THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO .- ACTS XVII. 11.

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LONGING FOR HAPPINESS.

Happiness, thou lovely name, Where's thy seat, oh, tell me, where? Learning, Pleasure, Wealth, and Fame, All cry out, - tit is not here. the real Not the wisdom of the wise, Can inform me where it lies; Nor the grandeur of the great, Can the bliss I seek create.

Object of my first desire, lesus, crucified for me ! All to happiness aspire, Only to be found in Thee! Thee to praise, and Thee to know, Constitute our bliss below; Thee to see, and Thee to love, Constitute our bliss above.

Lord, it is not life to live,
If Thy presence Thou deny;
Lord, if Thou Thy presence give, Tis no longer death to die; Source and Giver of repose, Singly from Thy smile it flows; Peace and happiness are Thine -Mine they are, if thou art mine.

TOPLADY.

The Market

## THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED. JOHN XIII. 23.

A SERMON preached in the Parish Church of St. John's, C. E., on St. John the Evan-gelist's Day, 27th December, 1844; on the occasion of an Annual Meeting of the Dor-chester Masonic Lodge, at their special

BY THE REV. W. DAWES, RECTOR.

The character of the Apostles of Christ must ever be a subject of deep interest to the Christian mind. Selected from the body of mankind by Him whose omniscient eye could scan the secrets of all hearts,—who knew what was in man—for the high and holy purpose of hearing his words of wisdom, marking his works of power and mercy, beholding his glory (the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;) and of bearing witness to the truth as it is in Jesus; - they stand before us, commanding our reverence, admiration, and love. The Scriptures, indeed, present us with one great Pattern, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;' of whom it is written, 'He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps.' But although Christis the Sun of righteousness 'by whose light alone we shall see light;' who is the Guide, as well as Saviour of his people: yet may we rightly regard, for example of life and instruction of manners, his earliest and most devoted disciples, who counted not their life dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. Amongst that holy band stands prominently, the beloved disciple? St. John, referred to in our text, and on whose festival-day, as appointed by our Church, we are now assembled.

I feel I have a duty of a very peculiar character to perform, in addressing you, not merely under the ordinary relation of minister and people, but some of you as belonging to the ancient Fraternity of Freemasons, who regard the Evangelist St. John as the Great Patron or Grand Master of Christian Lodges. Not being one of your body, 1 am not qualified to say much on the history, principles, and practices of your order: and were it otherwise, this is not a fitting time or place to fruit after his kind; so saith the Saviour: a peculiarity of the true Christian: the blending and harmonious action of what may Not being one of your body, I am not qualified antiquity; and truly, if your origin is to be regarded as coeval with the introduction and general use of hieroglyphical and symbolical characters, it must be run up to very high antiquity. These appear to be the first and simplest methods of retaining important truths -whether historical, speculative or practical -which the human mind in the ruder states of society employed. The early history of the Egyptians, Chaldenns, the Western or Celtic nations, and others, furnishes us with ample testimony, on this subject; and indeed, until the invention of alphabetical characters or letters by the Phænicians, and their general adoption by other nations, it will be seen, there was no other way open to them of recording extraordinary events, which were happening around them-of arresting and retaining the discoveries of philosophy and science -or of perpetuating moral lessons. But on this point, the history of Philosophy will supply abundant data to the studious, inquiring

Neither can I say anything respecting your distinctive principles: -you inculcate, as I find from your writings, the grand principles of truth and love; and cherish the obligation in all your members of affording ( relief) to indigent Brethren of the order, and to widows and orphans of Brethren. And as to your practice, we believe, that when engaged in your Lodges in the study and contemplation of high truths of natural religion, moral philosophy, or physical science, under symbolical representations, you would restrain all impiety and immorality. And further, as we have it upon the highest authority, a late chief of your order in England, that you fraternize for the purposes of social intercourse, of mutual assistance, of charity to the distressed, and good-will to all: and that fidelity to a trust, reverence to the magistrate and obedience to the laws, are sculptured in capitals upon the pediment of your Institution power meet you as a social, moral, and a loyal body; and gladly afford you the opportunity of meeting together in public Christian worship. Yet, we would have it ever remembered that, innocent and interesting as may be all those meetings, and doings, there is but 'one thing needful,' for sinful-im-mortal man; 'one thing' which no human

the attainment of spiritual religion — that faith and love to Christ, and devotion of heart and life to God, which St. John exemplified, and in which alone there is safety for eternity. Well, then, we think, must it be for us, on this occasion, to review the character of this holy Apostle, and learn in his life and words, what true religion is; and may we all (whatever name we bear,) have grace to follow him, who through faith and patience has inherited the promises. Appropriate, we are sure. will the Mason deem the subject for this occasion of our meeting, when I remind him of the terms in which his Lodge was dedicated :-To the Memory of Holy Saint John we de-

dicate this Lodge; may every Brother revere his character, and imitate his virtues!"

