

Masonic Sermon.

On Sabbath evening the members of St. Paul's and Wesleyan Churches, numbering over one hundred, assembled at the Masonic Hall, Upper Wyndham Street, and participated in a body to St. Andrew's Church, where an able, eloquent and instructive sermon was preached by the Rev. J. C. Smith, B. D., Chaplain of Wesleyan Lodge, commemorating the anniversary of St. John the Evangelist. The front seats were reserved for the Masons. There was a large congregation, the large edifice being almost filled. Appropriate music for the occasion was furnished in excellent style by the choir during the service.

The Rev. Mr. Smith after tracing the metaphysical significance of the incident recorded in the text, (1 Kings, 6th and 7th verses) as applicable to the absolute perfection of Jehovah's purposes, in the kingdoms of nature and of grace, drew attention to the particular methods adopted for the accomplishment of the Great Architect's designs. Towards the close some of the lessons prepared for our learning were emphasized.

1st. We have here in this subject a practical unveiling of something of true religion, furnished not in words of man's wisdom, not drawn out in the Theological schools of the world, but by the unerring pen of inspiration. Religion is a vital practical thing—a something which is meant to permeate and to sanctify all the varied relations of human life—full of forbearance and brotherly love, as exemplified in the life ministry and example of Emmanuel. Hence we infer that the religion can be in its origin Divine which does not authoritatively demand loyalty to God and fraternal kindness, good will to the universal brotherhood of men, in which faith leads not up to duty and eternal reward, transforming duty into high delight, and hope into full fruition.

Love or charity is God's royal seal, which never can be broken. All other virtues are doomed to die. Charity alone is immortal, and like the central sun in the firmament of heaven, it is destined not only to eclipse but to extinguish all other lesser lights by its resplendent and unending lustre. "Charity never faileth."

(2) This, Brethren of the Mystic Tie, queen of all the graces, and in, as you know, one of the golden links in the chain which binds our brotherhood into one the wide world over, from the monarch on the throne to the humblest of his subjects. For the Masonic Institution, which is not more illustrious for the tried stability of its friends, and the unexcelled honors which gleam all through her venerable history, than for the beneficent character of her ennobling aims, we do not claim that it is professedly or distinctively Christian. There are on the roll of its memberships in the visible church, the names of many whose religious opinions and daily life are manifestly at variance with the teaching to be found in the volume of the sacred law. Yet, I for one would blush were I to give my personal adherence to a system which I knew contained a solitary article in its constitution, either directly or indirectly adverse to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That there is any such article in our formulary we emphatically deny. And though not at liberty to canvass for recruits to the Masonic ranks, this much we are free to declare in the hearing of all men, that the science to which we render a homage inferior only to that which rightly belongs to a more complete and more glorious revelation is one in which the relations of human life and the social stations of mankind are set forth and inculcated on the broad basis of fraternal esteem and fellowship. Therefore let me express a hope, that thus interpreted the relations of this present life, and the endeavoring to discharge aright our individual responsibilities, animated not simply by the enthusiasm of humanity, but also by an enlightened fealty to the Sovereign of the Universe, we may view this portion of Holy Writ now under consideration as in complete accordance with the true genius of Masonry, which flattered or defamed, quietly holds on the even tenor of her way, steadily doing her work of benevolence along the unchronicled paths of genuine sympathy, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the orphan, and making the widow's heart rejoice. "Letting not her left hand know what her right hand doeth."

(3) Brethren, be ye persuaded not only as Masons, but as Christians (a higher style of man) henceforth to contribute by the grace of God somewhat to the upbuilding of Christ's spiritual temple on this earth. In doing this, be ye careful, in measure of spirit, in humbleness of mind, on all occasions to make liberal use of the implements (moral) "faith, hope and charity." First of all, dear brother, see to it that as a loving stone, dug from the quarry of nature and silently fashioned of God's Holy Spirit, thou thyself have an appointed place in that building in which the Lord Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone.

4. This living temple, this building of God, in which neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron is heard, is now in progress of construction. As yet the scaffolding is around it. It will of course be seen in its perfection and beauty only to heaven above. There and then the Great Architect's designs shall shape themselves into the blissful realities of eternity, never more to fade or change. Then the genuine secrets of a Master Mason shall be brought to light, and the wonders of redeeming grace shall be fully disclosed to those of us who shall have ascended on the ladder of Divine love, through the blood of atoning sacrifice, to the royal arch of heavenly experience. Then shall the golden square of eternal rectitude be applied to the redeemed in peace, and the compass of eternal truth shall finally define the limits of spiritual joy. Then shall the top stone be triumphantly laid into the rightful place, amid the glad acclaim of angel hosts and the spirits of just men made perfect. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner, this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes!" So mote it be.

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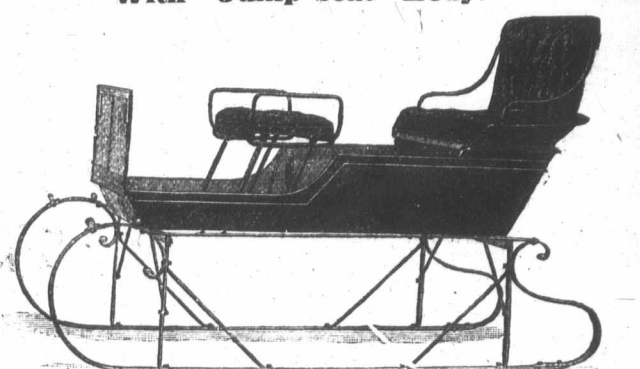
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