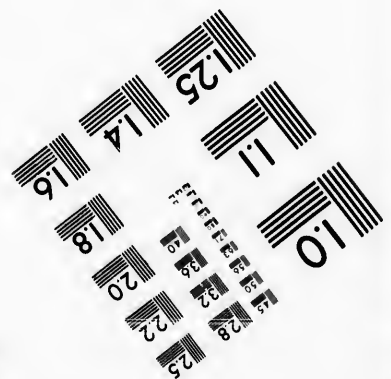
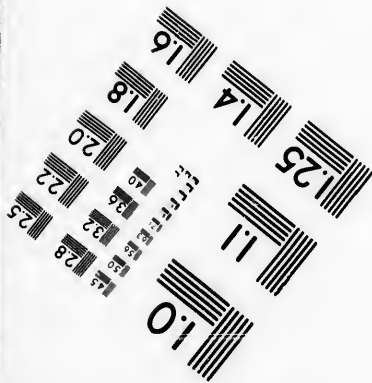
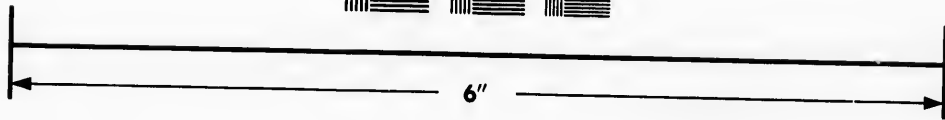
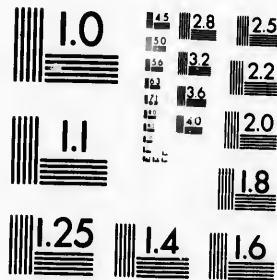


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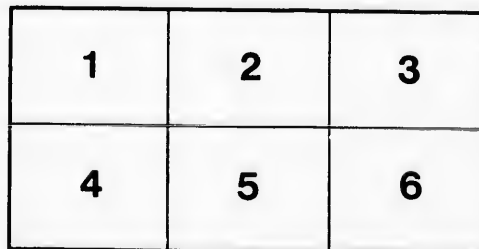
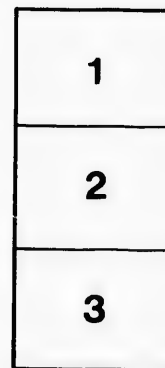
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# A SERMON

PREACHED BY

REV. GEO. D. HARRIS,

IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, HALIFAX,

ON THE OPENING OF THE GRAND LODGE  
OF NOVA SCOTIA, A. F. & A. M.,  
JUNE 11, 1890.

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1 ST. PETER 2: 17---" LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD."

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HALIFAX, N. S. :  
PRINTED BY W. MACNAB, 3 PRINCE ST.  
1890.



# A SERMON

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, HALIFAX, ON JUNE 11TH, 1890, UPON  
THE OPENING OF THE GRAND LODGE OF A. F. & A.  
MASONS OF NOVA SCOTIA,

BY THE REV. GEO. D. HARRIS,

RECTOR OF ST. MATTHEW'S PARISH LAHAVE, N. S.

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*1 St. Peter 2, 17: "Love the Brotherhood."*

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Assembled as we are to-day, brethren, as representatives of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Nova Scotia, to honour the great God of heaven and earth, and as the first opening ceremony of our deliberations, we are following one of the land-marks of the Craft of Masonry, observed from time immemorial.

Religious services, along with instruction or eulogies of Masonry, have long been the practice of this honorable body when celebrating the day of either of her patron saints, or when gathered in legislative assembly. As early as the year 926 A. D., we find a written injunction, issued by a Grand Lodge called together by Prince Edwin, brother of King Athelstan, and which had been observed for ages before, that "Every Mason shall cultivate brotherly love, and the love of God, and frequent holy church."

Long before churches were built, Masons met on the highest hills or in the lowest valleys for the purposes of the Craft and to worship God. Belief in and worship of God are two of the leading features and the oldest landmarks of the fraternity. Religion and religious teaching are constantly inculcated in Masonry, which thereby becomes the best and most efficient handmaid of Christianity, in encouraging and assisting men to be men in the true sense of the word man, and of extending and applying her holy principles.

