style of greater magnificence than before. But where should Charles find a man capable of grasping the entire plan; with learning, and skill, and influence, and power to superintend the whole of these vast and complicated operations; guide the labors of so many thousands of workmen and artisans; while, at the same time, he could design as well, and draw and plan, and superintend the mighty work of reconstructing a vast city, with all its churches, and cathedrals, and other public edifices? A man wiser than he whom the King of Tyre sent to Solomon to design and arrange the plans for the first Temple was needed — and such a man was found I It was none other than Christopher Wren, then Deputy Grand Master of Masons in England.

Masonry was then an operative science, as it had been beyond the memory of man, but it was not exclusively so. Like an honorary membership in literary or historical societies of the present day, some were admitted as Freemasons, not because they belonged to that profession of operatives, but because of their eminence in the political, scientific, or literary world. The operatives were called Free Masons, because they had passed regularly through the several grades, until they had become "master workmen," and thus acquired the freedom of the society, and entitled to all its rights and privileges. Distinguished men were admitted, because of their political eminence, or their superiority as men of science. These passed through the ceremonies of the degrees, and were called Accepted Masons — hence the terms, Free and Accepted Masons, as comprehending the entire body of the Craft. When Masonry laid aside its operative character, and became purely speculative, it retained the appellatives of "Free and Accepted."

St. Paul's Cathedral, London, is the most gigantic structure in the world consecrated to the interests of Protestant Christianity, and is only excelled in grandeur and extent by St. Peter's, in Rome. Besides this, it is the best specimen extant of substantial Freemasonry, in its operative character, of two hundred years ago; and the Grand Master of Masons was its architect and builder. The genius which designed, and the patient energy which constructed it, must command the homage of every visitor, and especially of every Freemason, whether from England itself or other and distant lands. As you enter the central door from the north and pass between the great pillars to the center of the floor beneath the dome, you stop and look around and upward in blank amazement. The entire building is on such a gigantic scale; so grand, so imposing, so solid, so perfect, that you feel subdued and awed as in the presence of the Master-builder himself; a sense of magnitude, of power, of grandeur, rivets you to the spot, and it is some time before you

dare move or turn to examine in detail. The form of this master-piece of architecture is that of a Greek cross; its extreme length is five hundred feet; its greatest width is two hundred and twenty-three feet; and its height, to the cross above the dome, is nearly or quite four hundred feet.

Standing on the mosaic floor beneath the center of the dome, facing the south, you turn to your left, and in front of you is the organ, and beyond it, the choir, where the religious services are ordinarily held. You advance to near the organ, and a record of the olden days is before you — the most fitting and appropriate epitaph conceivable. There are eight splendid Corinthian columns of blue- veined marble, which support the organ and gallery, and which are richly ornamented with carved work. On the side next the dome, in the front of this gallery, on a plain marble slab, is a Latin inscription, (formerly in gold letters,) which reads as follows in English:

BENEATH LIES

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN,

The builder of this Church and City,

Who lived upward of ninety years, not for himself,

but for the public good.

Reader, seekest thou his monument?

Look around!

Now let us see who and what was Sir Christopher Wren. He was the son and only child of the Rev. Dr. Christopher Wren, a clergyman in the national church of England. He was born at East Knoyle, in Wiltshire, on the 20th day of October, in the year 1632. His father descended from an ancient Danish family, and was a man of great learning and ability. His mother was Mary, the daughter and heiress of Robert Cox, Esq., a highly respectable family of the county of Wilts.

The young Christopher Wren was of very delicate health in childhood, so much so that his parents were unwilling to send him from home to be educated, and his father took that labor upon himself — assisted by a private tutor. His progress in learning was rapid, and his disposition was as gentle and amiable as his capacities were great. At an early age, when his health had improved, he was placed under the care of Dr. Bushby, of Westminster, where he had the best tutors England could afford; and such was his genius and taste for learning, especially mathematics, that when only in his thirteenth year he invented a new astronomical instrument, and dedicated it, in excellent Latin, to his father. In his fourteenth year he was transferred from Westminster to the University at Oxford. His attainments in the classics and mathematics were, at this time, far beyond his years; and his fondness for mechanics was such that he had already produced almost as many inventions as can be claimed by a full-grown New Englander of the present day. By his precocity of intellect and great attainments in science, he attracted the attention of the learned men of the University, and won their friendship and regard. Dr. Wilkins presented him to Prince Charles as a prodigy in science; and he was already entrusted with the translation of papers that would have tried the attainments of mature scholars.

The seventeenth century was the noon-day of England's glory — at least in mind. It was the century of poets, artists, and men of letters, Milton, Dryden, Cowley; Pope, Swift, Steele, Addison; Newton, Locke, Barrow, Boyle, Halley, Harvey; Rubens, Vandyke, Rembrandt, and a great cloud of giant minds, both in England and on the continent, made that century memorable in the world's history. The mental activities of the world were such as they never had been before; and it seemed as though humanity was about to ignore its kindredship to dust, and assert its claims to a higher birthright and a more glorious destiny. Dr. Harvey had discovered the circulation of the blood; and Galileo, with his glass, had invaded the heavens, and demonstrated the revolution of the planets. The Royal Society was organized, and genius had combined with science in efforts to wrest from nature its profoundest mysteries. Philosophy, in its most abstruse departments, was reveling in the opulence of its discoveries; astronomy was mapping out the heavens, grouping the stars, and measuring the days and years of the planets; while poetry was heard in numbers never heard before, and music was lending it wings to bear it heavenward.

Such were the tendencies of the age, and such the busy efforts of intellect to grasp the hitherto unattained, and contract the space between the finite and infinite, when Wren began his career of greatness. No wonder if his mind did

catch the inspiration of the age, and, like an athlete in the ancient games, prepare itself for mighty achievements in the intellectual arena.

