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AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE MASONIC  
FRATERNITY AND THE PUBLIC, AT WILMINGTON, N. C.

By

Eugene Grissom



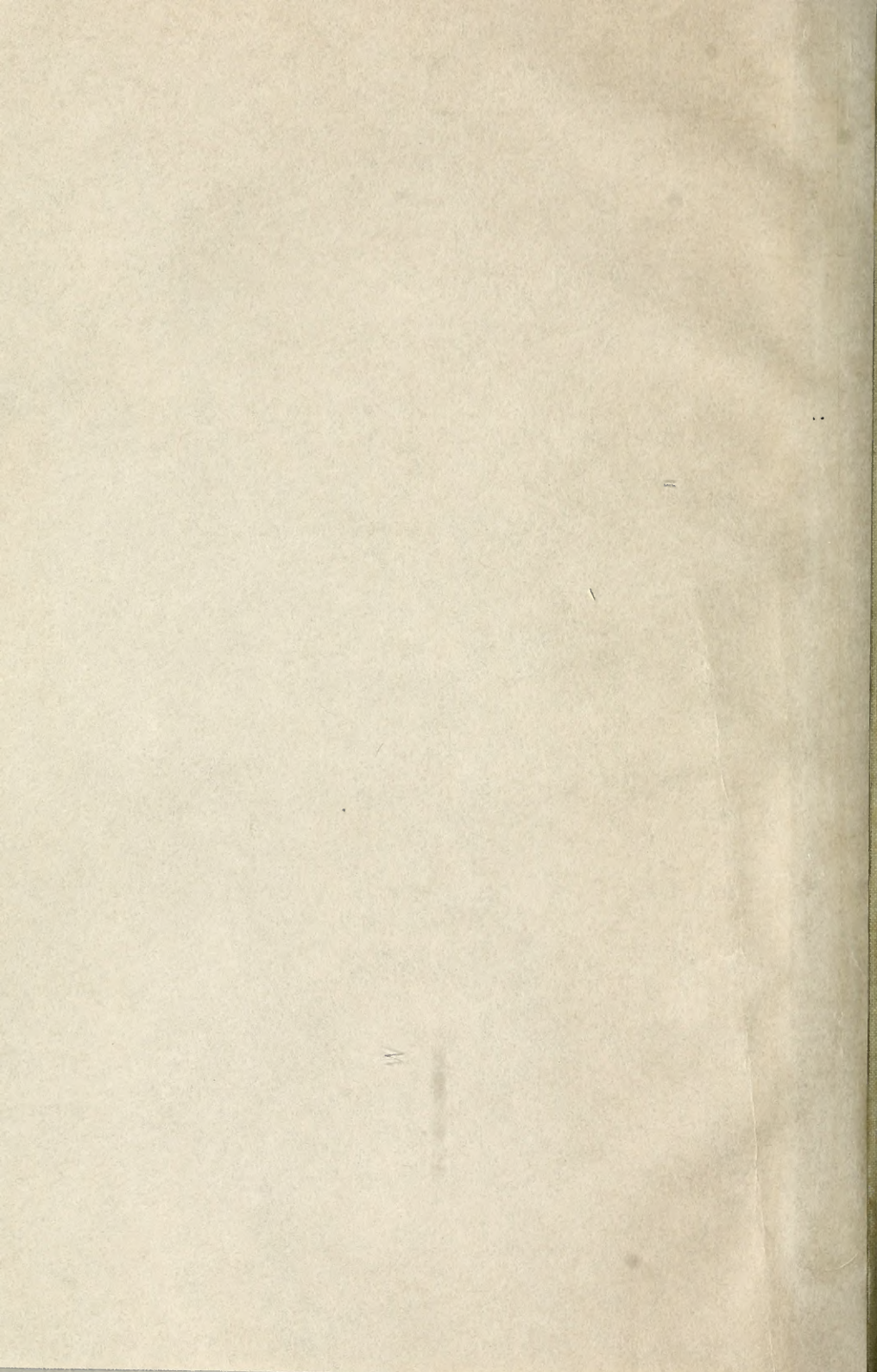




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*AN ADDRESS*

DELIVERED BY

EUGENE GRISSOM, M. D. LL. D.,

*G. D. H. P. OF NORTH CAROLINA,*

BEFORE THE

*Masonic Fraternity and the Public,*

AT

*WILMINGTON, N. C.,*

*On St. John's Day, December 27th, 1881.*

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## AN ADDRESS

Delivered Before the Masonic Fraternity and the Public  
at Wilmington, N. C., on St. John's Day,  
December 27th, 1881.

BY DR. EUGENE GRISSOM, G. D. H. P. OF NORTH CAROLINA.

*Brethren, Companions and Sir Knights:*

"And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light."

These are the words of him whose festival is this day honored by the brethren of the mystic tie, in every Christian land under the sun.

Most appropriate it is, that they whose earthly career is the search for light, should reverence as their patron Saint and Master, him who disclosed also that "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." He who leaned upon the breast of his master as the beloved disciple, and to whom the dying charge was given of the mother of the Saviour, the most precious legacy ever entrusted to mortal man—he whose epistles are aglow with the love of fellow-man and whose life was spent in bestowing the corn of nourishment, the wine of refreshment and the oil of consolation, Saint John the Evangelist, well completes the parallel lines that guide Masonic life.

It was to his hands, feeble with hoary age, when well nigh the

first century of the Christian era had passed, that the great mysteries of the Apocalypse were revealed, in the rocky caverns of Patmos, when like an initiate he stood the last among men, to witness the magnificent symbolism of the fate of man, arrayed in supernatural glory by Divine power—the *last* to be permitted to chronicle the secrets of God—the *first* to witness the final destiny of mankind.

This sublime revelation of the unutterable mysteries by their symbols, came to one chosen of God, whose life-long injunction illumined by practice more eloquent than speech, was, "Little children, love one another."

It is in accord with that command, that the spirit of masonry moves upon the earth, and rejoices to commemorate his feast.