The disciple whom Jesus loved."—This is a brief but very comprehensive description of the character of St. John. What disciple could Jesus (who knew what was in man) love, but one who was altogether lovely, in conversation: one who trusted in his Lord, meckness of spirit, and lowliness of heart. Jesus loved all his apostles—he loves all his disciples, for it is his word to the spiritual Israel: I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee?: if, then, the term stands (us it does) in special application to the favoured disciple John-surely it must be because of some nearness to the Saviour, some peculiar likeness to Christ, some greater measure of the spirit of Jesus realized in the soul, and manifested in his temper and life, than is generally attained and to be marked in his believing people. It is very much, then, to Acts. He possessed great delicacy of mind, and sensibility and tenderness of heart; and in the book of Masonry: "May every Brother revere the character, and imitate the when in the passage from which our text is virtues of Holy St. John.'

Permit me to remark that, to attain to this expressed wish, is not the work of Masonry, but the work of the Holy Spirit of God, in his silent, continuous, and effectual influences on the soul: it is not of him that willeth, 'nor attitude of this gentle spirit, when reclining of him that runneth, but of God that showeth on the bosom of the incarnate Deity, instinct mercy.' It is not by might, nor by power'-nor by any human devices—' but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.' It is that Holy Spirit of grace, by whom we are born again unto newness of life', and made 'sons of God and heirs of eternal life'; it is that Spirit, 'that giveth him the love of God and man is shed abroad in the heart-by him we are quickened to every duty, supported in every trial, comforted in every sorrow, and scaled unto the day of final redemption: By his abiding presence and divine influences, St. John became the character that we behold with reverence; by him were wrought the graces of the Christian life, the virtues which adorned and dignified this man of God, and which you would seek to imitate; by him they shine with such unfading lustre, and are ever sweet, and lovely, and fragrant, as flowers transplanted from the heavenly paradise!

in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. Saint John abode in him; he received out of his fulness grace for grace'; and therefore he at once manifested the character and temper, and performed the works of Christ,- whatsoever things were true, lovely, good report.

In the disciple whom Jesus loved' there are four qualities most eminently marked: 1st. His faith in, and devotion to his Divine Master.

2d. His meekness and gentleness.

3d. His fortitude and energy of character.

4th. His Love.

These qualities may be more conveniently poken of separately—yet are they all united and harmoniously blended in the all-but perfect character of St. John; and to behold him as he is, he must be seen clothed in this whole robe of light and beauty—this coat of many colours, wrought by the all skilful hands of the great architect of every spiritual character.

1st. The beloved disciple's faith in, and devotion to Christ, were most conspicuous, and form the ground-work of his whole beauteous character. Called, early in life, by the Lord Jesus to follow him, he at once obeyed the call, and ever after continued stendiast and faithful, with his divine Master. Though St. John is more frequently presented to us, through the evangelic story, than any other of the apostles, excepting perhaps Saint Peter, yet is there no instance recorded of neglect or want of faith in him. The unsteadfastness of the more impetuous Peter, sinking in the water, after offering to come to Jesus-at last denying him, in his very presence-nothing like this was found in the beloved and loving John. His faith was deep, calm and firmand though for a short moment shaken, when the prince of darkness prevailed, and all the disciples forsook Jesus and fled, yet he quickly recovered from his momentary defection: he returns to his Lord—undaunted, he enters the palace of the High Priest; and so far as we can gather from the sacred narrative, he never more quits him until, as the beloved disciple, he has committed to him the charge to be son and guardian to the weeping mother of his dying Lord;—he hears the expiring prayer— beholds the last beat of that great heart, which bled for men—and sees the Lord of Life—