His progress in the acquisition of knowledge at Oxford astonished his teachers, and secured for him the friendship of some of the first men in the world of letters. Dr. John Wilkins, afterward Bishop of Chester; Dr. Seth "Ward, the learned philosopher and mathematician; and the celebrated Mr. Oughtred, author of an abstruse work on mathematical science, with others of the first men of the age, became his friends. He wrote in Latin with singular facility, and, at the request of Sir Charles Scarborough, he undertook to translate some of Mr. Oughtred's mathematical works into that language. He invented, about this time, an instrument for writing with two pens, for which he obtained a patent. He was then but fifteen years of age! Dr. Scarborough, already named, was, at this time, a lecturer on anatomy at Surgeon's Hall, and employed young Wren as a demonstrating assistant. He also wrote a treatise on spherical trigonometry, and made several valuable inventions in mechanics.

Just at this time, as if to encourage intellect in its glorious efforts, the world of art was electrified by the announcement that St. Peter's, at Rome, was finished! This temple was not only the largest and richest then, or since, dedicated to Christian worship, but it was designed as the central Church of the Christian world. It had been built under the patronage and pontificates of nineteen successive Popes; and the genius of twenty of the most renowned architects, supported by the treasures of the Christian world, had been exhausted in erecting it, and art had poured out all its wealth of treasures upon it. No wonder that the announcement of its completion drew all eyes to Pome, and presented architecture as a science worthy the attention of scientific men. Wren grasped it as the naturalist grasps a new and rare specimen in nature.

In his eighteenth year he received his degree of B. A. at College. About this time, too, he contrived several new and valuable inventions. In the following year he wrote an algebraic treatise on the Julian period, and, by other manifestations of genius and learning, gave abundant promise of future greatness. Inigo Jones, the greatest architect in England, died just as Wren was expanding into manhood; he, too, had been Grand Master of the Freemasons in his day; and this relation, in connection with his fame as an architect, may have early directed the thoughts of Wren to that association.

At twenty-one the young scholar obtained his degree of Master of Arts, and, about the same time, he was elected a Fellow of All-Souls College, at Oxford.

He continued to spend most of his time at the University, occasionally visiting London for purposes connected with his scientific pursuits, where he was constantly engaged in accumulating those stores of knowledge by which he was prepared for situations in which he afterward rendered such distinguished services to his country and mankind. Mr. Evelyn, one of the first scholars of his day, about this time formed the acquaintance of Wren, and speaks of him in his Diary as "a miracle of a youth" and "a rare and early prodigy of universal science"

The period at which Wren emerged into active life was one "of philosophical inquiry, experiment, and discovery;" and a mind like his was ever ready to grasp at hints and partial developments, and from them to work out great practical truths. He assisted to perfect, if he did not really invent, that great philosophical instrument — the barometer, although efforts were afterward made on the continent to rob him of the honor. He also originated the art of engraving in mezzotint, which was subsequently improved by Evelyn and Prince Rupert — his co-laborers in the Royal Society. Indeed, there was scarcely any subject in the whole range of improvements and discoveries that did not, at times, engage the attention of this great experimental philosopher. In looking over the transactions of the Royal Society, of which he became such an active and useful member, we not only find him presenting valuable papers at almost every meeting, announcing discoveries and inventions, or suggesting improvements in former ones, but nearly every important discovery by other members was referred to him for examination. His opinions on all subjects were held in such esteem by his philosophical companions, that they were continually urging him on all points of great and momentous subjects. Robert Hook, one of the greatest mathematicians of that age, declared that "since the time of Archimedes, there scarce ever met, in one man, in so great a perfection, such a mechanical hand and so philosophical a mind."

A few select friends at Oxford were in the habit of meeting, at stated times, for the purpose of discussing questions in natural and experimental philosophy. Dr. Wilkins, Hook, "Ward, Newton, Boyle, Evelyn, "Wren, and other devotees of science were members of the club. In that little company were made the rough drafts, so to speak, of some of the greatest discoveries that were matured within the next fifty years. The times, it is true, were unpropitious; political commotions and civil wars convulsed society. The power of Cromwell had culminated, and he had now commenced his downward career, which was consummated, by his death, on the 3d of September, 1658. But, during all these upheavings of society, this

association of young men, in the retiracy (**retirement, seclusion**) of Oxford, continued its labors; the members were steadily preparing themselves for usefulness, and to shed upon their age and country a glory far greater than could be won at the head of armies and on crimsoned battle-fields.

During the residence of Wren at Oxford, he studied anatomy, and was afterward for a time demonstrator under Drs. Scarborough and "Willis, and greatly assisted the latter in preparing a treatise on the brain. He also first tried the experiment of injecting fluids into the veins, though this discovery was afterward claimed by the French. So profound was his acquirements in astronomical science, that when he left Oxford for the Metropolis, in 1657, he was appointed Professor of Astronomy in Gresham College. And now began his public life, so full of activities, so wonderful in achievements. He was now in his twenty-fifth year; in good health, of an ardent temperament, learned beyond any of his years, and ambitious to excel in whatever he undertook. His future life was the pathway of the peaceful conqueror, making conquest after conquest, and adding trophy to trophy, until, opulent in wisdom beyond all his compeers, and crowned with honors on which there rested no stain of blood or dishonor, he slept with his fathers in an honored grave, and left a name of which England will be proud when the race of her Stuarts shall have been forgotten.

In January, 1660, he was appointed to succeed Dr. Seth Ward, a Sevillian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, and was admitted to its honors in May following, a few days before the restoration of Charles the Second. The return of the Sovereign to his rightful throne gave great satisfaction to the nation, and promise of peace and security for the future. The civil commotions which had so long rocked the Island, under Cromwell and his son, ceased like the last vibrations of an earthquake, and stability in government afforded opportunities for intellectual culture and social improvement.

