

AN
ADDRESS,
TO A LARGE AND RESPECTABLE BODY OF
FREEMASONS,
ON THEIR
LAYING THE CORNER STONE
OF
St. George's Church,

ST. CATHARINES:

JULY 20, 1835.

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THE PRAYER.

O THOU Supreme Architect of Universal Nature, who, by Thy Almighty Word, didst speak into being the stupendous Arch of Heaven; and for the instruction and perfection of Thy rational creatures, didst adorn it with greater and lesser lights—thus magnifying Thy power, and endearing Thy goodness to the sons of men: We bless Thee, that, when man had fallen from his innocence and happiness, Thou didst still leave with him the power of reason, and capacity of improvement: We thank Thee, that, amidst the pains and calamities of this present state, so many means of pleasure and satisfaction are still reserved unto us, whilst travelling the rugged path of life. May all Thy miracles and mighty works fill us with the dread, and Thy goodness impress us with the love, of Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

ADDRESS.

Luke, 12 chap. 51 v.—“Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay : but rather division.”

It is of the outward or visible Church, our Lord here speaks; the inward, spiritual, invisible Church has no divisions—no differences: its members are all in union and peace. In the text, our Lord makes himself the agent or cause of these differences: “I come not,” says he, “to give peace, but rather division.” Divisions, then, he has permitted, for wise and useful purposes—for, first, different forms suit the different tastes of men, without destroying the essentials of religion; secondly, different churches tend to quicken the zeal and usefulness of each. But Satan, who is ever ready to sow tares, has made these divisions the instruments of the greatest mischief, by rending the church into endless divisions; and whilst it might have prospered under *more* than one form, schisms led at length to heresies and errors innumerable. These divisions, however, should not excite unkind, uncharitable or hostile feelings, one towards another. The right to exercise private judgment, which belongs to every man, is a divine right, as free as the light that shines, and as the air we breathe; and no man has a right to interfere, intrusively, with his neighbour’s private judgment, in the management either of his spiritual or temporal con-

cerns. If he ask advice and direction, then it is our duty to instruct him, as far as in our power; but we should leave the rest to the Holy Spirit and his own conscience: however, though private judgment should be as free as the air or the light, yet the light may be turned into darkness, and the air rendered pestilential.

The apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, gives the following description of the Christian world in the latter times. "Men," says he, "shall be lovers of their own selves—covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God—having a form of godliness, but denying the power."*

But though this anti-Christian spirit shall so far create divisions in the latter days; yet Christ has promised to be with *his* church always, even unto the end of the world. "Thou art Peter," says he, "and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."† But it is not of the visible church our Lord here speaks: it is the invisible one, that should be afterwards built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets—Jesus Christ himself being the *Chief Corner Stone*.‡

This is the foundation stone which you are about this day hieroglyphically to lay according to your own craft, as an emblem or sign of Him who is the chief corner stone of that temple not made with hands—eternal in the heavens.

The object of your association, according to the book of instructions which you favoured me with, is to heal

* 2 Tim. 3 ch. 2, 3, 4, 5 v. † Matthew, 16 ch. 18 v. ‡ Eph. 2 ch. 20 v.

divisions—to harmonize the jarring passions of men—to bring all denominations of Christians to love one another, to live as brethren, to be at peace: and although I am not a member of your order, or joined to you by outward forms; yet I can say I am joined to you in this spirit, and that my heart is in unison with yours. And here let me remark, that there never was a time that required your exertions more than the present; for never were divisions in the Christian world more numerous—never did the religion of Jesus shew less of His spirit—never was the Trowel of Reconciliation, (to use one of your own metaphors,) more wanted, to spread the cement of brotherly love and affection through the world; for never were men more “lovers of their own selves.” The hand of every man seems raised against his brother, and every advantage taken of his ignorance, weakness and necessity. But religious differences are not the only source of unfriendly feelings—political divisions are equally productive of hatred; so that it has literally come to pass, as our Lord foretells in the two verses following the text—that there “should be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three; the father divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

These divisions, however, were the *effect* of Christ's coming, but not the *end* for which he came. He came to bring peace and good will; and whatever tends to promote these objects, must be accordant with the Christian religion, and well pleasing to the Author and

Finisher of our faith. Now, no association seems to have contributed more in allaying differences, and healing divisions in every country where Christianity has prevailed, than the association I now address. I find your motto is, "to love the brotherhood—to fear God, and to honour the King." You exclude none, therefore, from your society, but the selfish, the uncharitable, the contentious, blasphemers of God's name and word, and traitors to the King, or the Government under which they live: all others, no matter of what sect, religion or country, you receive as brethren, and treat them as such.

