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WILLIAM SMITH, D. D.
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SERMONS
ON
PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

SERMON I.

AN EARNEST EXHORTATION TO RELIGION, BROTHERLY LOVE,
AND PUBLIC SPIRIT, IN THE PRESENT DANGEROUS STATE
OF AFFAIRS: PREACHED IN CHRIST-CHURCH, PHILADEL-
PHIA; ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST,
JUNE 24, 1755.

1. PETER, ii. 17.

LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD; FEAR GOD; HONOUR THE KING.

TO contain rules of conduct levelled to every capacity, and fitted to the circumstances of men, in all their various relations and exigencies, is an excellence peculiar only to God's holy word. In the text, and verses preceding, the apostle has the following noble exhortation——

“ Wherefore, says he, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings; be ye as *lively stones*, built up a spiritual house; *free* and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness. *Love the brotherhood; fear God; honour the king**.”

Vcr. 1, 5, 16, 17.

THE AUTHOR'S

LAST

MASONIC SERMON.

SERMON III.

PREACHED BEFORE THE GRAND LODGE OF COMMUNICATION,
ON ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S DAY, JUNE 24, 1795, IN ST. PETER'S
CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

ECCLESIASTES, ii. 21.

There is a MAN, whose Labour is in Wisdom, and in Knowledge, and in Equity.*

THIS text addresses you, Brethren, in the language of our great master, Solomon, who, after a consummate investigation of the good and evil things under the Sun, and the final tendency of all the labours of man, places him whose labours are "in Wisdom and Knowledge and Equity," in the same illustrious point of view, as the man who discharges the whole duties of Humanity, by "fearing God and keeping His Commandments."

The emphatical meaning of the word Man, as used by our master, Solomon, in the Philosophical and Masonic sense of this text, I need not explain in this splendid assembly of Masons. It is understood within the walls of the congregated Lodge, and

* Psalms, read 122, 133—
1st Lesson, 2 Chron. ch. 2.
2d Lesson, 1 John, ch. 3.

carried abroad into the world by every true Brother, in the Grand Lodge of the heart.

As such a Man, I would strive to acquit myself on this occasion. Forty years will this day have finished the long period, since I first addressed, from this pulpit, a Grand Communication of Brethren, with our great fellow-labourer, the venerable Franklin, at their head; and frequent have been the calls upon me for similar addresses, during the important æra that hath since succeeded.

It was with reluctance, therefore, that I engaged in this day's duty, knowing that I had little new to offer; and that little must be offered, with a great decay of former vigour, both of body and mind.

But the unanimous request of the Brotherhood operates as a command on me, once more to undertake what I trust they will accept as a final labour among them; squared by the Rules of Wisdom and Equity, and mensurated by the best Compass of my Knowledge; taking as a model not only the labours of Solomon, but of one greater than Solomon, so far as they can be imitated, namely, the Great Architect of the world; all whose labours are in the Infinite Perfection of Wisdom and Knowledge and Equity. For—

“ Before the foundations of this Terrestrial Lodge were laid—before the Almighty Fiat was pronounced—before the Sun, and the Moon, and the Stars appeared, as the beauty of Heaven, and an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord—He—the great Architect—in his stupendous Wisdom and Knowledge and Equity and Love, breathing on the

vast abyss of Chaos, surveyed the uncreated images of things, in the comprehension of his own unbounded mind, and commanded them to exist, according to Order, and in Measure, Number and Weight!"*

" Then, from the innumerable worlds which He spoke into existence, He chose this Earth, as the temporary Lodge of Man; and distinguished him, above its other inhabitants, with a rational soul, according to His own divine Image! For, as Solomon adds, " His spirit rejoiceth in the habitable parts of " His Earth, and His delights are with the sons of " Men."†

Wherefore, Man, being thus distinguished above the rest of the creatures of this world, by the superior qualities of his soul, was designed for superior pursuits; and his chief labours were to be " in Wisdom, in Knowledge, and in Equity"—that he might rise into more intimate kindred with the exalted Beings of superior Worlds.

From this source, therefore, namely, from the Soul and more dignified faculties of Man, flowed the Sciences, as from their true fountain; whose streams, rolling still deeper and clearer, through the channels of Time, have flowed even unto Us in this new World; brightening and enlarging their current, further as they flow!