Society—human rules—human studies or in- of the eleven at the sepulchre, on learing the Lord, he has reflected the heart of Jesus : and which we doubt not your order cherishes, be not structions can ever bring you to: even 'sal- tidings of the resurrection; he is the first to he ever stands forward, prominent to the narrowed and contracted to the small circle of vation through faith in the one Mediator discern the Lord, when, in the habit of a stran-between God and us—the man Christ Jesus. ger, he shows himself at the sea of Tiberias ger, he shows himself at the sea of Tiberias Your Society is not calculated, indeed does to the disciples fishing in their vessel; he, in not, I believe, pretend or attempt, to lead to company with Saint Peter, is the first to enter the temple at Jerusalem, after the Ascension, to preach Christ unto the people; he is the you, that ye also love one another.? first, with Peter, to suffer persecution for the I need hardly mention, that the testimony of Jesus, being thrust into prison by the Chief Priests. And of these two apostles it is written in the 4th of Acts, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlcarnel and ignorant men, they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." The same fervent devotion characterized him throughout a life, extended by the good providence of God to upwards of a hundred years. And need I light, cheers with its gentle, fraternal voice, and adduce his own writings, to tell of his faith affords effectual aid, to every one bearing the and devotion to Christ? A volume might image of Christ: to every son and daughter of well be filled with evidence brought from that fertile source. "Abide in him." "Whoso-ever abideth in him sinneth not." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "He that believeth on the Son his character and deportment, in his life and of God hath the witness in himself.?2 " He conversation: one who trusted in his Lord, that hath the Son, hath life." Words, all loved him, and was peculiarly like to him, in these, which plainly show the heart of the writer: they manifest the deep and abiding faith and devotion of the "beloved disciple." But (leaving with reluctance this grateful theme) we must pass to the

2nd quality remarkable in St. John: his meckness and gentleness of soul. How like to Christ himself, was he in this, particular of character. He had indeed that meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price,' of which St. Peter thus speaks; and which perhaps it was that rendered him so great a favourite with Peter, as we trace them so often together in the narrative of the when in the passage from which our text is taken, we hear of him 'leaning on the Saviour's breast' at the Paschal Supper. The highest genius of the most gifted artist has failed, we think, to catch the meek expression -to delineate the soft features, and the placid with the very life and spirit of Christ. We must image it all to ourselves-for the artist has failed to depict it: and happy for us Brethren, if, possessed in measure of the like spirit, we are enabled to realize the meek and gentle in the Christian character; for the and delight themselves in the act, the carth peace. And his writings, what full testimon do they afford us of his gentleness of spirit There is a breathing of gentleness in the utterance of the most tremendous truths, and the most sublime and soul-inspiring scenes of the Apocalypse. And in his first Epistle, his uniform mode of address to his sons in the faith and believers generally is 'little children'-'my little children,' expressing the utmos tenderness of a spiritual father in Christ. But we hasten to say a word on the 3rd

quality of the beloved disciple—his fortitude of character and energy of conduct. At first appear to the worldly mind opposite, if not contradictory, characteristics. He is passive when called to endure for the Lord's sake meek, complying and forgiving under insult and persecution; but when called to any Christian enterprise-the path of duty plair before him—who so bold—unshrinking—energetic as the true Christian?—So was it with St. John. Though all gentleness and love yet—strange was it—the Saviour surnamed him and his brother James, Boanerges, the sons of thunder. Mark the intrepid, though imprudent, zeal of John, when to resent an indignity offered to his beloved Master, he would call down fire from heaven, as Elisha did, to consume the adversaries. How touch ing was the gentle remonstrance of the Savi our to his meek, but bold disciple, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' The fortitude of John was most strikingly display ed, throughout the last trying scenes of Christ's life, to which we have before adverted. Whilst Peter—the bold and daring Peter to deny his Lord, on the first trial, if by the Christ reconciling the world unto himself. It denial there would appear a prospect of securing himself;—John remains calm—undaunted in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, —fearless: We know not that he was parti- and it tends not to that spiritual worship of God cularly tried—but we do know that he fell as a Father reconciled in Christ—the sweet, filial not from his steadfastness, in that dread hour heart-prayer of a child of God, 'Abba Father.' And therefore is it no guide to those many tle was consistent with this beginning. At mansions in heaven, which Christ has gone to once, next to Peter, he is the boldest preacher prepare for his bolieving, obedient people. It of the truth as it is in leave 1 recordless of were well to attend to the Instructions of your of the truth as it is in Jesus, regardless of order, and the rules of action it prescribes, so far his glorious career, we find him the great and fearless defender of the simplicity of the feet and light to our paths — by it along the his glorious career, we find him the great and fearless defender of the simplicity of the feet and light to our paths — by it along the feet and light to our path Gospel, against the heresies of both Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied the pre-existence and in Christ Jesus. latter days, offer astounding and irrefragable testimony to these fundamental truths. The Word was God?— the Word was made to the truth of the word was found was found to the truth of the word was found to the word was f ind dwelt among us?!