Charles was the patron of learning and learned men, and threw all the influence of his high position in favor of intellectual improvement. On the 28th of November, 1660, after a lecture by Wren at Gresham College, a meeting was held to promote the organization of a "society for the promotion of physical-mathematical experimental learning." Twelve were present, of whom Mr. Wren was one, and one of the most active. Then and there the corner-stone of the Royal Society was laid, and, on the 5th of December following, it received the approval of the king, and a charter of incorporation, which was drawn up by Wren himself. This opened a field of

labor for Wren, into which he entered with his accustomed zeal and diligence, and, for the greater part of his subsequent life, he was its most active and useful member. Almost every subject proposed for investigation was submitted to the ordeal of his criticism; and nearly every new discovery was referred to him for examination.

It would require a volume to describe all his labors, and record the signal triumphs of his genius. On the 12th of September, 1661, he received his degree of Doctor of Civil Law, at Oxford, and about the same time he received the honor of the same degree from the University at Cambridge — so great already was his reputation as a scholar; yet he was only in the twenty-ninth year of his age! Among other acquisitions of his active mind, was a knowledge of architecture, for which he had a particular fondness; and soon after he had taken the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, the king sent for him to come to London, and appointed him assistant to Sir John Denham, Surveyor-General of His Majesty's works.

Denham was a better poet than architect, and needed just such a man as Wren to aid him in the more important departments of his labor. Inigo Jones had long served as Grand Master (but was now deceased), and was acknowledged the best architect of his age. His son-in-law, Mr. Webb, a noted architect, was also distinguished as a Freemason, and had been the assistant of Sir John Denham in his official duties. Wren continued actively in the service of the king, and in his laborious connection with the Royal Society. His life was one of ceaseless labor, and his mind seemed capable of grasping all knowledge, and of solving every problem, however difficult or abstruse.

Charles the Second, as we have already seen, ascended the throne of England on the anniversary of his birth, 29th of May, 1660. During the years he spent in exile on the Continent, whither he had been driven by the protectorate of Cromwell, he had been made a Freemason, and was warmly attached to the institution. On his accession to power he encouraged the Craft by every means he could wield, consistently with his high position and the weighty responsibilities which claimed his time and attention. Masons were then builders — operative workmen, in practice as well as by profession. It was a profession, an isolated and peculiar profession; for while the members were engaged in their calling, either as architects or operatives, they held their secret meetings to impart and preserve a knowledge of their art, and enjoyed peculiar privileges by special grace of the government. All public buildings of magnitude and importance were erected by them, and the

whole business of building appeared to be conceded to them, and was under their control. The Order had long languished during the ascendancy of Cromwell, for his fanatical notions were in direct antagonism to Masonry, and he gave its members no encouragement. In addition to this, during the most of his protectorate the country was in a condition bordering upon anarchy, and there was little demand for the services of operative masonry. The people had neither time nor heart to engage in building. The tramp of armies and the shout of battle paralyzed the arm of industry, and hushed the din of the artisan: the people had no time for anything but to provide for personal safety and immediate necessities.

At what time Mr. Wren became a Mason, or where, we are unable to determine, for there is no record of it extant, so far as we have been able to discover. It was most probably in one of the Lodges of London, and very soon after he had passed his majority. He was naturally fond of society, provided its enjoyment did not prevent the gratification of his thirst for knowledge; and as the leading Craftsmen were then the men of learning, and the study of the arts and sciences a prominent object of the association, Wren doubtless found it congenial to his tastes, and resorted to it as the worn and thirsty traveler goes to the limpid waters to quench his thirst.

On the 27th of December, 1663, a General Assembly, or Grand Lodge, was held in London for the election of Grand Officers, and the transaction of such business as the exigencies of the Craft required. At this meeting Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, was elected Grand Master. This was the only elective office at that time, the others being filled by appointment of the Grand Master, who was Master, then, in more than name; he was not only the presiding officer of the General Assembly, or Grand Lodge (and it must be recollected that the Assembly embraced all the Craft, even to the youngest Entered Apprentice,) but he was emphatically the Grand Master of Masons. The Grand Master, therefore, at this meeting, appointed Sir John Denham as his Deputy, and Christopher Wren and John Webb his Wardens. Mr. Webb, having married a daughter of the celebrated Inigo Jones, received the benefit of instructions from that distinguished artist, and was now an assistant to Denham as Surveyor General. It will thus be seen that Wren was associated with industrious and vigorous Craftsmen, who were as ready for active duty as he was himself.

The session of the Grand Lodge at which Wren was appointed a Warden was an active and important one. To reduce everything to system, and secure order and regularity among the members, specific rules were adopted for

their government. Six General Regulations were framed, founded upon the organic principles of Masonry, and formally agreed to. They were of great importance in reducing everything to order, and securing a correct deportment among the members. They contain the germs of those General Regulations which were adopted in 1723, and have come down to our own times. Doubtless Christopher Wren bore a part in their preparation and adoption; and indeed, they bear evident marks of his systematic habits and well-trained mind. We should not be surprised if they were drawn up by him, and adopted at his suggestion.

Mr. Wren served as Warden until the session of the Grand Lodge on the 24th of June, 1666, when a change was made in the Grand Officers, and Thomas Save, a nobleman, was elected Grand Master in the place of the Earl of St. Albans. The new Grand Master appointed Mr. Wren as his Deputy, John Webb and Grimlin Gibbons being selected as Wardens.

As Assistant Superintendent of His Majesty's works, Wren found employment congenial to his taste, and was constantly engaged in his favorite pursuits. On the 23d of October, 1667, the corner-stone of the Royal Exchange was laid by the Craft — the king officiating in person. In the succeeding years many of the finest structures in England were built, and mostly under the superintendence of Wren. He appears to have been the most industrious man in England, and the record of his labors would astonish one, even in the present "fast age." But we may not detail them all, for we have not room.

