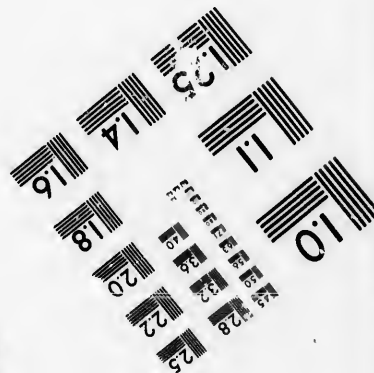
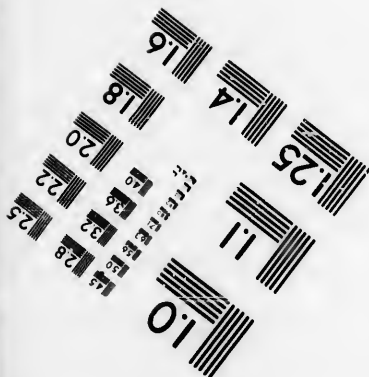
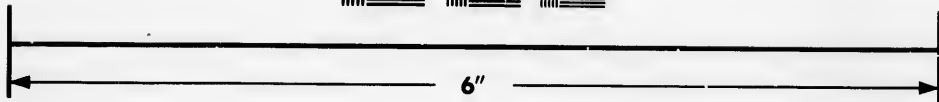
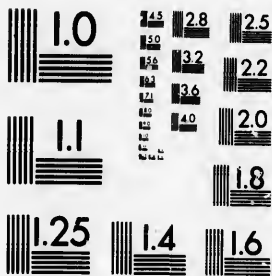


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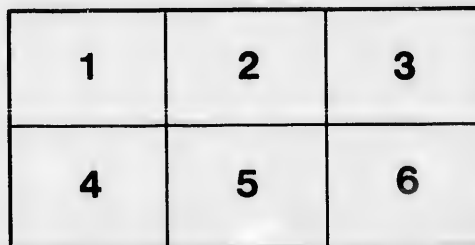
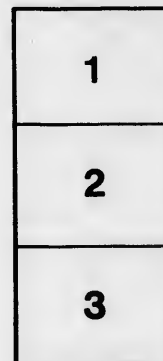
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CHRIST THE CHIEF CORNER STONE.

A

# SERMON,

PREACHED TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

SELECT SURVEYORS' LODGE

NO. IX.

HELD IN THE

SEIGNORY OF ST. ARMAND, LOWER CANADA,

ON THEIR

CELEBRATION OF THE FESTIVAL

OF

ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST,

A. D. 1811.

---

BY THE HON AND REV. CHARLES STEWART, A. M.  
MINISTER OF ST. ARMAND, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP  
OF QUEBEC.

---

BEHOLD, I LAY IN SION A CHIEF CORNER STONE, ELECT, PRE-  
CIOUS; AND HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM SHALL NOT BE CON-  
FOUNDED. 1 PETER, ii. 6.

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Montreal:

PRINTED BY NAHUM MOWER.

1812.

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St. Armand, L. Canada, January 6th, 1812.

THE MEMBERS OF THE SELECT SUVEYOR'S  
LODGE, No. IX.

SIRS,

*IN compliance with your request I have sent to the press the Sermon which I preached to you on the Festival of St. John the Evangelist. It was prepared for delivery without my having any thoughts of printing it, but I have not made any alteration in it except a very few verbal corrections. If it in any degree contribute to your christian edification, or to the spiritual, or even temporal welfare of any of its readers, I shall not regret printing it.*

I am, Sirs,

Your obedient humble servant,

CHARLES STEWART.

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CHRIST THE CHIEF CORNER STONE.

## A SERMON.

LUKE, ii. 14.

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will  
towards men.*

**I** HAVE chosen these words for my text as containing matter particularly suited to this season, and as being agreeable to the sentiments and professions of the society by which I am invited to preach here. This invitation I consider as a favor and an honor done unto me ; and honorable will it be to me and to them, if it contribute to increase " *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.*" All true honor is summed up in promoting these objects.

