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ADDRESS,

BY REV. J. D. GIBSON,

ST JOHN'S LODGE, COLUMBUS, MISS., U.S.

RESPECTED HEARERS,—

According to ancient usage, we annually gather round the altar of Friendship, to celebrate the increased reputation and usefulness of Free Masonry, and pay the tribute of affectionate remembrance to the virtues of its reputed patron, St. John the Evangelist. Thus we bring our votive incense to that temple which our predecessors founded on the firm basis of Virtue, and supported by the pillars of Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty. We meet not to drain the bowl of intemperance, nor to indulge the excess of gluttony, but to renew the cordialities of friendship, the resolutions of love and good-will. We assemble not to disturb the peace of mankind, by the busier plans of ambition, nor to fabricate those arts of luxury which but augment the miseries of human life; our object is to enliven the kindly sensibilities of nature, and all the sweet civilities of social intercourse. In view of this fact, I have have chosen as the subject of my address this evening—*Friendship*.

Right Worshipful Sir and Brethren,—

The Brotherhood of our race is a subject which has demanded and received much attention. The moralist and philosopher, the poet and scholar, the divine and magistrate—all have done homage to it. It is one which the dim remembrances of childhood suggests to our minds; and many of the proudest and loftiest associations of manhood are eternally connected with the theme; and we love it well. The thought that the teeming population of this great earth, scattered over continents and islands, are all members of one Father's family, is noble and elevating. We no longer feel alone, when from the graves of past generations, a glad, but moving voice comes, saying: "We are thy brothers—created by thy Father, and blessed by His cheering smile." We are no longer afraid of the future, when the spirit of prophecy whispers to our souls that the countless millions who will yet tread this fair earth, and breathe its air, "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." And when this holy thought is in our mind, we cease to envy