In 1671 he commenced the erection of his great Doric, fluted column, called, by way of eminence, The Monument, and finished it in 1677. It was built in obedience to an act of Parliament, to commemorate the great fire, and the rebuilding of the city. Its site is within one hundred and thirty feet of the spot where the fire began. It stands on a pedestal twenty-one feet square, and its entire height is two hundred and two feet. It was then, and long since, regarded as the finest isolated column in the world; and was nearly thirty feet higher than that of Antonius at Rome.

But the height, durability, and style of the monument on our own Bunker Hill has eclipsed the glory of the great column in London. On the 20th of November, 1673, he received the honors of knighthood from his sovereign, Charles the Second, and they were never conferred on a worthier subject.

London, before the great fire, was a mass of architectural incongruities. The streets were narrow and crooked, turning and twisting in all kinds of curves

and angles. The alleys were little more than paths between buildings; and the latter were mostly of wood, with the upper stories projecting over the street, and many of them were covered with pitch on the outside. No wonder it burned: the only wonder is that it had not burned sooner, and entirely. Upon preparing to rebuild the city, Wren was directed by the king to prepare a general plan, with new grades, a system of sewerage, and broad and regular streets; but the owners of private property entered their protests, and refused to yield. The acting commissioner found he could not accomplish all he wished, yet he succeeded in his designs to a very considerable extent. Many streets were widened and straitened; the buildings were arranged in better order and taste; the uncouth and antiquated projections of upper stories were prohibited, and brick and stone were substituted for wood. There was much opposition to all this, but Wren was in advance of his age; and by his prudent and judicious management, together with the counsel and encouragement of the king and parliament, he was able to proceed with his herculean task, and London soon began to rise like another phoenix from its ashes.

About one hundred churches and chapels were to be rebuilt, besides the Royal Exchange, Custom House, Guildhall, Blackwell Hall, Bridewell, St. Paul's Cathedral, and some fifty other public buildings. These were public works, to be erected under the supervision of the government; and, from their numbers and magnitude, we may form some estimate of the amount of labor to be performed by Wren. He had now succeeded to the office of Surveyor-General, and, in person, prepared the designs for most of these great structures. He had his assistants in each particular department to execute the details, but the burden and responsibility rested upon Wren himself, and nobly did he perform his task!

The great cathedral was Wren's greatest work, and it is still the monument of his enduring fame. That magnificent structure, and the site it occupies, has a history, a romantic and brilliant one, running away back into antiquity, in the days of heathen gods and heathen worship. According to Flete, a monk of the fifteenth century, a temple once stood on that very spot, dedicated to the goddess Diana. Though this is not positively certain, yet, from the amount of Roman pottery, urns, vases, etc., found there while making excavations, it is highly probable that a temple to some deity worshiped by the Romans anciently occupied the ground.

The first Metropolitan Sees were established in England in the year A. D. 185, and a Christian church was then erected on the present site of St. Paul's— a

heathen temple thus yielding its place to the triumphs of the Cross. This early church was, most probably, destroyed during the persecution under Diocletian. But the religion of heathen Rome was destined to pass away before the simple but sublime teachings of the Gospel, whose earnest messengers went everywhere, proclaiming the new faith with a constancy and heroism worthy of the ancient prophets. The fires lighted by Diocletian were among the last spasmodic efforts of heathen Rome to preserve its ancient religion. With the decay of the Empire, its religion waned — for it had in itself no vitality. St. Augustine came to England about the beginning of the sixth century, on a mission from Pope Gregory, under whose preaching Ethelbert, the first Saxon king, embraced Christianity, and the Cross was then firmly planted on the soil of Britain. About the year 604, the first church named St. Paul's was erected on the site of the present one.

Some seventy years afterward, Erkenwald, the fourth Bishop of London, expended large sums in enlarging and ornamenting this church, which remained as a visible landmark in the progress of Christianity until 1083, when it was destroyed by fire. A much more splendid church (and the immediate predecessor of the present one,) arose from its ruins; but this, also, was greatly injured by fire, in 1135. It was still incomplete, for the steeple was not finished until 1221, and the choir not until nineteen years afterward. The length of this building was six hundred and ninety feet, breadth one hundred and eighty, and height of the roof, one hundred and two feet; it covered three acres, three roods, and twenty-six perches. The height of the steeple from the ground was five hundred and twenty feet; the length of the cross above the ball was fifteen feet; and the transverse portion six feet. In 1444, the steeple was struck by lightning and set on fire; and again in 1561. In 1630, a commission was issued to inquire what repairs the venerable structure needed, and what funds were on hand to defray the expense. In 1633, the repairs were commenced, under the direction of the celebrated Inigo Jones, then the Grand Master of Masons; they were finished in 1639; at an expense of near half a million of dollars.

The building suffered greatly during the civil wars, and on the restoration of Charles the Second, a new commission was organized to repair it, in which Mr. Wren appears as architect. This was in 1663, and three years were occupied in removing adjacent structures, clearing away the accumulated rubbish, and providing materials for the work. While this was in progress, and when all were looking forward to see their venerable Cathedral restored to more than its former glory, the great fire of 1666 occurred, which decided its fate, and rendered it incapable of repair.

It was then determined to take down the remains of the old building and erect an entirely new one on the same ground; and a new commission was issued to this effect, with Christopher Wren as the chief architect. He accordingly prepared plans and designs, which were repeatedly altered and changed, but finally approved of by the king, who, on the first of May, 1675, issued his warrant for the commencement of the work.

The difficulty of removing the old walls and towers had been great. They were of stone, and the cement which bound these stones together had been growing into stone itself for nearly six hundred years. To mount to the top of the walls and pick off the stones in fragments, was a very tedious as well as a very dangerous process; and it seemed as though it would require an age to accomplish the work and permit them to begin the new structure. The restless energy of Wren could not endure this tardy process; and his philosophic mind set to work to devise some plan to expedite the business. It would not do to undermine the towers and allow them to fall, for there was too much peril to the workmen; and to blow up the structure by gunpowder, would scatter destruction over the whole city. In this dilemma, the scientific mind of Wren devised a plan. He calculated the weight of one of the towers, and then the exact explosive force of gunpowder, in order to ascertain if the walls might not be thrown down without scattering the fragments. Assured of his calculations, he went to work.