I feel it to be my duty particularly to address myself to those who have requested me to preach, as I would endeavor particularly to serve them. This I should find very difficult had I not prepared myself expressly for the occasion ; and I am happy to think that you have no blind prejudice against a written discourse. Not being a member of your society, some persons, perhaps, may think a disadvantage to me and to them on the present occasion, but, I hope, that it is quite the contrary. It renders me more free to speak without partiality ; and, perhaps, more bold to guard you a-

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gainst any bad use of your society, and to encourage you to make the best advantage of it. The best of men and societies are wanting in these respects.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men : This was the song of the Angels praising God, when the Saviour was born, which is Christ the Lord. This was the celebration of his birth. " God manifested in the flesh"\*—in our nature—in his humility exalting the glory of God, reconciling fallen man to his Creator, and giving this proof of God's good will towards men, has thus been celebrated in the christian world above 1800 years.

Christ only brought in all righteousness ; and he is the only way in which we can attain unto any, acceptable to God. " There is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."† His Godhead in our nature is the only mediation to us to all good and glory on earth and in heaven. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the gospel according to St. John ; and in his epistles and revelation this Apostle and Evangelist especially sets forth the doctrine that Jesus Christ is God as well as man, and that on this ground love of God and love of man are inseparable. In honor of him and of this day, therefore, it is particularly my duty to be explicit on these important points.

It is your design and wish to celebrate the memory of the beloved disciple of our Lord on this day. I heartily join you in this resolution. This is consistent with the practice of the primitive church, and of the church established here. You and I are friends to some form and order of time and things in remembering holy men, and worshipping God, and praising him for his many gifts. We think (justly I

\* 1 Timothy, 3, 16.

† Acts 4, 12.



believe) that this is the surest way of keeping up the memory and the improvement of them, and of honoring God in all things. But let us not lose sight of the proper object, Glory to God in the highest, in all we do; and let not outward things so far engage us, or be multiplied upon us, as to hinder instead of increasing our devotion to God. No service, no order, no learning, is to come in competition with that of Christ and his Gospel. All must be obedient to him, in order to be with him, and not against him. We must not set up any other doctrine secretly or openly, or any other image in our heart, to supersede, or set aside his teaching and example. He must be our high priest, and master, and head over all things.

As far as religion is concerned, and it applies to all your conduct, you must be christians, altogether christians. Where Christ is preached, he must be confessed by all men; and all his word must be conformed to. You must not add to, or take away, from it, on any account. As far as you teach religion, you must teach Christ, for there is no other door to it, no other way to God and to heaven; and he that teacheth any other Gospel is accursed. Worshipping the great God, the Father Almighty, the Eternal Lord, can not be performed by any of us except through the intercession of Jesus Christ. Any person, any thing, not ministering, nor used in his acknowledged name, in worship, among christians, partakes of idolatry instead of true religion. Far be it from me wilfully to suspect, unjustly, any of you, of drawing nigh to idolatry. I do not accuse any of you of so great sin. But I would guard you against all error and sin. Some men in every society are guilty of both; and all men may benefit by christian caution and counsel.

You believe in Christ ; and it is your desire and intention to serve him. Make your society contribute to this as far as possible ; especially, by recommending and representing the Gospel as the greatest gift of God to man next to reason. Without reason Revelation is useless ; but set not up human reason or inventions above the Revelation and the instruction of God. Whosoever hideth, or buryeth, the talent of his Gospel will be condemned by it to everlasting punishment. Whosoever will use it honestly, must improve it to his own good, and to that of all his brethren. He will find that no other means can supply such powerful motives and helps to the exercise of virtue, morality, charity, love of God and of man—Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men. In charity, the greatest charity he can perform, he must publish it to his brother. His Lord and Master, in kindness to both, commands him so to do, unless his brother persist in refusing that which is holy. But then, he must not substitute any other foundation, any other rule, to stand or walk by ; “ for other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”\* Any other foundation is one of sand. Guard your brother against such an one.

As far as religion is the object of your society I have pointed out rules which are inseparable from true religion. I know charity is a leading object with you ; and I have shewn you that it should be built on Christ. This is plain ; for every christian knows, and says, that the charity of the Gospel is the purest and most extensive possible : that the rule of Christ, to do to others as we would that they should do unto us, cannot be improved upon : and that we are

\* 1 Cor. 3, 11.

to treat all men as our brethren, under one Lord and Master. At the same time, societies may agree in associating for particular purposes for their own advantage, or for the advantage of the public in general; they may direct their charity to particular objects and persons; and they may have particular orders, regulations, and officers, in some degree peculiar to themselves to govern and connect themselves by; and they may carry on all this without making religion a specific object of their union, or confessing Christ a necessary title of admission to the society; and yet the object and the business of the society may be in full conformity with the Gospel. But, whereforever, and in whatsoever, religion is professed among christians, there the name of Christ must be glorified. "He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."\*