It would be a crime for any member of your body to divulge the secret that unites you together as brethren, and separates you from the rest of the world. In giving an account of your order, even were I a brother, I could go no farther than the publick documents disclose, with which I have been favoured; but as I am not a member, if I should speak unadvisedly or incorrectly, I trust you will pardon the one, and excuse the other.

You say you can trace the foundation of your order from the commencement of the world. No doubt the *principle* which governs your society, is as ancient as the Creation—when the Earth, Sun, Moon and Stars, and all the Planetary System, were formed by the Divine Architect, in that beauty and order in which they still exist—when innocence and peace reigned on the earth, and the lamb and the lion lay down together.—Undoubtedly the principle which unites you as brethren, then existed: order and harmony reigned till sin entered the world, and one brother became the murderer of the other. But after this, we no longer find

brotherly love prevail; discord and confusion seem to have gained ground so fast that the whole world, we are told, was "filled with violence;" so that God, in just judgment, destroyed it with a flood of waters. However, there were some who were called the children of God, in these days; but many of them fell from their high character and calling, and Noah and part of his family only, were deserving of this appellation. It is not, however, from such general principles that I would deduce the antiquity of your order, or date its commencement. The hieroglyphick emblems used by you, are more convincing proofs to me, that your association existed before the flood. To prove this, it is necessary to trace the antiquity of letters. Much diversity of opinion, on this subject, exists among the learned: some have thought, that when Moses received the ten commandments from God, that he was the first ever taught the use of letters; but it is plain from the Book of Job, which is much older than the Decalogue, that writing was then known—for Job says: "O that my words were now written—O that they were printed in a book—that they were groven with an iron pen, and *lead* in the rock for ever."* But the sacred scriptures go much farther than the Book of Job. The apostle Jude takes particular notice of the prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, out of which he quotes this remarkable passage, not inapplicable to the present times:—"Behold," says he, "the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sin-

* Job, 19 chapter, 23, 24 verses.

ners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."*

This is the prediction of the patriarch Enoch, before the flood, which the apostle Jude applies to the latter times. It appears, then, that letters were in use in Enoch's time; from which it may be inferred, that your association must have existed before his day. It is equally evident, since hieroglyphick language was retained by your order after it had long ceased to be used by the rest of mankind, that you have had some sacred and inviolable system to preserve it from oblivion. To make this more plain to those who do not understand the language of signs and hieroglyphicks, which is the first language of nature, and easiest to be understood by the unlettered and unlearned, permit me here to mention some of those figures or emblems, used publicly in your society.

The *Pot of Incense*, in your language, represents a pure heart, which is always an acceptable offering to the Deity. The *Bee Hive* is, to you, an emblem of Industry; and teaches that we should not sit down contented, whilst any of our brethren are in want, if it be in our power to relieve them by our industry—as the bee toils for all the members of its fraternity, as well as for itself. The *Eye* is a fit symbol of Omniscience, signifying that His Eye sees into the most hidden recesses of the heart—that though our thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from men, yet they cannot be hid from the ALL-SEEING Eye of God. The *Sword pointing to a naked Heart*, demonstrates that JUSTICE

* Jude, 14, 15, 16 verses.

will, sooner or later, overtake every unworthy member of your body. The *Anchor* and the *Ark* are emblems, you say, of a well grounded hope, that you will arrive at the harbour of rest and peace, after you have escaped the dangerous rocks of sin—being safely carried over the floods of sorrow and pain, in the Ark of the Covenant. The *Hour Glass* is an emblem of human life: your remarks on this hieroglyphick figure are so useful and interesting, that we cannot omit any part. “Behold,” says your Monitor, “how swiftly the sands run, and how rapidly our lives are drawing to a close! We cannot, without astonishment, behold the little particles which are contained in this machine; how they pass away almost imperceptibly, and yet, to our surprise, in the short space of an hour they are all exhausted. *Thus wastes man!* To-day, he puts forth the tender leaves of hope; to-morrow, blossoms, and bears his blushing honours thick upon him: the next day comes a frost, which nips the shoot; and when he thinks his greatness is still aspiring,” he drops, like the last grain of sand, into the heap of dust that has gone before. To which you add the *Scythe*, as the emblem of Time in the hand of Death, which cuts short the thread of life, and launches the soul into eternity.