In his progress of removing the old building he had come to the middle tower, on which the lofty spire had formerly rested. This was nearly two hundred feet high, and the workmen could not be induced to labor on the top of it. Here Wren determined to try his experiment, for the double purpose of facilitating the labor and working out the problem of his philosophical speculations. He caused a hole to be dug of about four feet wide, by the side of the north-west pier of the tower, from which a perforation was made two feet square, reaching to the center of the pier. In this he placed a small deal box, containing eighteen pounds of gunpowder. To this box he affixed a hollow cane which contained a quick-match, reaching to the surface of the ground above, and along the ground a train of powder was laid with a match. The mine was then closed up and exploded, while the philosophical architect, at a safe distance, calmly waited with confidence the effect of his experiment.

The result proved that the small quantity of powder not only lifted up the whole angle of the tower, with two great arches that rested upon it, but also two adjoining arches of the aisles, and the masonry above them. This it

appeared to do in a slow but efficient manner, cracking the walls to the top, lifting visibly the whole weight about nine inches, which suddenly dropping, made a great heap of ruins in the place, without scattering or accident. It was half a minute before the heap, already fallen, opened in two or three places, and emitted smoke. The result of his calculation was satisfactory, and the experiment eminently successful. He ascertained, by this experiment, the force of gunpowder — eighteen pounds only of which lifted the massive stone tower, which was two hundred feet high, with the additional arches, weighing more than three thousand tons, and saved the work of a thousand laborers! The fall of the immense weight, from so great a height, produced such a concussion that the citizens supposed it to be the shock of an earthquake. The experiment was one of the finest illustrations on record of the superiority of mind and science over mere physical force.

Satisfied with his experiment, Wren determined to continue the process; but being called away on other business, he entrusted it to the management of his next officer, who, too wise to obey the orders of his superior, inserted too large a quantity of powder, which sent the fragments in every direction, to the great danger of the inhabitants. They made such complaints that an order was issued to use no more powder, though, with the original caution of the architect, it might have been continued without danger, and at a great saving of time and money.

The corner-stone of the new cathedral was laid on the 21st of June, 1675, by Sir Christopher in person, as D. G. M., assisted by his Wardens, and the structure was completed in 1710, by the great architect's eldest son — it being thus thirty-five years in building. The entire cost of the building was seven hundred and forty-eight thousand pounds — nearly four million dollars, and the amount was principally raised by a tax on coals imported into London, and the residue by voluntary contributions. And what, think you, reader, was the compensation received by this great genius for his untiring labor for more than thirty of the best years of his life? The paltry sum of two hundred pounds per annum — one moiety of which was reserved by the government until the completion of the work!

Sir Christopher suffered much abuse from nameless writers, charging upon him frauds of all kinds; and severe and villainous criticisms on the style and manner of building, by men who dare not put their names to their productions. Anonymous pamphlets were issued, full of scandalous abuse of the Grand Master, but he heeded them not. Fully conscious of his own integrity and ability, he quietly pursued his labor, depending on his work,

when finished, to justify his course, and upon posterity to do justice to his memory. Government, however, instituted critical and extensive examinations into his proceedings, which proved him capable, correct, and honest. He came out of the ordeal unsullied by the vile aspersions, and loved and venerated more than ever.

With all the great man's devotion to science, his achievements in his profession, the friendship of his sovereign, and the honors conferred upon him, he was not happy. It needed the pure and noble sympathies of woman to fill the void; for what are all other earthly blessings, without the bliss of wedded love! Early in 1674, therefore, he married the daughter of Sir John Coghill, and, on the 16th of February, 1675, his happiness was increased by the birth of a son, whom he named Christopher, after himself. His wife died soon after, and he subsequently married the daughter of Lord Fitzwilliam. For nearly thirty years after his marriage, his life was one of severe and unremitting labor, and its complete record would be but a continued repetition of dates, and deeds, and triumphs.

The great number of public buildings erected under the supervision of Sir Christopher were gradually completed. One after another they were accepted from his hands and consecrated to sacred, or dedicated to public uses. For all this labor, as above hinted, he received a very meager compensation, yet his public and philanthropic spirit induced him, in 1779, to donate, from his small salary, fifty pounds, to aid in carrying forward the work on St. Paul's. During this year he finished the church of St. Stephen, Walbrook — a most beautiful specimen of his skill in architecture. So delighted were the people with their new church, that they presented to the wife of the great architect the sum of twenty guineas, as a kind of thank-offering. The following is an extract from the parish vestry-book:

"August 24, 1679. — Ordered that a present of twenty guineas be made to the lady of Sir Christopher Wren, as a testimony of the regard the parish has for the great care and skill that Sir Christopher "Wren showed in the rebuilding of our church."

It was, apparently, a small testimonial, but it was richly deserved and most worthily bestowed.

In 1680, Sir Christopher was elected President of the Royal Society — a most honorable mark of distinction. But he had labored faithfully and zealously to build up the institution, and well deserved the honor of being its first officer. Indeed, his labors were incessant; when not engaged on St. Paul's, the great

work of his life, he was at some of the numerous other public buildings whose construction he superintended; while his evenings were mostly given to the Royal Society. During the period of his presidency, we find, on looking over its records, that he was rarely absent from one of its meetings, and scarcely a question of importance was brought before it but was subjected to the ordeal of his criticism, from the swing of a pendulum to the movements of a planet. Indeed, no subject seemed beyond the grasp of his capacious mind — no question so abstruse that he could not analyze it. As a specimen of his industry at this period of his life, we quote a single paragraph from Elmes's biography of the great builder.

"The next year (1683) of Wren's life passed much the same as the last, superintending and designing for St. Paul's Cathedral, the Royal and Episcopal palaces at Winchester, the parochial churches, companies halls, and other public and private edifices in the metropolis, and the two universities, besides his attendance on the Privy Council, the Court of Claims, the Royal Society, and unrecorded public and private engagements!"