The principles and objects of Masonry are such as, when known, will attract the love and esteem of all honorable men, and I think myself happy in having this opportunity of presenting to you to-day some few of the many reasons why you should love this Brotherhood, second only to that glorious Brotherhood named after the Divine Son of God, viz., the Brotherhood of Christianity.

Freemasonry is no mere toy; it is not an institution designed simply for recreation, or for mutual protection, profit or pleasure, but is designed to teach man his relation to the mighty God, on the one hand, and, on the other, to all mankind and to himself, with his respective duty to each; and in this design she

takes her foundation principles from the holy religion upon which she herself is established.

No human society without such principles and objects could possibly exist so many ages as this society has done. For Freemasonry is not a child of yesterday, nor is she content to count her years by centuries, but by the millenniums. Her origin is twofold. As an organization, a visible body intended to live and thrive and work for the good of mankind and the glory of God, she has an establishment from a very remote period, the date being fixed very near the completion of King Solomon's Temple, built to the honor of God in the year 1004 B. C., and is thus 2894 years old. But as a Science, it dates from a period little less than that of the Creation itself. Indeed, the science of Freemasonry has always been considered as coeval with the systematic regulation of that chaotic mass over which the Spirit of the Great Architect of the Universe moved as He began the great work of those memorable six days, in which all things of earth were formed, and Father time started out on his primeval movements.

The grand reason why the science of Freemasonry is justly held to be thus coeval with the creation of our world is, not because the Order has been in existence from so remote a period—which no enlightened man or mason will maintain—but because the Principles and Truths sought to be inculcated upon every member of the Craft by its beautiful symbolism, are coeval with the world's birth-day.

These Principles are sublime, yea, I may say divine, for they are based on the same foundation as is our holy religion; and hence Masonry has always been defined by words which declare exactly what it is, and what every intelligent mason recognizes it to be, as he receives each new burst of masonic light. It has been defined as "a science of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbolism," having one high end and aim, viz.: to teach Truth and Fact—truth which is scriptural truth, and facts which are scriptural facts.

Its whole design as a speculative science is the investigation of Divine Truth, and I well remember my own surprise and delight when I so unexpectedly found the whole symbolism and teaching of the initiation, passing, and raising to the sublime degree of a Master Mason, so full of scriptural reference and instruction.

From the moment that a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry starts out on his pilgrimage in search of light till he is finally rewarded, he is an investigator, ever seeking and always finding new light and new truths; learning more and more of these at every step, while yet, as anticipating from the start, never fully finding that of which he is in search; and thus learning what we should all ever remember that the great question asked by Pilate, the governor of Judea, of our Lord and Master, viz.: "What is Truth," has never yet been, and never will be fully answered in this world. Not till mortality has been swallowed up in victory, and the gates of the kingdom of heaven have opened to receive the children of the King, will it receive its answer; but when we shall know even as we



are known then shall we expect to have the question answered by Him of whom it was asked over eighteen hundred years ago.

Two of these great truths of Masonry referred to are, first, there is a God, a living, loving, active and just God, who governs not only the world at large, but also each individual creature of His hand, who over-rules all things, and who, by His mighty justice, shall cause truth to prevail, right and goodness to triumph in the end, and sin to be punished: all of which is beautifully brought out by degrees as the candidate wends his way along the path leading to light and fraternal greetings. The other is that fundamental doctrine of our holy religion, viz., the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead.

These two doctrines, or truths, or principles our order teaches so thoroughly by her symbolism that not a single Mason who is at all sensible of the teachings of symbolism can possibly fail to understand and appreciate them. Again, if we closely follow the candidate in his journeyings, we shall also follow very clearly the history of civilization, in condensed form, from its first risings in semi-barbarous times and manners, separating the sacred from the profane, ever advancing to new acquisitions of knowledge, well called light. The candidate learns in allegory that a good man and true fell in the discharge of his duty, and that his murderers did not escape punishment, but the signification of all this becomes to him a life-long lesson of the utmost weight and importance, viz., that there is an unceasing conflict ever going on between truth and error, light and darkness, beauty and deformity, virtue and vice, life and death, and that the former of each of these shall finally triumph, and the latter be surely defeated and destroyed. The law of eternal justice is revealed to him; the immortality of man is plainly taught; omnipotent truth is announced: in a word, he is thoroughly taught the universal truth, accepted by all great minds, that "Truth shall prevail."