There are various friendly societies of different descriptions independent of religious Creeds, whose association is useful to themselves and the public. There are some for charitable purposes—for affording relief to those in want—and these are, perhaps, the most useful societies. There are some for discouraging vice, others for promoting loyalty, and some for the cultivation or indulgence of friendship. In all these respects, I believe, you are desirous to excel; and I would encourage you in piously following up these objects. They are all encouraged by Christ. Some persons have very erroneously supposed that friendship and patriotism are not consistent with the Gospel, but the best proof to the contrary, in answer to this modern and unnatural philosophy, is the example of Jesus Christ himself. He shewed a particular regard for Nazareth, where he had

\* 1 Tim. 6, 13.

chiefly resided, and for John among his disciples. He loved Lazarus, and his sisters; and he wept at the grave of Lazarus: and he wept over Jerusalem, and mourned for her sins particularly. Cultivate friendship with the good and wise, especially with the household of faith, and especially with those united with you in bonds of relationship of any good description, and in bonds of innocent and natural affection. But, flee the seat of the scornful, and the company of sinners; for "evil communications corrupt good manners."\* Keep them out of your feasts, for they will be spots in them; † and admit them not into your society, for they will discredit it; and they will make your secrecy an occasion and an instrument of evil to you, and of danger and mischief to you. They have done so to your society before now, we know, in France and in Germany; especially, by introducing sedition and disloyalty into your Lodges, which are demons of discord quite contrary to the principles and general practice of the society, I am persuaded; Intemperance also, they have in too many instances encouraged among you, which is also quite inconsistent with your rules, and with all peace and good order, and with "the feast of reason, and the flow of soul," which I believe you wish to cultivate. Festivity without excess is not denied you by the gospel any more than is the exercise of pure friendship. Jesus Christ joined in the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, and the first miracle that he wrought was in support of innocent mirth and good fellowship; which occurrence is particularly recorded by St. John.

It is a partial view of Scripture, and a want of attention to all its parts, which mislead some men in considering these

\* 1 Cor. 15, 33.

† Vide Jude 12.

Subjects. I must exhort you to make good improvement of the Scriptures,—**THAT BOOK**—which is the word of God.

You shew, you profess, great regard for that glorious book. You cannot say or do too much in its favor scarcely, short of worshipping it. But remember, it is the inside, the spirit of it, you should search, and “read, and learn, and inwardly digest.” The form of it is nothing, without the power of it governing your life. The more you prize it, the more blamable you are if you do not improve it. If you care for its letter only, “it killeth, but the spirit giveth life.\*” Apply every part of it to your own life and conversation to the thoughts and intents of your heart. It is one building; therefore separate not its parts. Like Jacob’s ladder it reaches to heaven, to the house of God, and to the gate of heaven.

The Old Testament or dispensation of the covenant, in the beginning of God’s Church, is preparatory to the new—“a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.”† Stop not at the threshold, but go on to Christ’s first coming on the earth in our nature, and prepare for his second coming to judge the world in the glory of the father. The ministration of the Old Testament was glorious, much more the ministration of the new.‡ The law given by Moses is introductory to that of Christ; and the wisdom of Solomon is a step to the wisdom of our Lord. John the Baptist prepared the way for our Lord; and John the Apostle and Evangelist completed his gospel. Study all the parts of this building; enter into its chambers. Were I to select any, I should say frequent those occupied by St. John. But add not to, nor take from any of its parts or passages. They are all holy to God. “As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye

\* 1 Cor. 3. 6. † Gal. 3. 24. ‡ Vide 2 Cor. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

may grow thereby : If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious ; ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.\* See, that it is by Jesus Christ you must come unto God. He continueth ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood. He is the great high priest to make intercession for you, made higher than the heavens.†

The building of Solomon's Temple, or rather, I should say, the Lord's Temple by Solomon, is a part of Scripture you particularly attend to, I believe. All Scripture is profitable for instruction, and for furnishing you to good works ;‡ and all should bring you to Christ. The Temple of Solomon is a figure of Christ's Church ; and different parts of it represent corresponding resemblances in the Church ; and you should glorify Christ in the whole building. He is the chief corner stone, elect, precious : and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. But, if it be rejected, it is made a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence :§ and "whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."|| Stand on it ; build on it ; that your house may stand ; build gold, silver, precious stones—true and solid doctrines, not wood, hay, stubble, which cannot bear the fire, or the day of trial ;¶ build up pure christianity. Through the Temple of Solomon enter into the ark of Christ's Church ; raise it up, and defend it and enlarge it with all your power. As the builders under Nehemiah, in rebuilding the Temple, had

\* 1 Peter 2. 2, 3, 4, 5.