* The Masonic reader will readily allow that in different Masonic Sermons, even by different Authors, repetitions and copying from each other, so far as concerns the mysteries of the Craft, Metaphors, Allusions, &c. are unavoidable.

† Prov. ch. 31.

Nor have any of the sons of men laboured more strenuously, for clearing and widening and deepening the channels of Arts and Sciences, than the fraternity of true Masons, from ancient to modern times. In all ages, in every country and climate, on Land and on Water, under every circumstance, adverse and prosperous, they have adhered to the Rules of their Craft, seeking to adorn the precepts of their chief Master Solomon, and to merit individually the character of a Man, whose labours are in Wisdom, and in Knowledge, and in Equity.

The Arts and Sciences, are the grand pillars, which support the Fabric of human Wisdom, and are in turn supported by it. The Arts, in practical life, produce magnificent buildings to delight the eye, and accommodate man with terrestrial Lodges; while the Sciences, especially as improved and exalted by the divine science of Christianity, produce moral order, and all the charities of Friendship and brotherly Love, to humanize the heart; and lead to piety, both in speculation and practice; to comfort us in our walk below, and prepare us for our seat in the celestial Lodge above.

Seeing, therefore, that this happy union of science with art, produces such a valuable issue, we are not to wonder at the honours paid to those great Men, and Master-Masons, who have benefited the world by their Ingenuity and their labours of Wisdom and Knowledge and Equity; nor are we to neglect the proper occasions of displaying their illustrious example, for the imitation of others.

The memory of those great Craftsmen, who first taught mankind to build, to plant, to sow, to defend

the body from injury, and to adorn the mind with knowledge, will still be held dearer, and more precious, to a man whose labours are in Wisdom and Knowledge and Equity; than the memory of the most renowned Conquerors, though mounting to a throne, through the spoils of War, and the devastation of Nations!

To the discoveries in Science, we owe our acquaintance with the works and wonders of Nature, have been enabled to travel the ocean, and behold the wonders of the great Deep; to explore the starry Heavens, to pursue the eccentric comet through its long and devious track, to measure the swiftness of a sun-beam, and the rapid journies of Light; to trace the divine Wisdom and Agency, not only in the greatest, but the minutest parts of His works; and this enlargement of our knowledge of the works of creation, has enlarged our conceptions of the Creator, the mighty Lord of Cherubin and Seraphin—the immortal and invisible God!

It is thus that by the good examples of labourers of this kind, and as we are further instructed by the precepts and example of our heavenly master Christ in his Gospel, that we reap the glorious crop of Christian virtues; which calm and cheer the conscience, purify the heart, and maintain Concord, Unity, Friendship, Charity and brotherly Love in the Lodge; thereby opening a happy intercourse of love, between the Workmen upon earth, and their great Master in heaven.

Now, since it hath pleased Him, that the cunning Craftsman, the learned Philosopher and the good Man,

should all severally contribute so much to the service of mankind; how rare and valuable a Jewel must the Man be, who, according to the text, joins the skill and cunning of his Craft, with the wisdom of the Philosopher, and the goodness of the true servant of God—whose Head, whose Hands and Heart, are alike devoted to the welfare and happiness of his fellow men?

Such it behoves every man to be, who is a faithful member of society, and seeks to do good in his generation, according to the allotment of his Creator, whosent no man into this world, to live by the labours of others. But such particularly should the Man be who is an adopted member of that Fraternity, whose Festival we now celebrate; and which we cannot better celebrate than by shewing the world that we constantly keep in view our professed obligations, to make all our Labours and Wisdom and Skill subservient to the three grand pursuits of the Brotherhood—the promoting “Peace on earth, good will to men, and Glory to God, in the highest!”