The three stages of human life are not less significantly represented, by the three steps of stairs by which we ascend through this life to a higher state of existence. These are, Youth, Manhood and old Age, signifying, as you explain it, that in youth we should industriously occupy our minds in the attainment of useful knowledge; in manhood we should apply our knowledge in the discharge of our duties to God, our neighbour and ourselves—that so, in age we may enjoy

the happy fruits of a well spent life, and die in the hope of a glorious immortality. Thus every hieroglyphick figure becomes a sermon, and preaches more feelingly than the most eloquent orator: it speaks a language that the unlearned can readily understand, and which the learned must reverence and admire.—Hieroglyphick signs are significant emblems of things by which men of every nation and language can communicate their ideas, and hold intercourse with one another, without the use of letters. Since, then, the divisions of which my text speaks, are not divisions in the invisible or spiritual church, of which every true believer and follower of Christ is a member, no matter what the form of his worship may be; and since the Christian world requires some friendly mediator, some benevolent society to compose these differences, to remove prejudices, to promote brotherly love and charity, and assist the efforts of the gospel in bringing peace and good will to men; and since such are the objects of your society—may we not then hope, that the *Corner Stone* which this day you are hieroglyphically to lay, will be an earnest of the future peace and union of this church; and that the work which is begun under such auspices, will progress till the Cap Stone is laid in grace, and joy and gladness fill these courts with praise. No sound of hammer or axe was heard at the building of Solomon's Temple: idolatrous nations only, raised their altars and worshipped their gods with clamour and confusion. Hiram and his brethren, you say, had all the materials laid down, ready dressed and prepared—a wooden mallet was only used to put the stones together. All these are figures or emblems, intimating that we should come to

God's worship in silence, like stones ready prepared for the work; that is, with pure hearts and humble voices, when we present ourselves to the Divine Architect, to build us up in His holy temple.

The best Institutions have been abused: Christianity itself has had its divisions, and its members have perverted its best precepts, and turned its virtues into vices: similar evils must be found in your society.—The benevolent heart can never enjoy the gifts of Providence alone: in imitation of the munificent Giver, it desires to make others partakers of the same bounty. Brotherly love increases and heightens this feeling, and leads to acts of charity and hospitality: charity, however, can never run into excess, for “charity never faileth;” but hospitality may be abused, and unless carefully guarded will lead to evil.

It is against this abuse I wish to warn you: this virtue becomes a vice, if not under the control of a well regulated mind, guided by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord tells us, that even our prayers may be made for a pretext to devour widow's houses: in like manner, hospitality may be used as a cover for intemperance and excess. Whilst, then, I would urge you, as the apostle does, to “use hospitality,” let me beg you will never lose sight of the four cardinal virtues recommended in your Monitor: these are, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. *Temperance*, you say, is that due restraint upon our affections and passions which renders the body tame and governable: it teaches to avoid excess in all things, and frees the mind from the dominion of every ruling sin. *Fortitude*, you say, enables us to undergo every privation, pain or danger, in support of truth, either for the glory of God or the benefit

of man. *Prudence* teaches you to regulate your lives and actions agreeably to the dictates of reason, and the law of God; whilst *Justice* is that standard or boundary of right which, without distinction or partiality, gives to every one his due—"tribute to whom tribute—honour to whom honour."*

With these guides before you, it is unnecessary for me to add one word more to teach you how to avoid excess, or to keep your affections and desires within their legitimate bounds:—And may the incense of Christian charity and love be always found burning on the altar of this temple, whose foundation stone you are about to lay; may it ascend when our glass is run, and we numbered with the dead that lie here together in peace; and may true piety rise also, as a sweet smelling savour in the sight of our great Grand Master and Lord. And since sin, as it is well expressed in one of your prayers, has destroyed within us the first temple of innocence and purity, may the Holy Spirit guide and assist us in re-building a second temple of reformation; and may the glory of this latter house be greater than the former. AMEN.

* 1 Peter, 4 chap. 9 verse.

