

MASONIC SERMON IN HAMILTON.

BY BRO. THE REVEREND W. S. SPEIRS.

AT 3 p. m. on Sunday the 31st December, the members of the several Lodges of A. F. & A. M., to the number of nearly five hundred, entered the Cathedral, the choir singing, "Onward Christian Soldiers." A large congregation was present to hear the interesting service. After the brethren had taken their places the Rev. Canon Hebden, M. A., began Even-song. The Very Reverend the Dean read the lessons. The Lord Bishop of Niagara, who was present in his stall, took up the service at the Creed, and continued to the end of third Collect. The choir then sang the anthem taken from the cxxxiv. Psalm, and it was rendered in an excellent manner. In fact the canticles, anthems and hymns were soul-inspiring, the choir seeming to enter into the solemnity and grandeur of the occasion. After the singing of the anthem His Lordship read prayers to the end of the evening service. A hymn was now sung, after which the Rev. W. S. Speirs, Assistant Minister of the Cathedral, preached the sermon, which we give *in extenso*. He was listened to with wrapt attention, and silence prevailed throughout the large and magnificent building. There must have been almost a thousand persons present. He took for his text

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments;

As the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.—Psalm cxxxiii.

It is indeed a good and pleasant thing for brethren to dwell in unity, and the fact of the presence here to-day in God's Holy Temple, in this beautiful Cathedral, of so many members of this ancient Order, this grand and glorious Order of A. F. & A. M., must prove to the citizens that there is unity amongst you, and that peace is within your borders. You acknowledge the one true and only God, and by acknowledging Him, you admit the existence of the three in one, the trinity in unity. That you are a religious body, none who know anything of the Order can fail to admit, and that there is freedom of opinion on religious subjects and religious belief you must yourselves admit. We are accused by the world of doing dishonor to Jesus Christ the Son of God, and of the Holy Spirit, but that in your name and in your behalf I disclaim. Your emblems and your ritual show that you acknowledge the three in one, and if the names of the several persons of the blessed Trinity do not appear they are implied and recognized by all. What would your institution be if you did not worship God? The bare fact of the Order having existed throughout so many generations and through such troublous times, when empires have fallen into decay and kingdoms been swept from the face of the earth; I say the fact of your existence now so pure and free from charge proves that it has God's holy sanction. Like the Holy Bible and the Holy Catholic Church, you are sustained by the same Almighty arm; but sometimes members of the "mystic tie" think if they are good Masons that is all the religion they require. I am sorry to say that such thoughts and such opinions are entertained and held by very many whom I have met within the walls of a Lodge, aye, even in the *sanctum sanctorum*. If there are any within the sound of my voice who hold such dangerous and erroneous views, I would beseech you to abandon such unworthy thoughts and flee to the Cross of Christ and prove by your obedience to His holy laws that you are not outside the pale of hope. Masonry cannot save you. Masonry, although it may direct you to God, it must not, it should not, it cannot take the place of His holy religion. Nothing that is not of Divine origin can do that, and although we may admit and do admit that God protects the "Order," still if we place our dependence upon Masonry, we will find at the last that we have placed our soul's salvation in jeopardy and hazarded our future in the long, long eternity; we will find out when too late, that we have leaned upon a "broken reed." Having been a member of the "Order" for many, many years, I know whereof I speak; I know the workings well, and I have seen this mistake made by many a worthy "brother," for if the teachings of Jesus Christ are true which I affirm they are, that of placing an entire dependence in Masonry as a saving grace, or as a means thereto, will not stand the trial at the last day. It is true that Masonry from first to last inculcates religious sentiment and feeling, and promulgates and defines the Christian virtues, and if the Church could absorb every member of the Masonic body into her life, Christianity would sweep all infidelity from the face of the earth in a very short time, and thus hasten the second advent of our Blessed Lord. Masonry is wide spread, it is a power