Do we not find here, dear friends, reasons why we should "Love the Brotherhood?"

This is indeed a grand institution, and not too old yet to do good. Its mission is not yet accomplished, nor will it be till sorrow and suffering have left the world. We delight in its antiquity, because there is an irresistible enchantment about everything hoary-headed and aged. The good man whose head is silvered o'er with the frosts of many winters and whose body is curved by the weight of many years is more to be respected and honoured than at any former period of his life. The old battle-flag, pierced by the bullets of the foe, and torn in the struggle of war is revered and loved by every true soldier as he loves his country, his home, yea, his very life. The old arm-chair, the old family Bible, all scarred and torn, are treasured all the more because of those very scars and tears, their age and history.

So it is with our holy and beloved religion, which started approximately some six thousand years ago. It has grown and expanded and developed in spite of all

opposition, till it has become a universal kingdom, drawing to itself the love and respect, the adoration and obedience of all good men.

And so, relatively, is it with the body of Freemasonry. We love and revere it because it is the oldest *human* society on the face of the globe; we love it for its work's sake; we revere it because, while it remains what it is, it will unmistakably show forth the immortality of the soul, the Fatherhood of God Almighty, the brotherhood of all mankind, and finally, the triumph of good over evil.

The Masonic Fraternity can justly then be described as a moral, intellectual, scientific and religious body, having the honor of God and the good and advancement of man as its chief object. She opposes vice, error, ignorance, fanaticism and persecution; she supports all that is good and true and noble, and scorns all that is impure or evil in any form or degree. Her motive power is Charity; to alleviate suffering, to raise the fallen, to bless and do good to others, is her chief tenet.

For all this we love her! Here, too, throughout the civilized world, under the banner of our Order, men are brought together who have no other tie of fellowship; and no matter how unequal their social positions, how diverse their religious faiths (so long as they believe in Almighty God and the Holy Scriptures), however discordant their political opinions, no matter what differences exist, here, for once at least, as it shall be in "the sweet bye and bye," they forget everything but the fraternal tie which binds them together in one solid and almost universal brotherhood.

"In faith and hope the world will disagree,  
But all mankind's concern is charity."

Oh! that this tie could always exist, and always have its divine influence upon the hearts and actions of all the fraternity out of the lodge-room as well as in it! What discord, what trouble, what unhappiness would be avoided! But even as it is, one of the strongest ties known to man exists here with a universal influence. So strong are the ties of this Brotherhood, that let a Master Mason go to any part of the habitable globe, and if he uses the signs and words of the order aright, and there be another mason within hailing distance, he will find a friend and brother, be that other Barbarian, Seythian, bond or free, a Chinese, a wild Arab, or an American savage! Let but one of these be admitted into fellowship by the mystic ties of Freemasonry, and a bond of union and brotherly love is welded that cannot easily be broken. These principles unite into one indissoluble bond of affection men of the most opposite character and nationality, so that the persecuting tyrant becomes at once the kind friend and brother, and by them, in every country, a mason may find a brother, and in every clime a home.

How often has the wounded enemy become the object of love and attention directly the mystic tie was recognized? How often have the famishing and languishing been relieved and comforted on account of this brotherhood of the

Craft? We have read of men who, while enduring all the horrors of a bitter winter's campaign, badly fed, and badly clothed and lodged, sick and wounded, exiles from homes and friends, with nothing to cheer or comfort them, suddenly raised out of their deep distress by finding amongst themselves a brother of the Craft, though total strangers and even enemies before. These men have cheered and helped each other, sharing with one another what any had over and above the bare necessities of existence. It does seem that all that divine love, good will and self-sacrifice for the sake of others, of the early Christians, which led the world to cry out "See how these men love one another," is now centered, I may almost say *alone* in the Masonic fraternity. We see it at times indeed in the Christian churches now-a-days, but certainly not universally nor even generally.