Such were the multiplicity of claims upon, and such the unwearied labors of this great and good man and distinguished Grand Master. Well did a later writer say, in view of all his labors, "had he been remunerated as architects now are, he would have been, perhaps, the richest commoner in England." But he sought to be useful rather than to acquire wealth.

To go back a little and bring up his Masonic record: On the 27th of December, 1663, a General Assembly or Grand Lodge was held, when Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, was elected Grand Master, who appointed Sir John Denham his Deputy, and Christopher Wren and John Webb, Esqs., his Wardens. This fact is stated on the authority of Anderson, Preston, and all the old Masonic writers, and universally credited by the Craft. At this session of the Grand Lodge, an effort was made, and partly accomplished, to reduce the general principles governing the Order to positive and specific rules; and in the earliest printed works on Masonry, we find the following six regulations as having been proposed and adopted at this session:

"First. — That no person, of what degree soever, be made or accepted a Freemason, unless in a regular Lodge, whereof one to be a Master or a Warden in that limit or division where such Lodge is kept, and another to be a Craftsman in the trade of Freemasonry.

“Second. — That no person hereafter shall be accepted a Freemason, but such as are of able body, honest parentage, good reputation, and an observer of the laws of the land.

“Third. — That no person hereafter who shall be accepted a Freemason, shall be admitted into any Lodge or assembly, until he has brought a certificate of the time and place of his acceptance from the Lodge that accepted him, unto the Master of that limit or division where such Lodge is kept; and the said Master shall enroll the same in a roll of parchment, to be kept for that purpose, and shall give an account' of all such acceptations at every General Assembly.

“Fourth. — That every person who is now a Freemason shall bring to the Master a note of the time of his acceptance, to the end the same may be enrolled in such priority of place as the brother deserves; and that the whole company and fellows may the better know each other.

“Fifth. — That for the future, the said fraternity of Freemasons shall be regulated and governed by one Grand Master, and as many Wardens as the said society shall think fit to appoint at every annual General Assembly.

“Sixth. — That no person shall be accepted, unless he be twenty-one years old or more.”

The above six rules formed the germ of those "Ancient Charges and General Regulations" which were approved and adopted by the Grand Lodge in 1723. They were, most probably, the product of Mr. Wren's systematic mind, and bear his impress. He was one of those tireless workers, who is never satisfied unless the cause in which he is engaged is progressing; and, in order to accomplish anything, he knew the importance of system and rule. Like a wise and judicious master-builder, he would first draw the designs for his work, and then persistently follow those designs to completion. The government of Masonry, at that day, was loose and uncertain, much being left to the will of the Grand Master; hence the necessity of arranging and systematizing the laws, as above accomplished by Wren.

In June, 1666, the Earl of Rivers (Thomas Savage,) succeeded St. Albans as Grand Master, and Sir Christopher Wren was appointed his Deputy. The Grand Master was too indolent to attend properly to the duties of his office, and the superintendence of the Craft was left almost exclusively to his Deputy. In this office Wren served, with great acceptability, until 1685, when he was elected Grand Master. Two distinguished men had preceded him in the Orient during this interval — George Villars, Duke of Buckingham, and

Henry Bennett, Earl of Arlington — but each had retained Sir Christopher as Deputy, so highly were his services appreciated. Then, for ten years, he presided over the Craft as Grand Master, in addition to all his other arduous and complicated duties. The Order nourished during all these years, for how could it be otherwise when the great Wren was at its head, imparting to it the vigor and restless activity so characteristic of himself?

In 1695, Charles Lenox, Duke of Richmond, was elected Grand Master, and Sir Christopher was relieved of a portion of his burdens; but three years afterward, in 1698, Wren was again elected. How long he served we are unable to state — probably until 1702 — but, from his increasing age and growing infirmities, to say nothing of his public engagements, which still pressed heavily upon him, it is presumed that he could give but little attention to his masonic duties. It was, probably, in consequence of this, and partly to unpropitious public events during the reign of Queen Anne, that Masonry began to languish in London, and in a few years but four Lodges were to be found in activity. But a brighter day was ere long to dawn upon it — the morning of an eventful and glorious future.

Let us return a little, again, to gather up a few items in the history of the illustrious architect. "We have seen he was elected Grand Master in 1685, and an eminent writer, referring to that period, says:

"Wren had now received almost every honor that could be conferred on him: knighthood from his sovereign, when that distinction was more selectly conferred than of late years ; the presidency of the most illustrious philosophical society in Europe; the surveyor generalship of all the royal works, the cathedral of St. Paul, and the public buildings of the capital; and the associate and correspondent of the first men for rank and talent in Europe. In this year his services were required in a parliament which Hume acknowledges was placed in a more critical situation than was almost any one preceding it. He was accordingly elected and returned a member for Plympton, in Devonshire, and served in that parliament which began at Westminster May 19, 1685."

In this new public position, his duties were numerous and arduous, and his attendance on the meetings of the Royal Society was not so regular as formerly; but he found enough to occupy every moment of his time, and really accomplished more in detailed labor than any man in England. Nor was this a mere spasmodic effort; it was continued year after year, and to read the matters referred to him by the government, some apparently of trivial importance, and some of the greatest magnitude, and, from his

reports upon them, one would be led to think that the whole business of the municipal administration rested upon his shoulders. He seemed to do everything, because the government knew he could, and it required he would. He was the best model of a "business man" we have ever seen described — giving prompt and thorough attention to everything, and at the right time.

He was also an example in his morals. His life, in every respect, was blameless, and he thought it not inconsistent with his position to frown upon immorality, wherever found. In 1695, he, in conjunction with his associate commissioners of the public works, issued an order forbidding profanity among the workmen employed upon the cathedral, thus exhibiting his detestation of that inexcusable and ungentlemanly vice. In this he bore a striking resemblance to the illustrious Washington, and added another proof to the theory, that no one can be truly great who is not of pure morals and blameless life.

