

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

St. John, the Apostle of Love, was the son of Zebedee and Salome. His father was a fisherman, who earned his bread by toiling with the net on the boisterous sea of Galilee. Although of this humble calling, Zebedee must have been removed above the pangs of poverty, for the Scriptures make mention of his "hired servants," of his wife's "substance," and of "his own house," St. John was about twenty-five years of age when he followed John the Baptist preaching in the desert, and heard of "One mightier than he," at once his kinsman, according to the flesh, and his Lord. Though at first called "Boanerges," that is, a son of thunder, his character ripened under the influence of his divine Master into that of a son of unsurpassed gentleness and love. He became not only one of the Twelve Apostles, but was also brought within the innermost circle of our Lord's most intimate friends. He, with Peter and James, were with Him, when no one else was admitted—in the chamber of death, amid the Glory of the transfiguration and in the agony of Gethsemane. He was the very personification of love, which is the sum and substance of Masonry. We read of but one instance of his exhibiting any other spirit, and that was, when exasperation at the conduct of the Samaritans towards his Master, led him to wish fire called down from heaven to consume them. He was present at nearly all of the wonderful miracles performed by Christ; he was the leader of the triumphant procession in Jerusalem when the people cried, "Hosanna to the son of David;" he leaned on His bosom at the Paschal Supper; he was the only Apostle present at the Crucifixion; he was the trusty, loving friend to whom the Saviour with his dying breath committed the care of His mother, Mary; and he was the first to recognize in the dim form seen in the morning twilight the presence of his risen Lord. Honored and loved was he above all other Apostles. But his trials were many and severe. Under Herod's persecution his brother suffered martyrdom. In the persecution under Domitian he was taken to Rome, where he won the crown of martyrdom without dying, for he was thrown into a boiling chaldron of oil, from which he escaped unhurt. Next he was banished to labor in the mines of the rugged and desolate isle of Patmos, in the midst of the Ægean sea, where, however, he wrote his beautiful Gospel, and that Revelation of the glory of the great Temple above, which baffles human language to adequately describe.

It is remarkable that the key-note of St. John's Gospel is the same as that of Moses in the first book in the Bible, St. John repeating the very first words of Genesis—"In the beginning." But the Revelation of St. John is the most interesting to us as Masons; for while at Patmos he held intimate converse with the Great Architect of the Universe, saw beatific visions, and beheld the Temple of God on high, of which the gorgeous fabric of King Solomon at Jerusalem, and his "ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord" gives us but the faintest shadow, although it astonished the Queen of Sheba. This book, besides, is full of symbols and figures that should interest and instruct every Freemason.

It is related of St. John that towards the close of his life, when he was so feeble that he had to be carried to Church, he still ceased not to preach; but his sermon was comprised in these words: "Little children, love one another;" and when asked why he dwelt so much on love,