For this we love the Brotherhood. Here is a livine principle, inculcated by God Himself, and enforced by His Holy and Divine Son on all His followers, which we find more universally observed in the body of Freemasonry than in any other society, divine or human, except we range the divided Church of Christ, as one, against it; then perhaps we may find its equal. Ask the fatherless and the widow of the love and thoughtful carefulness of this fraternity, and hear their answers of commendation and then prayers of thankfulness for the blessings of a friend in need, who then, most truly, is a friend indeed. Ask the stranger in a strange land who first "took him in;" the hungry, who first "fed him;" the naked and destitute, who first clothed and assisted him, and you will generally find that, if he be a Mason, his answer will be "the fraternity of Masonry." They first found him out and gave him those things which were needful for the body, and thus by their works both of love and charity proved themselves the friend they profess to be to each other.

I am aware that objections can be found against this Brotherhood, and that many such have been made, though most unjustly. Many judge the Craft by the actions of a few of its members, which, as you will readily admit, brethren, is most unjust. There has never existed a society of men either purely human or purely divine in its origin, or semi-human, or semi-divine, upon which some of its members have not brought disgrace and shame. Even the divine Church of Christ with its glorious principles, design and work, if judged by the ungodliness and faithlessness of many of its members would have to be most unmercifully condemned. And so of Masonry. But judging each by its object and work, our eulogy will stand unimpeached and unimpeachable.

There is an objection against the Order, urged most unjustly to its disadvantage which I wish here to answer. It is said that Freemasonry is a secret society, and therefore should not be upheld by respectable men. Now, while I acknowledge that it is a secret society in one sense, I most emphatically deny that it is secret in the sense in which the objection is urged. The very fact before you to-day: the fact that the representatives of this body in Nova Scotia having given notice

of its annual gathering for business, and inviting the public to come together and hear what is said about it, should decidedly nullify the objection. Secrecy is one of the land-marks of the Order, and these words are constantly addressed to every candidate for its mysteries: "Keep sacred and inviolable the mysteries of the Order, as these distinguish you from the rest of the community and mark your consequence among Masons."

There is a certain amount of knowledge as to methods of recognition, signs and words; of legendary and traditional learning, which is given only to those who rightly pass the degrees; and this veil of mystery, this "awful secrecy," as some choose to term it, has invariably, from the beginning, been a distinctive mark and characteristic of the institution: and to-day, as of old, the first duty of a Mason is the promise of secrecy, and this principle has remained intact through all the changes and chances that have swept over the world, carrying in their train the destruction of kingdoms, of empires, and even of whole nations. It is absolutely necessary for any society which intends to be permanent—which intends to accept some and reject others who ask admission within its doors—to have a secret mode of initiation and of recognition, and a secrecy in other things necessary to the maintenance of the Order.

But the designs, the grand object, the principles, the requirements in those asking admission to our Order, are all loudly proclaimed to the world, and they are invited to ask of, and to know her upon these lines. Everybody knows who are her members, and those who are once admitted are proud of the honor, and glad to have it known that they are Freemasons, and so I contend that in the sense of a secret society, in the true sense in which that term should be used, the Masonic fraternity is not a secret society. Compare for a moment this organization with those rightly and justly called secret societies, and you will at once see how unjust is the accusation. Look, for example, at the Nihilists. This society declares that it has no belief in God, and then inconsistently declares Him to be the personification of all tyranny. It respects no laws of justice, morality, or of property; it endeavors to overthrow all institutions, political, social, military, and religious; its members are joined together by oaths to carry out these destructive principles; and they dare not let it be known that they are members of this Satanic body. Look at the Socialists. Look at the Klu-Klux-Klan, organized to uphold slavery. Look at the Fenians, and look at "Young Ireland," having the most complete system of oaths and of secret work, fearing the public eye, keeping hid from all eyes their terrible designs till by their direful effects of rapine, fraud, bloodshed and misery, they become known. Compare, I say, with these, this honorable body, which is glad to have the world know its designs, its teachings, its membership, making God and right, with the advancement of every social and moral virtue its leading principles, and then say can Freemasonry be justly charged with being a secret society? For her secrecy, such as it is, honorable, laudable, commendable, we love her; yea, we love the brotherhood for these things.

