

bearing, that scorn of the happiness and luxuries of the world, that austere, rigid life of strict self denial, that bold rebuking of ungodliness in high places. It is all summed up for us in those words I have already quoted, *John fulfilled his course*—words which depict his career either as that of the victorious racer dashing along the race course, passing every competitor, and dying nobly in the very moment of victory; or, as others have understood the words, of the course of some stream that sweeps along in its majestic course, fertilizing, as it goes, many and many a land, and at last rushing as a mighty torrent into the bed of the ocean, its native home. Brethren, when we look at the history of a great saint like St. John the Baptist, it is right to trace the visible effect to the hidden cause; to trace the stream to its one true fountain, and to be sure that where there is such abhorrence of sin, such love for the Saviour, such witnessing for truth, such boldness even unto death, that God has been sought and found; that fruits like these grew not on the stem of nature; that the truth has been followed, so far as the truth is known; that that truth has taught him how to value the world's toys and baits, and scorn and rage—to value them at their real value, when seen in the light of eternity—and then to trample them under foot. Faith like his; separation and severance from the world like his; that rugged and undaunted boldness which courts no smile and fears no frown has its roots on high, in common with God, in a spirit of obedience to His will. But your presence here to-day reminds me that I must turn to another illustration of the text, "By their fruits ye shall know them." I cannot hope to teach you your duty as Masons; it would ill become me—perhaps the youngest in your ranks—to attempt this. But since you have honored me so far as to ask me to address you on this festival, I propose to examine our world-wide order by the simple test our Lord and Saviour here lays down; and with no affected humility permit me to ask you, Brethren and Worshipful and Right Worshipful Brethren, to extend your wonted charity to me if I fail, I do not say to instruct, but to interest you. What I have to say cannot be new to you, for it is from yourselves that I have learned the truths I am about to put you in mind of. What, then, is Freemasonry, and what are its fruits? What is its aim, and what does it do? First, what is it? It is a *beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols*. Masonry, then, is not a system of religion, but of morality. The great principles of natural and revealed religion are, it is true, preserved and inculcated by our Order. The Bible, the volume of the Sacred Law, is the great standard of Masonic truth. No act is regular which feels not the hallowing influence of its open

pages. It is the central point to which the eyes of Masons are always directed, from which are diffused those gleams of light which dispel the darkness of the human understanding, and brighten and illumine the blindness of the human heart. But Masonry concerns itself rather with the moral than with the spiritual doctrines of the Bible. It is the handmaid and assistant, not the rival of, or the substitute for, the Church. This "system of morality, veiled in allegory," is "illustrated by symbols"—symbols from the universal language. The bent knee, bowed head, outstretched hand, are embodiments of thoughts and feelings common to mankind. Look around you, as you sit, and let me read to you what this Church teaches you symbolically. The *chancel* looks toward the East because Christ is the Bright and Morning Star, and shall thence appear, as say the old traditions, when in the latter day he cometh to save us. The Western front is toward the world. Upon that face are found in many an ancient Cathedral all manner of strange grotesque figures, representing the evil agents and powers of darkness cast forth from the Church and beating their wings against its windows, unable to effect an entrance. There, at the North, stands the tower, the symbol of the Apostolic Ministry facing the foes of Christ and resisting them, keeping watch and ward evermore on the side of the danger. Within, the church is divided into nave, choir, and sanctuary; threefold according to the eternal Three, and yet again in the nave are three aisles, of the same sacred number. The chancel arch is the symbol of the gate of death, the portal through which man enters into the rest of paradise. The choir represents that paradise, the place of our hopes and dreams. Thither looking, we see its occupants clothed in white robes and singing in melodious antiphonal chant the songs of other days, and the new songs of Moses and the Lamb before the symbol of the throne. That throne is within; it stands in the sanctuary—the symbol of the present Christ, where we show forth the Lord's death till he come. Above the chancel the roof ascends, adorned here and there with shining stars, because our journey through life is in the night of this world—a night now far spent. The font stands at the door, because we enter by baptism into the fold of God. The very windows are symbols. They are wider within than without, because the truth widens and broadens upon us as we leave the world and enter the household of God. and those windows are filled with many colored glass, which, from without, appears dark and unsightly, but from within appears beautiful and clear; because it is only by being inside the church that man can discern the glory and beauty of the light shed on us by our Lord, who is light. Such,