In 1698, as we have already stated, he was again elected Grand Master, and renewed his attention to masonic duties with the zeal of his earlier years, enhanced in value by his matured experience. One who was well acquainted with his history, refers to his masonic zeal in the following language: "He distinguished himself beyond any of his predecessors in legislating for, and promoting the success of, the lodges under his care. He was Master of the St. Paul's Lodge, now the Lodge of Antiquity, and attended the meetings regularly for upward of eighteen years. During his presidency he presented the lodge with three mahogany candlesticks, of beautiful carving, which the members still possess, and prize as they deserve; and also, the trowel and mallet which he used in laying the first stone of St. Paul's cathedral."

In the year 1700, Wren was again elected to parliament for the borough of Weymouth, and devoted himself to his public duties with the same zeal as formerly. St. Paul's was now approaching its completion. The venerable Wren still superintended the work upon it, but nearly four-score years had rendered him incapable of enduring the fatigue of His younger days. His son, whose skill as an architect was only inferior to that of his father's, had become his assistant in the completion of the great temple, and thus relieved his father of much of the active labors. "Wren, himself, however, presided over the designs, and watched, with an anxious eye, the finishing of the work on the cupola and lantern. At last, in the year 1710, "when Sir Christopher had attained the 78th year of his age, the highest stone of the lantern on the cupola was laid by Mr. Christopher Wren, his son, attended by the venerable

architect, Mr. Strong, the master-mason to the cathedral, and the lodge of Freemasons of which Sir Christopher was for many years the active as well as acting Master." Such is the simple record of the completion of this great work — the proudest, noblest building of its day in the British empire. He had been thirty-five years in its construction, but it is the only work of equal magnitude that ever was completed by one man. It was not only the great architect himself who watched it from its foundation to its cope-stone, but the principal mason, Mr. Strong, did the same, and so did the Bishop of London, Dr. Compton, who was also intimately associated with Wren in its erection. To examine the mighty structure now, one will wonder how it was finished in so short a period. St. Peter's, at Borne, was one hundred and fifty-five years in building; but there was lacking the profound and varied learning, the restless activity, the untiring industry, and unfaltering perseverance of Sir Christopher Wren in its superintendence.

But upright and pure in life as was the noble Wren, he was destined to share the common heritage of such men, and tread a thorny path ere he was permitted to enter upon his final rest. It will be remembered that of the paltry sum allowed him as an annual salary, by government, one-half was to be retained until the work was completed. Before this event men had risen to power "who knew not Joseph" — selfish, suspicious, jealous minds, who could not comprehend the great abilities of the gifted Wren, nor appreciate his eminent virtues. The cathedral was, substantially, completed, save some few adornments and addenda, and here his enemies endeavored to thwart his purposes by throwing obstructions in his way — doubtless to prevent him drawing the remaining moiety of his hard-earned and long-delayed compensation. He appealed to the Queen, but his petition was referred to the commissioners, who were controlled by the influence of his enemies. He then petitioned the Archbishop of Canterbury, and also appealed to the public in a pamphlet, but still the cabal prevailed. Queen Anne died in 1714, and George the First ascended the throne. A new parliament was convoked, new commissioners were appointed, a new race of men gathered around the Hanoverian monarch, seeking to bask in the sunlight of royal favor, by crowding aside those more worthy than themselves. One historian says:

"His age (eighty-three) rather than his infirmities, gave his enemies pretenses to annoy him; and the king's partiality for his German subjects, their friends and connections, to whom Wren would not condescend to stoop, removed the personal influence of the sovereign from our patriarchal architect."

In 1718, his enemies prevailed with the king to remove the venerable man from his position as Surveyor-General of the Royal Buildings, after having filled the office, uninterruptedly, for forty-nine years. His genius, and learning, and industry, had enriched the nation; his retention in office, so long, had been an honor to the reigns of several successive princes; but his dismissal, at such an age, with all his faculties undimmed, and half his just compensation withheld, was a disgrace to the reign of the first George that can never be effaced. The special enemy of Wren, a man by the name of Benson, who had succeeded him in office, was very soon found utterly incapable of performing its duties, and, within a year, was expelled from it in disgrace, while Wren removed to his house at Hampton Court, full of years and honors, where he spent the residue of his days in peaceful and dignified retirement. "Here," writes one of his biographers, " he passed the greater part of the remaining five years of his life, occasionally coming to London to inspect the progress of the repairs at Westminster Abbey, visiting his great work, St. Paul's, and indulging, after such an active life; in contemplation and study. In addition to the consoling study of the Holy Scriptures, which had been the guide of his whole life, and with which he was well acquainted, he employed this leisure of his age in those philosophical studies to which he conceived it was the intention of Providence that he should apply himself more closely.

"The life of this great and useful man began now to draw near its close; but accident, and, perhaps, disappointment at the ungenerous conduct of the king to him at so advanced an age, shortened that life which temperance and activity had so prolonged beyond the usual term allotted to man. Till the time of his removal from the office of Surveyor-General, he had principally resided at a house appropriated to his office, in Scotland yard, Whitehall; but afterward he dwelt occasionally on St. James' street, and remained surveyor of the Abbey till the time of his death. He also rented a house from the crown, at Hampton Court, to which he made great improvements. Here he would often retire from the hurry and fatigue of business, and passed the greater portion of the last five years of his life in this calm recess, in those contemplations and studies which I have before enumerated.

"In coming from Hampton Court to London, he contracted a cold, which, perhaps, accelerated his dissolution; but he died as he had lived, with the greatest calmness and serenity. The good old man, in his latter days, had accustomed himself to take a nap after his dinner; and, on the 25th of February, 1723, the servant who constantly attended him, thinking he slept longer than usual, went into his apartment and found him dead in his chair."