† Vide 2 Timothy 3. 16, 17.

‡ Luke 20. 18.

† Hebrews 7. 24, 25, 26.

§ Vide 1 Peter 2. 6, 7, 8.

¶ Vide 1 Cor. 3. 12, 13.

their swords to defend it and themselves against the enemies of the Lord, so do you take the whole armour of God ; and having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast plate of righteousness, and taking the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit,\* “ fight against sin, the world and the devil, and continue Christ’s faithful soldiers and servants unto your lives’ end.”†

In Poland, formerly, the nobles used to draw their swords when they pronounced the Apostle’s Creed, in token that, if it were needed, they would defend and seal the truth of it with their blood. Let your defence be strength in the Lord, in confessing and imitating his faith and works. Let your sword be resolution under him. Bear not, however, you that are in authority, the temporal sword in vain, but in support of good order ; but let your principal sword be that of the spirit, the word of God. Let the priests, and prophets, and heroes, and martyrs, it holds up to your view, guard you against evil, and shew you the way to Christ and to glory.

In conformity to your partialities, and to my subject, and to the season ; I must particularly, but briefly, celebrate the characters of St. John the Baptist, and St. John the Apostle.

St. John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord, and to proclaim the kingdom of the Messiah. He preached repentance ; and the necessity of bringing forth works worthy of repentance, in order to obtain salvation. When “ all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, he said to them, one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose.‡ And when his disciples were unwilling to prefer

\* Vide Ephe. 6. 12, 14, 15, 16, 17.

† Office of Baptism.

‡ Luke 3. 15, 16.

7. 24, 25, 26.

Peter 2. 6, 7, 8.

r. 3. 12, 13.

Jesus before him, he sent them to him, that they might be convinced he was the Christ, by seeing the wonderful miracles which he performed. We should learn from the example of St. John the Baptist, to renounce the vanities of the world ; to keep under the body ; and to practise self-denial and humility of spirit. Especially ministers and those in authority should learn from him, not to flatter their friends and hearers, but to take all prudent means when the providence of God gives a fair opportunity to reprove their vices, and to press upon them their duties. So, St. John told, the publicans not to exact too much, and the soldiers not to do violence, and to be content with their wages : and he reprov'd Herod for his adultery with Herodias. The ways and progress of sin are dreadfully marked out in the history of that family. The assurance and hardness of heart which accompany sinners, even in the hour of social joy and festivity, and the folly of making a rash oath, and the wickedness of keeping it, if it involve one in sin and in promises which ought never to be made, much less to be performed, are plainly demonstrated in their history ; and their complication of wickedness in putting St. John to death needs only to be mentioned to you to deter you from sin. Death, no doubt, was a welcome visiter to this holy man ; for a greater prophet had not arisen before him ; and it would introduce him to a kingdom where the least of its inhabitants would be greater than John in his best state upon earth.

St. John the Baptist prophesied of Jesus. Jesus Christ was the greatest of prophets, and next to him, St. John the Evangelist, whose memory we now celebrate, to the glory of his divine Master. St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, was the favorite, beloved disciple of our Lord ; and his love toward our Lord was eminent among the Apostles. Though



on the surprisè of our Saviour's being seized by the chief priests and captains he fled with the rest of them, yet, he quickly recovered himself, and confidently entered the high priests' hall, and continued with Jesus to the end of his life, in the midst of his most inveterate enemies.\* St. John, and his brother, St. James, were surnamed by Jesus Christ *Boanerges*, that is, *Sons of Thunder* : and on account of the sublime nature of his doctrine, St. John was honored in the primitive church with the title of the *divine* ; and he was resembled to an *Eagle* soaring aloft. In all his writings he especially sets forth the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the duty of charity to man : and when age and weakness disabled him from preaching, it is said, he used to be led to the church at *Ephesus*, and that he exhorted only in these words, " little children, love one another." If we would particularly honor him, we should particularly study him ; and we should be bold in resisting those heresies against our Saviour's divinity, which he so diligently opposed ; and we should love one another. We should learn from him to forsake all to follow Christ ; and to be constant to the end in cultivating holy and innocent love and friendship ; and not to suffer dangers or disasters to separate friends. It is said, that St. John on account of his faith and preaching was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, by the order of the Emperor *Domitian*, and that he, miraculously, came out of it unhurt. He certainly was banished to the *Isle of Patmos*, a barren Island in the *Grecian Sea*. After the death of *Domitian* he went to *Ephesus*, where he died, being about a hundred years old. He tarried till Jesus came to take him away in peace ; and it is believed that he is the only one of the apostles that did not die a violent death by the hands of