Centuries have gone rolling into the vaults of time, bearing each the annual tribute of our brotherhood on this day. A thousand incidents of masonic history illumine the past. The whole world is marked with monuments of this recurring season—here a temple, there a column—now a hospital for the weary body—yonder a refuge from sorrow. Song and feast, poem and historic le-



gend unite their fragrant memories here, and we are echoing the voices of our ancestors in this joyous welcome, to the olden present, the past that is ever new.

History delights to record the seven wonders of the world as the sublimest achievements of man in the older ages, and orators exhaust the power of language to recount the triumphs of art and science under the blaze of modern discovery, but after all, what is the greatest wonder among mankind? Is it the Suez Canal, the St. Gothard Tunnel, or the Ocean Cable? Is it the art of Italy, the science of France, the arms of Germany, the magnitude of Russia, the wealth of England, or the progress of America? Nay, these are *all*, but fragmentary. It is

#### MASONRY,

the bond that unites all peoples, of every tongue, in every land, Christian, Jew and Mahometan; whose history embraces the chronicles of antiquity, whose present exhibits a brotherhood that encircles the globe with its clasp, whose future we believe to be coeval with the destiny of man. There is scarcely a strip of territory to day, where man acknowledges the being of his Maker, that masonry does not claim as her own. On the slopes of the Himalayas, by the waters of the La Plata, in the wilds of Australia, in the deepest valleys of Switzerland, in the depths of New Zealand, on the

shores of China, in the forests of Canada, the lodge of the mason is built perfect and true, and the heart of universal brotherhood beats with a common impulse to Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

Is there anything like this phenomenon, throughout the domains of earth? The philosophic mind must be struck with astonishment at a spectacle so utterly unlike any other feature of social development. There is something here powerful enough to level every distinction, from the monarch to the peasant, every impediment of tongue, every prejudice of birth, every obstacle of distance, every artificial barrier that man has erected between himself and that last narrow bed, the opening grave, by the side of which all men come at last in one common and irresistible obedience to Divine will.