This great evangelic pursuit and labour, which our Master Christ came to establish upon sure foundations; our Master Solomon likewise taught in our text, as has been already shewn; and the character given of our Master Hiram, that Prince of Masons, beloved by Solomon, leaves an example which we profess and should strive more and more to follow—Skilled in every art and science, then known among mankind, he delighted to employ his skill to the noblest purposes—the building a house for the Glory of the Omnipotent God—chosen as a Master Builder

by the king of Tyre, and sent to Solomon for that purpose, as you heard it read, in our first lesson for the occasion of the day—

“ I have sent a cunning man, endowed with understanding, a great master-builder of my fathers—
 “ skilful to work in gold and in silver and in brass
 “ and in iron and in stone and in timber; and to decorate his work in purple and in blue, and in crimson;
 “ also to grave all manner of graving, and to find out
 “ every device which shall be put to him*!” and accordingly Solomon, then accounted the greatest and wisest man upon earth, paid him proportionable honour, employing his talents in the noblest work—the building a House for God, and placing under his direction no less than thirty-six hundred master Workmen, fourscore thousand Craftsmen, and seventy thousand common Labourers; all whose labours he directed in Wisdom and Knowledge and Equity, those three grand pillars, founded as upon the adamant rock of everlasting Truth, on which all True Masons profess to rear and support their Fabrics.

On this foundation, we wish the works of all mankind, as well as our own, to be built; and to build on such a stable foundation, is the most essential part of the Wisdom or Mystery of Masonry; and therefore it need not be called a Secret—in any other way than that the rules for Masonic workmen, are most conveniently and effectually propagated in secret, or within the doors of the Lodge, closed and guarded. My Christian Brethern in general—I would not, in this sacred place, where it is my duty on every occa-

* 2 Chron. chap. ii. 7.

casion to publish nothing but what is consistent with the truths of the everlasting Gospel—I would not, I say, rise to indulge the sport of Imagination. A sermon to Masons may well be a sermon to all who call themselves Christians. The great principles of Love and Good Will, of Wisdom and Knowledge, of Justice and Equity, which it is the business and main desire of the Lodge to propagate in secret among the Initiated Brethren, are such as may be proclaimed aloud from the house top. They were engraved on the heart of the first Man, by the hand of the Creator, in the bowers of Paradise. They were renewed by his Blessed Son, and pressed home with deeper sanctions and upon more powerful motives, in the New Testament; and they are ever cherished and cultivated in the souls of all who delight in Wisdom, Beauty and Harmony, by the grace and goodness of the divine Spirit—thrice blessed Three, in one eternal Godhead!

It is by these principles that the members of a Lodge, or indeed any true Christian, can be denominated “living stones, built up a spiritual house, possessing that Wisdom which descends from on high—a pure influence from the glory of the Almighty, more beautiful than the Sun, and above all the orders of the stars;” first Pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated; which, whosoever finds, findeth the Secret of Life—even that Secret which may be felt and enjoyed, but cannot be fully expressed, as containing those Unspeakable Words of truth and happiness, which, according to St. Paul, it is not lawful for a Man to utter.

I knew a Man, says he (still using the word Man in the same emphatical sense, well understood by Masons, as it was used by Solomon in the text)—“ I “ knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago— “ (whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out “ of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth), but I “ knew such a man caught up to the third Heaven, “ into Paradise, where he heard unspeakable words, “ which it is not lawful for a Man to utter—Of such “ an one will I glory*.”

St. Paul speaks here of his own Trance and Vision, when converted and rapt up into the third Heavens; but whether “ his spirit was carried up in the body “ or out of the body he could not tell, but only that “ he there heard unspeakable words, which it is not “ lawful or possible for a Man to utter” in the common language of men—for the words which he heard could only be intelligible to the initiated in Christ; who might be favoured with the like glimpse of heavenly glory.

It is no way presumptuous, or irreverent, to compare earthly things with heavenly things—The Beauty, the Harmony, the Peace, the Joy of a true Lodge of Brethren, or even of a single happy Family upon earth, may bear some resemblance, or be in some degree compared, to the Joy and Harmony of Heaven. Nay, we are even commanded to figure to ourselves as much of the joy and happiness of Heaven, as by divine Revelation we are enabled to

* 2 Cor. chap. xii. 2—5.

conceive, and to make them our example in all our pursuits of Joy and Happiness on earth.

Returning, therefore, to the words of St. Paul—
“ I knew a Man, whether in the body or out of the
“ body, I cannot tell!” and comparing earthly things
with heavenly—The Brethren here assembled, well
understand what is meant by the emphatical words—
“ Man and Body;” and not being able to tell, in cer-
tain situations of the Initiated, whether they “ were
in the Body or out of the Body;” and also what is
meant by their being taken up to the third Heaven,
or Paradise of their Art and Craft; and hearing the
words, which it is not lawful to utter, but to the true
Brethren; to those who have the Signs and Tokens
of fellowship, and the language of Brotherly-love!