One other charge against this body I must refer to, but briefly ; a charge which I am pleased to explain ; a charge which is indeed true, but the reason given for its existence is so slanderous to the Craft, as it is unjust and unfair to those in whose favour it is made, that I take great pleasure in explaining it. Charity, charitable judgments, honour to whom honour is due, and the highest respect and esteem for the fair sex, are principles most thoroughly inculcated on every Mason in each and every degree as he advances in the mysteries. And so when the charge, the slanderous charge, the unjust, uncharitable, the severe charge is made that the Craft does not admit women to membership *because they cannot keep a secret*, it is as false against the Order as it is unfair, and maliciously urged against the women.

True, indeed, women are not admitted members, but the reason of this is based upon the fact that Speculative Masonry is but the application of Operative Masonry, and the first Masons were those engaged in the building of material edifices, requiring strong, hale, hearty, able-bodied men to do the work assigned to them. And so we find one of the first pre-requisites to initiation that the candidate be "a man," a man in every sense of the word, a man intellectually, a man morally, physically, and religiously, fit to do a day's work, and worthy of the work in which he was engaged, and hence we find many old charges in ancient Masonry, saying "a candidate must be a man, free-born, of good kindred, true, no bondman," that he "have his right limbs, that he be good and true, of mature and discreet age, no immoral or scandalous liver, but one of good repute and well-recommended." All this is based on the fact that King Solomon employed only men in the construction of the Temple.

This requisite has been a land-mark of Masonry from its origin, now nearly 3000 years, and the land-marks of Freemasonry, like the laws of the ancient Medes and Persians, alter not. We should expect to see signs of decay and death in the Craft should any of these change, and so the prohibition, implied in the requisition that the candidate be a man, has its origin there, and not where it has been so unkindly put. Personally, we should be only too happy to welcome to our social lodge assemblies our lady friends ; but we shall have to continue deprived of that pleasure and of the ennobling and exalting influence of the ladies, whom, may the G. A. O. T. U. ever bless and protect.

Knowing our principles, the wisest and best of men in every age have not only become members, but have been encouragers and promoters of the art and science, and have never deemed it derogatory to their dignity, their position or their influence, to join themselves to the Craft, and extend her principles. And particularly is this so with christian men, for, as I have already intimated, not only are Scriptural truths and facts proclaimed by her symbolism, but Holy Scripture itself is taught in all the workings of a Masonic Lodge. The Book of the Law, the Holy Bible, is by no means a sealed book or a dead letter in Masonry, but rather, it is a living, active agent in all the work and teaching of the Craft. It is

one of the "Great Lights," and a lodge never opens, works or moves abroad without this Light shining upon it.

Because of these principles, because of her design and work, because of her ancient land-marks, never changed and unchangeable; because of the good men and true who belong to her membership, because of the value of her teachings, because she is such an efficient and worthy hand-maid of our holy religion, we love her—we love "this Brotherhood."

Let me urge upon you, dear brethren of the Fraternity, to try and recognize the value of these things, that each man may endeavor to be true to his obligations; to become more familiar with her designs and work; to become better skilled in her law, more devoted to her tenets, while you strive in daily life to exhibit the ennobling qualities of honest, just, and true men and masons, becoming ever more and more worthy brethren and true christians. Ever remember that our High and Glorious Grand Master, has given us His Divine Son for our guide and example in the life of a perfect man; and with loyal hearts and true let us endeavor to follow that guide and emulate that example, so as to gain His approbation—the "Well done, good and faithful servant," of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Fearing that I have already trespassed on your time and patience, allow me to commend our beloved Order, along with each of her members, to the Grand Architect of the Universe, beseeching Him to bless her designs and work to His honor and glory, and to the good of each member of the Craft, and to all others who may come within her beneficent influence, while we gladly sing:

"Hail Masonry divine,  
 Glory of ages shine;  
 Long mayest thou reign!  
 Where'er thy Lodges stand,  
 May they have great command,  
 And always grace the land.  
 Thou art divine."

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