It has been well said, by a Grand Master of distinction, Richard Vaux, of Pennsylvania, in an address of 1869, that

“An Order that has centuries upon centuries encircling its history, as the bark covers the trunks of primeval trees, showing, by the lines which mark each successive years' growth, their longevity and strength, must, of necessity, command the respect and admiration of mankind.

Comparing it, in its majestic proportions, its hoary antiquity, its strength, beauty, and stability, with all other human institutions, it awakens the deepest interest,



and invites the most thoughtful study.

The ages, as they pass over, do it homage. Time recoils from his attacks upon it; to examine his weapon, and wonder how it is resisted; the Spirit of Destruction lodges in its battlements and broods over the successive failures of its insidious influences; the Genii of Unrest, Schism and Heresy, hovering around its portals, at last fly, affrighted and dazzled by the light of unbroken harmony which illuminates its sacred altars.

The tongue of universal history knows not its language, and fails to record either its origin or its works; the philosophers are silent in regard to it, for they cannot teach its virtues or interpret its mysteries; poetry knows nothing of the rhyme of its ritual, and music has no sound to give voice to its universality. It cannot be described, for it has no parallel."

#### ORIGIN OF MASONRY.

It is natural, my brethren, that the question should often recur—and upon an occasion like this, when our friends without the temple engage in the rejoicings of a festival like this, it is certain to suggest itself to every reflecting mind. What is the cause of Masonry—when and where was its origin, and what ends does it propose to accomplish?

Perhaps none of these inquiries can be fully answered in this mortal life. They are but known in part, to the gray haired mason,

who, like Goethe, lives to complete the fiftieth year of jubilee, in masonic mysteries.

But there is a reply in the general voice of human experience, which is sufficient to demonstrate the claims of this ancient order to the respect of mankind.

The *cause* of masonry is on account of the weakness and wickedness of men—the *origin* of masonry is in the remote past, and the chief *object* of masonry is the welfare of humanity.

The existence of masonry through so many ages, and under every possible phase of human life and experience, is proof absolute that it meets a great want of the human heart. Once within the lodge, everything is forgotten by the true mason, but the brotherhood of his fellows, the search for truth, and the authority of his maker. A mason, G. M. Whitehead, of N. J., in an address in 1869, to G. Lodge, has beautifully said:

"Here, we are all citizens of one country, which is the great globe itself; members of one family, which is the entire human race; children of one Father, which is God."

It is needless to speculate upon the precise date of the organization of Masonry. Whether we accept the legends which connect its work with the building of the temple of Solomon, and with events long anterior to that grand display of the art of operative masonry, as literal history or symbolic truth, all its sublime



principles arise out of the earliest necessities of man. Its mystic symbols bear close relationship to the types and emblems of the spiritual life, the highest aspirations, and the most recondite mysteries of the older ages of humanity. There is internal evidence to every mason of reflecting mind and intelligent understanding, that it existed before the advent upon earth of the Saviour. A writer, N. P. Langford, G. Historian of Grand Lodge of Montana, in an address of 1867 has justly said:

"No institution contains more valuable undeveloped history than Masonry. Were all the influences recorded, which, from age to age, it has exercised over the affairs of the world, a volume of rare historic value would be added to our libraries.

Masonry, in all its symbolic teachings, while it has quietly exhibited its power over conduct and action, is yet without a written history. The story of its birth, its objects, its effects upon civilization, is traceable and traditional; and the results of which, through its allegorical instruction, it has been the fruitful parent; the minds it has trained for earthly immortality; the noble plans it has originated; and the base ones it has overthrown; the light it has reflected upon past ages and with which our age is so radiant—all these, by the inviolability of its ceremonial, are still hidden from the appreciation and admiration of the world, and

known only to the initiated.