But passing over all those mysterious expressions
(both in the scripture original, and in the copy
brought down to the practice of the Lodge); I shall
consider, in language familiar to all, and without a
metaphor, in what respects a Lodge on earth, duly
regulated according to its professed principles,
grounded in scripture, may be compared to Heaven,
or the Lodge of Paradise above.

And first the Lodge below may resemble the
Lodge above, by the excellency of its Constitution
and Government, which are so devised, that although
the Will of the Master, like the Will of God, is a
Law to the whole Family; yet He can neither Will
nor Do any thing but what is according to Wisdom,
and Knowledge, and Justice, and Right Reason; and
therefore the obedience of his Lodge is cheerful and
unrestrained. For the peculiar light of his profes-
sion assists him in discerning what is best for his

Household or Lodge; and that Love, which is the lasting cement of his Family, disposes all the Brethren to act with One Mind and Heart. But not so hath it been among mankind in general. For although they have busied themselves in all ages, in the framing civil Constitutions, and plans of Government; in forming, and reforming them, in pulling down and building up—yet still their labours have been too much in vain—because they have daubed with untempered mortar, and their corner-stones, have not been laid (as in the Lodge, and according to our text,) in Wisdom and in Knowledge and in Equity of Rights!

Secondly, the Lodge may be said to resemble Heaven, on account of the universal Good Will which reigns therein, among the Brethren, although of different languages and countries. It is not necessary to have the labour of learning various tongues in the earthly, more than in the heavenly Lodge. And although, at the building of Babel, the universal language of the workmen was confounded and divided, because they were divided in their hearts and workmanship; yet among the true Master-builders who have since remained at unity among themselves, there is but one language and the same tokens, which are known and understood by all in every country and clime; namely, the language of Love, and the tokens of Good Will!

In the Lodge, as in Heaven, there are no distinctions of Rich and Poor, but all meet on the Level, and act on the Square; distinguished only by their different Skill in their Craft; and a zealous desire, both in the Lodge and out of the same, to promote all that is

praise-worthy among the Brethren, and tending to enlighten and bless mankind, by an amiable condescension, and a benevolent freedom, which pervades and actuates every member, and reigns undisturbed in the Lodge.

In the third place, the Lodge may be said to resemble Heaven, because in Heaven, without respect of persons, they who fear God and work righteousness are received into happiness; so likewise the Lodge opens its bosom to receive good men (who come with the proper signs and tokens) of all Nations, Sects and Professions; and entertains them with sincere Love and Friendship—even as the quiet harbour of some hospitable port, opens its arms to the tempest-driven voyager, and offers him that security and rest, which, on the common ocean, he sought to enjoy in vain!

And now, Brethren, (a word being enough to the Wise) I trust that nothing more need be added on this occasion, respecting the nature and excellency of our Grand Masonic Institutions! Wherefore, it remains only for me to wind up the labours of many years among you (beloved and beloved!) by one solemn Charge and Exhortation; namely, “That you would inflexibly adhere to those great and wise institutions; and that you will accept this my last public Labour of Love, as a token of my Love to the Brotherhood, and honour it with a place among the Archives of the Lodge.”

“ I Charge you, then, in the first place, since we declare such excellent things concerning the Lodge, and have even compared it, in Beauty and Order, to

the Lodge in Heaven;—to remember that you will destroy all ground for this comparison, unless you labour earnestly, like faithful workmen, to imitate the inhabitants of Heaven, by a pure life and unblemished conversation; walking worthy of your vocation as Men and as Christians;—considering that speculative Masonry, which was the glory of the former house under the Law, must be perfected and made sublime by operative Masonry and Vital Practice, which constitute the glory of the latter House!”

“ Remember that you are pledged in the most solemn manner to this conduct. Behold that book, which contains the writings of your master Solomon, of your beloved St. John, and above all, of your great master Christ, and his other holy Apostles. In your procession to the house of God this day, as in all former processions, not only with much respect, but also with magnificence, that book, the Holy Bible, has been borne before you, as the sign and evidence of your profession. Be careful that your practice square with your profession. Let that Bible be your Charter of Rules and Rights; and while it calls you to Love and Good-will, let not its divine precepts, as pressed upon you by our master Christ, and both our St. Johns, be violated by Evil-speaking, or the contemptible words of Malice, Slander, or want of Charity, to any of the human kind; not even to the least of those whom Christ loved unto death; and still less, if possible, to a Brother, with whom you are pledged especially to live, as on the Square of doing as you would have done unto you.