But we must pass on to the 4th and last feaare of the character of the beloved disciple, which we proposed to touch :--

His love. This is the characteristic of St. John. In overy age of the Christian church and by every Christian heart, may we not beholds the last beat of that great heart, which bled for men—and sees the Lord of Life— felt to be the loving disciple of the blessed dead.—On the first day of the week he is first

Christian mind-the embodiment of that new Covenant which our Lord delivered to his Apostles on the night previous to his crucicompany with Saint Peter, is the first to enter fixion: A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved

I need hardly mention, that the love here spoken of, the love of St. John, was very much more than compassion to the poor, and relief to the necessitous. It was that love which worketh no ill to his neighbour and which is the fulfilling of the law-that love which moves him, in whose heart it abides, to do justly, to delight in mercy, and to walk humbly with his God: that true Christian love, which regards God as its supreme object-goes out in tender, intense emotion to wards Christ its Author-and reflects its mild affliction, to every brother of the human family Charity towards any small number, with whom we fraternize for any particular objects, we should often be reminded, is not Christian charity or love. No-no-Christian charity is free as the Gospel whose first-fruit it is, pleasant to the eye and good for food: 'tis free as the dews of heaven which fall as well on the barren desert, as on the fertile valleys;—free as the sun whose light and heat are withheld from none: it is free as the love of God—God is Love.

It were surely vain to attempt to offer proof that the beloved disciple himself loved his Saviour and loved his people. The pure spirit of Christian love breathes in all he wrote,—the warm, bright flame of Christian love shone in all he did-and when, full of years, he is about to pass to the deep quiet of a heavenly home-his last public exhortation is 'Little children, love one another.' St. Jerome informs us that, when age and weak ness disabled him from preaching, at every public meeting in the church, he exhorted them with these words: 'Little children, love one another.' Some of his auditors wondered at the constant repetition of the same thing, and inquiring the reason of it, received from him this answer: 'This is what our Lord hath commanded, and if we

can do this, we need do nothing else.'
Such in brief was St. John: himself the loving disciple, he was emphatically the beloved disciple. Approaching in spirit so near to his divine Lord by the abundant communications of His Gracehe was blessed with the peculiar friendship of Jesus—he is honoured as the great prophet, under the Christian dispensation. To him it was given to behold the mysteries of the apocalyptic visionhe reveals them to the generations yet to come, even to the time of the end. He has been called distinctively, and by universal consent, the Divine; and with his solemn, awful book the canon of Scripture closes, sealed with the signet of heaven, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this acording regard that be the transporting walkened the things which are written in this book."

Such was St. John; his character—his privi-leges—his faith in his Divine Master and devotion to him—his meckness and gentleness—his fortitude and energy of character—his love; and he is blessed with the special friendship of the Son of God :-

"MAY EVERY BROTHER REVERE HIS CHA RACTER AND IMITATE HIS VIRTUES."

But now to conclude this prolonged address the object of the Masonic order is said to be to promote piety and virtue. My Christian Brethren, take heed individually, that yours be Christian picty and Christian virtue: the piety and the graces or virtues of St. John: -nothing short of this, will stand the fiery trial, which is hereafter to

As Masons, let me say, preserve a high standing in seeking the attainment of the object stated; let it not be with you, mere negative or sentimental piety and virtue; -- and we shall rejoice in beholding the good fruit, the living 'soberly, ighteously, and godly in this present world.'

But, Brethren, let me say, what I have before intimated, do not expect from Masoury or any human system, what it cannot teach, 'a saving knowledge and love of God, as revealed in his Son Jesus Christ.' It cannot show you the way to heaven-or lead you on that way: Christ, the only true Shechinah-the light of men-hath said, once for ever ' I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' Masonry may direct you to God, as the Great Architect of the Universe; it may teach you that he is the all-seeing Eye-that he holdeth the Scales of Justice; -that he upholdeth all things by his power, and ordereth all things by his providence, and such like grand truths of natural religion: and it may teach, that he is to be worshipped — and that his Commandments must be obeyed, -all this is well; but it deth not teach—it does not pretend to teach you of God, as seen in Christ: 'He that hath seen me hath seen tells not of the Holy Spirit's necessary influences made wise unto salvation, through faith that is

and interesting nature of the investigations you engage in, you be led to think it contains so much, as to enable you to rest upon it for guidance to truth and virtue and peace, and perhaps to neglect the divine word and ordinances. Oh! emember it is a human system, and can never bring the soul of sinful man to peace with God. There is but one system of divine appointment; one only way of acceptance with the Father, one name under heaven whereby we can be saved-

Masonic Brethren. Remember always the higher and holier order to which you belong, the Christian brotherhood; and that every one is a brother who loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; that every one is a neighbour, who needs a pitying eye

May the disciple whom Jesus loved, exempli-fying, as he does, true Christian piets, Christian love and Christian virtues, he ever present to your minds in your social meetings;—and may every brother have the grace of the Holy Spirit, enabling him in deep sincerity of soul, "to revere his character and imitate his virtues."

## THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

However great the value and necessity, of visible ordinances and sacraments to the visible form of the otherwise invisible house of God; and however important their uses as divinely appointed instruments in leading sinners to Christ, and in helping them to abide in him; we cannot keep too distinct the great truth, nor urge it too plainly, that it is not these which constitute the true Church of God, whatever their office as parts of, and as essential to its visible form : that the great constituent act on which the whole being of the true Church depends, is just that on which all true piety in each soul depends the coming of sinners, each for himself, unto Christ, by faith; that in proportion as this individual exercise of faith, immediately upon Christ, increases in strength, and thus draws more and more life from him into each soul, so increases the life and holiness of the Church-in other words, that the spiritual life of the Church is not a sort of corporate investment in something called the body of the Church, independently of the spiritual character of its several members, from which body, as a fountain, theirs is drawn, and which continues ever the same in fulness, whether they severally be holy, more or less: but that it is simply the aggregate of the spiritual life and holiness of all individual believers, severally united to, and drawing life immediately from, Christ; that to faci-litate this individual deriving of life directly from Christ all the way of our pilgrimage, each for himself, drinking of that rock which follows us, and gathering of that manna which, to the believer, daily cometh down from heaven, is the great object of all the external institutions of the Church; and that whenever they become so employed or it garded that they perform not this subordivite office, especially when placed so high in dignity that they stand as evidences of the possession of grace, instead of only signs and seals and means of grace; that they intercepts instead of aiding the soul's direct looking ing a Jesus for righteousness and life frenderless immediate, and more vicarious more by intervening and intercessory agencies; when they become themselves the objects of faith instead of its auxiliaries—assuming, in any degree, to stand as vicars of Christ to the soul, inviting reliance in themselves instead of glorying, like John the Baptist, to point the sinner away from them to the Lamb of God; whenever thus used, (we cannot say, it too strongly,) they are grievously perverted

and dishonoured.

Never did the forerunner of our Lord appear more truly great than when retired most behind his message, and endeavouring to centre all attention upon Him who was to baptize, not with water, but with the Holy Ghost. Never do the visible ordinances of the Church appear in their real beauty and dignity as when their signs are most retired behind the great truths they signify, and most effective in fixing the hearts of those who come to them on the person and offices of that Saviour whose inward grace they pledge,

and to faith convey.

How prone are Christian men to lose sight of the real adorning of the house of God; to think of the type more than the reality; to dwell on the outward appearance which, however costly and magnificent, like the most fine gold of the temple of Jerusalem, is temporal; instead of the glorious jewelry of the spiritual sanctuary which is unseen and eternal. How prone we are, while estimating very highly, as we ought, the assembling together of the many to the solemnities of the sanctuary, to make a low practical estimate, comparatively, of the value of the coming of one sinner to Christ, by a living faith. Angels, in the presence of God, re-joice over one sinner that repenteth; and all the worth they see in our outward things, is their tendency to advance the repentance and faith of sinners. But we-how prone to take the means for ends, satisfying ourselves too much with the dignity, and propriety of the visible array—zealous to gather about our altar the tributes of wealth and taste—the sculpture, the architecture, the robe, the chaunt,—all, it may be, as is well belitting the courts of the Lord's house; but looking too little beyond these surface-things, to inquire how far it may be hoped the inward adorning of faith that worketh by love, and hath fruit unto holiness, is keeping pace .-Alas! let us not forget what emptiness and nothingness are in the one, but as it is met at each point and filled out with the reality of the other; that dead materials, wood, hay, stubble, however covered over with the sacramental robe of a Christian profession, are stubble still; that the spiritual death; of a merely professing Christian; instead of being made less dead by being arrayed in the circumstance of life, is only made the more awful by being thus laid out in state. painted corpse, dressed as in life, is the most revolting form of death. But there is a way to be adding ever increasing beauty and glory to the house of God. Oh I that we niny prize it more and more! Go out into the lanes and highways; find some outcast

<sup>\*</sup> Prestoil's Masonry, page 282.