To reveal them would be to break the charm which renders masonry so dear to all its votaries. The great elements of its indestructibility, that which has preserved it through ages of barbarism, and given to it a greater antiquity than any other human institution, is its secrecy. We would not, if we could, tell the tale of its achievements. They belong to its archives—too sacred even to be committed to durable monuments, and doubly dear to us, because their only record is the heart."

Its great antiquity proves that it was established in wisdom, whether its mystic lore was or was not gathered by Solomon, and it also proves the goodness of its aims, whether or not they were purified by St. John.

"Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime,  
Shrine of all saints—spared and blest by time."

Says an ancient Pythagorean, Hippodamus:

"*Laws* repel men from crime, and excite to virtue.

*Manners* and *studies* fashion the soul like wax, and through their energy, impress propensities that become, as it were, natural.

It is necessary that these three should have an arrangement in conjunction with the beautiful, the useful and the just, and that each of these, if possible, should have one or all of these for its final intention, that disciplines, manners and laws may be beau



tiful, just, and advantageous.”

This ideal of the wisdom of the philosopher is realized in the Lodge, and I need not remind my brethren, of the lessons of *Wisdom, Strength and Beauty* imparted in the manners and studies of masonry.

One of the most truthful and striking declarations of Bacon may be found in these words:

“It is Heaven upon earth to have a man’s mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.”

And of such is the true mason.

No institution of such dignity and with such claims could descend from antiquity without encountering attack and obloquy—the contempt of the ignorant, and the hatred of the wicked. By its very moral constitution, this was a necessity. Its existence was a protest against narrowness and injustice—it was always the antagonist of him who worked evil—it was the uncompromising foe of him whom the book of Baruch, describes as the wicked with these touches:

“They showed no mercy to the widow, did no good to the fatherless, nor helped any man in his distress.”

How much more effective is this than the most labored invective and bitter denunciation!

#### MASONRY AND THE CHURCH.

But the question is asked, sometimes by those who should know better, also by the candid and honest inquirer, if we do not

present masonry as a substitute for the church, and rank its claims as superior to those of religion. This is a well-worn question, but though the reply is obvious and trite enough to you, my brethren, and to the great mass of the people, for the sake of the young, it may deserve a serious reply.

In the language of Grand Master Whitehead, of New Jersey.\*

“The mason who subordinates the Church to the Lodge errs, and errs grievously. Each has its proper mission and its appropriate sphere. But the mission of the Church is higher and more sacred than that of our fraternity. Masonry is of human origin; it claims no divine commission. It does not profess to be able to reconcile God and man; it is powerless to change the human heart; it cannot save a soul from death. These are the prerogatives of Omnipotence.

“The mission of masonry is rather with the present than with the hereafter; rather with things temporal than with things eternal. It seeks to open the fountains of benevolence, to make the selfish man less selfish, the avaricious man less avaricious, to soften the heart, and to bring the erring back into the path of duty. It stretches out its hands to succor the needy and the orphan, to dry the widow’s tears, to cause the sun to shine where shadow had rested, to make life a joy and not a bur-

\* W. S. Whitehead, G. M. New Jersey, 1868, Address to Grand Lodge.



den, to smooth the pillow of suffering and death.

"It concedes to the church the more honored, influential, and sacred position, but strives, in its own peculiar way, and by its own peculiar influences, as a handmaid of the Church, to assist her in every good and perfect work."

Masonry demands of no man his religious creed, so that he but acknowledge the great Architect of the Universe in the Almighty God. The truly religious man will hold his creed, whether written or unwritten, but masonry stops not to countersign it with her approval before she gives her blessing. And yet because the forms of the Church are not indispensable to the progress of masonry, it must not be imagined that her work is left without the spirit of religion, the light shed by the Father into the minds and hearts of the children of men, and the outcome of the principles of eternal justice softened by mercy, between all men

Wisely did the great La Place, who placed the grand gauge of the loftiest mathematics upon the immensities of space declare, with absolute confidence.

"I have lived long enough to know what I did not at one time believe—that no society can be upheld in happiness and honor without the sentiment of religion."