\* Vide *Nelson's Companion for the Festivals*.

enemies. He prayed, come Lord Jesus, come quickly ; and the voice from heaven which said to him, " blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,"\* was fulfilled to him. He rests from his labors ; and his works do follow him. They still celebrate Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men ; and we have endeavored to celebrate the same by honoring his character, and that of St. John the Baptist. These Master builders will build you up in Christ, and prepare you for his second coming, to try your works, if you truly honor them. To them I refer you—to their scripture doctrines—and I shall now only recapitulate, and sum up their and my advice in a few words.

Humble yourselves, and glorify God. Admire the humility and the love of Christ, the perfecter of Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men. Worship him in this hymn of praise, sung by Angels proclaiming his glory, and good tidings of great joy to all people, at the same time that he was born of a woman, and laid in a manger. Celebrate it, and this season, by honoring him in all his ways ; " casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."† Let not other Lords have dominion over you ; and love not the things of this world, or forms of festivals, except as means of contributing to Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men. In your society and meetings cultivate love of God and man, loyalty to your King and country, friendship to one another, and charity to all men ; and keep far from you all intemperance, and all disorderly and wicked things and persons.

\* Revelation 14. 13.

† 2 Cor. 10. 5.

Honor the book of God—the Bible—in deed, in spirit and in truth, and not in word and tongue only. The whole of it hold dear to you ; and make it a lantern to your feet, and light to your paths, in all your life and conversation. Especially learn Christ from it ; and that in all things he has the pre-eminence. Never man spake as he did ; and he will guide you into all truth. “ I have more understanding than all my teachers ; for thy testimonies are my meditation,” said David.\* Yet he, and many righteous men, and kings, and prophets, did not see the things which you see, and did not hear the things which you hear. They did not hear the preaching of St. John the Baptist, or St. John the Apostle and Evangelist. Hear ye them—the voice of one crying in the wilderness, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ; repent ye, for the remission of sins. The axe is laid unto the root of the trees ; every tree which bringing not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.† In the gospel and the revelation according to St. John you are told to search the scriptures, for they testify of Jesus ; “ that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the father ;”‡ that you should keep the word ; and not add to, nor take from it ; and that we shall all be judged by the word of Jesus in the last day.

Attend to St. John’s description of the heavenly Jerusalem. Rise from Jerusalem on earth to Jerusalem above. Admire and magnify the Temple of Solomon as a type of the glorious city, a porch to it. But stop not in the porch. Go up to the heavenly city. Consider the new Jerusalem, its streets of gold, its gates of pearl, its foundations of precious stones. “ Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city

\* Psalm 119. 99. † Vide Matt. 3. 1. ‡ John 5. 23.

of God.\* Yet, as Queen Sheba said of the earthly temple and Jerusalem, the half has not been told us.† Happy are they who enter into it. The way is opened by Jesus. He is the great high priest, who has entered in the holiest and he invites all his friends to follow him, all who do his commandments. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the lamb's book of life."‡ Be enrolled there, by belonging to his people; his church here below, praying for its peace, and seeking its good. "They shall prosper that love thee;" that love thee for their brethren and companions' sake, and for the sake of the Lord. Dwell together in unity, and in love of him, and in always promoting Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men. So shall you go into the house of the Lord, "not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens."§ So shall your feet stand within the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. There you shall enter into the joy of your Lord, and sit down with St. John, and all the holy Apostles, and Prophets, and with all your holy brethren, in the kingdom of God; and with them, with one heart and voice, for ever say, "worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."|| To which, that you may come, God of his mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Trinity in Unity, be ascribed all honor and glory, thanksgiving and praise, love and obedience, now and for evermore. Amen.

\* Psalm 87, 3.

† Vide Bishop Horne's Commentary on the 122d Psalm, with editions, the whole of which most beautiful original, and paraphrase and new version, cannot fail to delight and edify the reader

‡ Rev. 21. 27.

§ 2 Cor. 5. 1.

|| Rev. 5. 12.

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