
Charity vs. Malice

by Eugene V. Debs

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Our members must learn that they are in honor bound to protect the character and standing of all other members of the Order. As long as a member commits no offense, by which he violates his obligation, no member has a right to detract from his reputation. If he proves false to his pledge, prompt and decisive action should be taken against him as the constitution provides, and he should be made to atone for his wrong. But as long as he holds his place in the Order he is entitled to the respectful consideration of every member. It is too often the case that members say unkind, uncharitable, and unjust things of each other, and these remarks, in many instances are prompted by envy, jealousy, and malice. This is not right, and the member who indulges in talk that is detrimental to his fellow-member is the real offender before the law, and should be arraigned and compelled to make restitution to the injured one.

“Our mission is to build up, not to tear down.” This is especially applicable to the character of our fellow-members. If we cannot speak kindly of them we have no right to speak of them at all. To speak lightly of the reputation of our brothers is criminally wrong, and as antagonistic to our principles as vice is to virtue. It is better to help humanity than to hinder it — far better to be charitable than malicious; and the man who had rather add to, than detract from, the reputation of others is a good man and will meet his sure reward in the respect of his fellows and the approbation of his own conscience.

Beware of the man who has no faith in humanity — he judges all mankind by himself and of course places a low estimate upon its worth. Being dishonest, deceitful, and treacherous himself, he is utterly unfit to soar above, even in conception, the meanness of his own nature. Such a man never had a kind word for anyone. He had rather clothe the reputation of his fellows with infamy than honor. He is not only mean and contemptible but cowardly in the extreme, and has no

scruples about the means he employs to carry out his devilish designs. We hope to see all such men banished from our ranks, as they only serve to create discord and ill feeling. If we would be true to ourselves, true to our principles, and true to honor and manhood, we must treat our fellow members with kindness, charity, and justice.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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