

## THE DAY IN HAMILTON.

THE members of the five city Lodges, the Acacia, Temple, Barton, St. John's, and Strict Observance, met in the District Lodge, at the old hall, presided over by R. W. Bro. Mason, D. D. G. M., and afterwards marched in the customary order of procession to St. Thomas' Church, at which they arrived at 3 o'clock. The Masons occupied the body of the church, which was crowded during the sermon, and the greatest attention was paid to the discourse, which was eloquently delivered. The following is the sermon delivered by R. W. Bro. Rev. J. E. Richardson.

John xiii. chap., 34th verse: "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Why St. John the Evangelist is regarded as the Patron Saint of Freemasons I shall not attempt to decide—perhaps the most thoroughly instructed brother among us would fail to give an account in the matter that would prove satisfactory to all parties, although various ancient traditions, well sustained and worthy of credit, have been received as affording good and substantial reason that he was not only a prominent teacher, defender and exemplar of those great principles on which Freemasonry is based, but that he instituted a secret Theological Society with mystic rites and Masonic emblems. The pupils of St. John are well known to all readers of ecclesiastical history, and perhaps through those saintly fathers the world became first enlightened under the Christian dispensation in those great and blessed truths which we believe belong especially to the Craft. However, be this as it may, Masonry is dependent for its life upon no Patron or Grand Master. Its truths are heaven-taught truths; its author is the Great Architect of the Universe; it abides and flourishes in the hearts of a faithful Brotherhood. But since love shone out so brightly in the whole character—in the life and writings of the Apostle and Evangelist St. John—since he, pre-eminently was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and whose delight it was to dwell upon the Divine love which Jesus breathed in every word he uttered, and practised in every act he performed. We Masons may properly honor him as a Christ-honored exponent of our greatest moral and Christian virtue, Charity, which is even greater than Faith and Hope, and which is the very bond of peace and of all virtues. And we may fairly claim him from the picture given of him in the Bible, as a true champion for the principles of Freemasonry, and for a maintenance of the ancient landmark of our Order. To-day, then, let us, as we keep the memorable festival of St. John, make his record of the Saviour's great injunction the subject of our consideration, "A new commandment give I unto you," &c. This has been not inappropriately termed the Eleventh Commandment of the moral law, although at first it does not appear quite evident why our Lord has termed it "a new commandment." There can be no doubt, from the express words of Christ himself and his Apostle Paul, that love to man was inculcated long before the Christian era in the decalogue which God delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai. In answer to the Scribe's question Jesus said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This is the first and great Commandment, and the second is like unto it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self." When He inculcated it, it did in most important particulars become a "new commandment;" then it was explained with new clearness, enforced by new motives and obligations, illustrated by a new sample and obeyed in a new manner. The Lord Jesus had so much enlarged that law of brotherly love beyond what Jews or heathens understood it to be, extending it to all mankind, and even to enemies; so greatly extended and heightened it even to the laying down of one's life for another, so effectually taught, so mightily encouraged, and so urgently insisted upon it as to present it to the Church in an entirely new aspect. Moreover, this commandment when delivered by our Lord was a new one, because it had been generally neglected in the practice of mankind, and because it was, for the most part, omitted in the lessons of the moral teachers of the age. It required the cultivation of peace and harmony by mutual forbearance, kindness, candor and forgiveness by supplying each other's wants, by uniting in prayer and religious exercises, and by concurring to promote the common cause of the gospel, as one body animated by one soul. They were to regard each other as brethren in the same family, disciples of the same Lord, soldiers in the same army, travellers in the same journey, heirs of the same inheritance, members of the same body. Furthermore, Jesus Christ, as the eldest brother in God's family has, in all His acts of love towards us, shown us how to fulfil the command which He himself has given us. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." We learn something of that love as we behold Him in the manger at Bethlehem; we learn it as we think of Him in the wilderness suffering and sorely tempted by the powers of darkness; we learn it as He led forth His disciples from their worldly occupations and taught them in spite of their feebleness of faith, the words of eternal life; we learn it as He went from city to city casting out devils, healing the