The elder St. John, called the Baptist, whose Festival we celebrate this day, was the forerunner of the Saviour of the world; the divine Messenger or Harbinger, who first proclaimed the glad tidings of Salvation, in the truly evangelical language of Love. The second John, stiled the beloved disciple, admitted into his Master's bosom, to lean or to lie on his breast, was a very flame of Love! All he writes, all he preaches, is Love divine, and social—the Love of God, manifested in the redemption of the world; and that Love which man ought to bear to man, on account of our Redemption; “for,” says St. John, “if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. By this mark or token shall we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the Brethren; for he who loveth not his Brother, abideth in Death, and he that hateth his Brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life. This commandment, therefore, we have from him—That he who loveth God, love his Brother also.”

Thus instructed, and thus professing the principles and doctrines of the true Lodge, remember the fate of that first of Masons and of Men, our great progenitor Adam, who being found unworthy of the bliss which he enjoyed in his Paradisaical Lodge, was driven from thence by order of the omnipotent GRAND-MASTER; and a *celestial Tyler*, a mighty Cherubim, with a Sword of fire (mark the emblem) was placed to guard the door, and forbid his future entrance.

Since that time, the Lodges of his posterity have fallen from primitive order and perfection. Yet still they will be a resemblance of the Paradisaical lodge,

and even of Heaven itself, so far as you labour earnestly in the exercise of Love, that great badge of your profession. For Love, producing good works, not only in your walk as Masons, but as Christians, is justly stiled—the fulfilling of the whole law, the sum and substance of all duty.

Let those Pharisaical zealots, who flatter themselves in a superior sanctity, and self-righteousness, belie their professions by slandering their neighbours, and putting the worst constructions on their actions, while Charity would suggest those which are more liberal—But let it never be so among you, looking chiefly upon the bright and lovely parts of the human character, casting a veil, where possible, over its weaknesses and failings.

Are you calumniated by any, who, through ignorance or misrepresentation, entertain prejudices against your order—Answer not a Fool according to his Folly—Return not Railing for Railing; but let your converse in the world be a living answer to the Reproach. And while you remember that you are Masons, forget not that you are Christians, to be judged at the great day, by the same Laws of God as other Christians, in the sight of Men and Angels.

As a further assistance in your labours, keep in constant view the bright examples of those who have been eminent in your Fraternity, through ages that are past—rejoice in their Memory, and be incited to follow their steps, in Wisdom, and Knowledge and Equity; considering that those steps led them, and may lead you, from one degree of Knowledge and Virtue, to degrees still higher; raising you to the

sublime pinnacle of Wisdom and Virtue on the terrestrial Lodge, preparing you more and more for admission into that celestial Lodge, reared by the great Architect himself; where all the followers of Christ and holy St. John, and the blessed Evangelists and Apostles, enjoy Wisdom and Knowledge and Happiness, blessed forever more.

My concluding Prayer is, that such may be your lot, and the lot of all who now honour us with their presence; “through the Might of the Father of Heaven; the Wisdom of his adorable son, and the grace and goodness of the Holy Ghost, thrice blessed Three!” To whom be glory, &c.

Amen—so let it be.

P. S. Short address, at the conclusion of the Sermon—
 “Brethren a collection is now to be made. After what has been said of Love and Charity, more would be needless—
 “Whoever gives let him give freely, and with a willing heart.”

IN GRAND LODGE OF PENNSYLVANIA; ST. JOHN'S DAY,
 JUNE 24, 5795.

“ON Motion and Seconded, Resolved, That the Committee of Arrangements be requested to wait on our Rev. Brother, Doctor Smith, with the Thanks of this LODGE, for the Discourse by him delivered on this day, and request the favour of a copy of the same for publication, and that one thousand copies thereof be printed at the expense of the Grand Lodge.”

The above is a true extract from the Minutes of the Grand Lodge.

GEORGE A. BAKER, GRAND SECRETARY.

June 9th, A. L. 5802.