So lived, and so died, Sir Christopher Wren, one of the ripest scholars, and certainly the ablest architect, that England has ever produced. Perhaps no man ever lived a more harmless and blameless life than he, nor one of more unremitting labor. An ardent devotee of science, he consecrated all the stores of his varied learning to the practical benefit of his countrymen, and the adornment of the metropolis of his nation. A sincere believer in the Revelation which God has given to man, he adopted its holy precepts as the rule and guide of his faith and practice; and, from its sacred promises, drew consolation to cheer and strengthen him in his age and infirmities. Few men have lived so usefully — few have died so peacefully. He lived more than ninety years, and his death, said Dr. South, resembled that of the saints, and might well be called 'falling 'asleep;' for the innocence of his life made him expect it as indifferently as he did his ordinary rest."

In the latter years of the illustrious Grand Master, Masonry had languished in England. Queen Anne was no friend to the Order, and public opinion was fashioned by reflection from the throne. Her immediate successor was neither qualified by mental capacity to appreciate, nor in morals to adorn, a society based on the immutable principles of morality; hence Freemasonry met with no encouragement from the sovereign, and the age and anxious cares of the venerable Wren precluded him from bestowing upon it his fostering attention. In 1717, there were but four Lodges remaining in the South of England, and these were in London. But the Order was not destined to become extinct, though royalty frowned upon it, and its great annual meetings had been for years neglected. In that very year, by the active efforts of a few zealous brethren, a Grand Lodge was convened; some changes were made in the organization and government of the Craft, which infused into it a fresh vitality, and it began, with more than youthful vigor, a career of expansion and usefulness which has continued for nearly a hundred and fifty years. The old Charges and Constitutions of the Order were collected and revised by a committee, and, after several year's careful thought, were reported back to the Grand Lodge, and finally approved by that body one month before the death of the venerable Wren. Thus, that great man lived to see the Order with which he had been so long associated, for which he had done so much, and which he so fondly cherished, begin a new career of usefulness. The sun of Masonry, though obscured for years, rose again just as that of its great exemplar was calmly setting. The rising glory of the Order threw a halo around the tomb of its departed Grand Master, and crowned it with a wreath of perpetual benedictions.

The life of Sir Christopher Wren is an example for every young man, whose habits are yet to be formed and character to be won. His stores of learning were the accumulations of a life-time. When he left school, it was not to riot upon the intellectual treasures he had garnered there, but to add to them. He had just begun his studies; his mental discipline had been with a view to future labors and greater achievements; and, instead of believing himself so opulent in intellectual wealth as to require no further efforts, he conceived that he had only acquired a working capital, with which, by patient industry, he might make further and greater acquisitions. He seemed to regard the mind as capable of almost infinite expansion, and of understanding all things within the reach of finite capacity. Hence, he quailed not at any mental enterprise that presented itself, and determined to master whatever subject came within the range of his studies — believing the only barrier which could prevent further progress was that between the finite and the infinite. "With such views of the powers of the human mind, it is not to be wondered at that he became the most learned man of his day.

His industry was another remarkable feature of his character, and without which the former would have been of little avail. Indeed, it was the great secret of his wonderful success. Perhaps no one man ever performed more real labor than Sir Christopher Wren. He never considered that he had accomplished anything, while more remained to be done. He believed that industry was the law which the Creator had stamped upon human nature, and that idleness was a crime no less heinous than profanity or drunkenness. He knew it was his duty to labor, that God required this, and, therefore, he found his pleasure in it. Hence, from the time he began his education in boyhood, until past the age of ninety years, he was never idle — save when nature demanded rest. This, together with his habitual temperance and strictly moral conduct, was the cause, not only of his uniform good health, but of his greatly protracted life. He lived long, because he lived right and well. The amount of labor performed by this extraordinary man is truly astonishing. The erection of such a building as St. Paul's cathedral, at that age of the world, and with the comparatively limited facilities then at hand, would be sufficient to occupy a life-time; it was more than any man had ever accomplished before, or, we came very near saying, since. But the designing and superintending of that great structure was not a moiety of his architectural labors. He built churches, and public edifices, and private mansions, not by dozens, but by scores and fifties; and most of them remain until this day, the finest, most beautiful, and most substantial structures in the great metropolis of England.

But, in addition to all this, Sir Christopher found time to pursue his scientific investigations, and really accomplished more in this department of labor, than any of his illustrious compeers. The records of the Royal Society not only attest his genius and learning, but exhibit his unprecedented labor, and constitute a monument of his industry, as glorious and permanent as St. Paul's itself. It is surprising, nay, almost astounding, to look over these records, and see what can be accomplished by one man. Yet, not content with this, he found time to attend to social duties as well, and did more in the lodge-room than any score of Freemasons in all England. How often we hear men of the present day, who perform not one-tenth of the labor that Christopher Wren did, say, "I have no time to visit the lodge!" Such men should read of the life and labors of this early Grand Master, and cease forever to make such excuses.

In another respect was Sir Christopher an example worthy of the emulation of all: we allude to his pure and blameless life. A devout believer in God, as the great creator, law-giver, and redeemer, he conceived it his first and highest duty to obey him, worship him, love him. Heartily believing in the divine authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, he embraced their precepts as the great unerring chart by which to regulate his life; and having once settled this, to the satisfaction of his own mind, he never swerved from duty until he closed his eyes in death. His whole life constituted a moral structure, beautiful in design, faultless in proportion, and perfect in detail; and when he had "finished his work," the stainless structure was a guarantee that his Divine Master would pronounce it "well done."

Such was Sir Christopher Wren, the most faithful, the most laborious, and the most distinguished Grand Master in the annals of Masonry, for the last two hundred years. Others have been eminent for one or more particular trait, or feature, or quality; but Wren embodied every excellence in his character, and left a record unequalled on the pages of Masonic history. It will be long, if ever, ere the Craft "Shall look upon his like again."

FINIS