The masonic lodge, in our land, has, as its furniture, the "Holy Writings" which are held by masons to be true, and received as the

moral trestle-board. Indeed, the very existence of a lodge in three degrees is a perpetual denial of atheism. Unless there be three degrees of life—the natural, spiritual, and celestial—the lodge has taught nothing by its symbolic form.

What that lodge contains in outward appearance, as symbolic of all that is good and true, I will recall, in the words of an eminent mason of the Cape Fear, whom some here will remember, the late lamented James Banks:\*

"Follow me within the Lodge. Behold the evidence of their wisdom in every object, on which the eye can rest. There stands the Sacred Altar, witness of many a solemn thought and word. On it rests the Holy Bible, square, and compass. Need I remind you of the lamb skin or white leather apron, emblem of innocence and peculiar badge of a mason—the plighted hands, the blazing star, the mosaic pavement—the square, the plumb and level, the All-Seeing eye—the sun, the moon and stars—the naked heart and sword of justice—the scythe of time—the broken column, the weeping virgin, the hour-glass and the coffin, the new made grave, the sprig of acacia, the anchor, and the ark.

Aye, and "the clouded canopy, or starry decked heaven, where all good men hope at last to arrive by the aid of the theological ladder which Jacob saw in his vision, the three principal rounds

\*From an unpublished address.



of which are Faith, Hope, and Charity."

"Can I remind you of these emblems, their moral and significance, and not remind you of the zeal, the skill, the wisdom, and the love of the ancient fathers?"

It is good to study the designs upon "the trestle-board," and wise to commune with the mighty dead. It will lead us to think upon the uncertainty of life, and the immortality of the soul; and these thoughts will lead to the cultivation of the masonic virtues, which were so beautifully accomplished in the life and character of St. John the Evangelist."

One thing may be safely affirmed; that the true mason will, in all lands, live that life that befits him to reach, and to display the religious graces that may be in the possession of his people. A light of masonry has declared, who was himself a minister of the Christian religion, and a priest of the Church of England:†

"Our profession is to cultivate wisdom, to maintain charity, and to live in harmony and brotherly love" Says he,

"When a man is said to be a mason, the world may know that he is one to whom the burdened heart may pour forth its sorrows; to whom the distressed may prefer their suit; whose hand is guided by justice, and whose heart is expanded by benevolence."

Says a beloved Past Grand Master.†

"The brightest jewel in the masonic casket is *Charity*. Masonic Charity in its comprehensive scope views every man as a brother in one sense; weeps over his miseries, and seeks to enlighten his ignorance, defends his helplessness, strives to relieve his wants, whispers good counsel in his ear, rejoices in his prosperity, and glories in his emancipation from error, superstition and vice."

#### MASONRY AND BENEVOLENCE.

Yet the order of masonry is not simply a benevolent society, established for the convenient and systematic bestowal of charity when required. This is a wide spread error, and confounds our ancient craft with the many organizations springing to life with the passing years, and doing their own good work in relieving the widow and the orphan, the crippled, the sick and the poor. Many other agencies abound in the work of relief. Woman is always running the errand of mercy with the willing feet of Charity.

The true mason abhors the arrogant spirit that would claim even for his revered and beloved craft a special privilege as the almoner of mankind. Nay, he knows full well, that if the mystic tie were annihilated upon earth, the sweet influence of charity would yet be shed among men. Cowper has beautifully written that,

"True charity, a plant divinely nursed,  
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,

†Oliver, page 45,

†P. G. M., John Nichols.



Thrives against hope, and in the rudest scene,

Storms but enliven its unfading green ;  
 Exub'rant is the shadow it supplies,  
 Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies."

And the poet of nature, in allusion to the spontaneous distribution of these fairest graces of life, gratefully declares:

"The primal duties shine aloft like stars,  
 The charities that soothe and heal and bless,

Lie scattered at the feet of men like flowers."—Wordsworth.

I need not remind my brethren that the charity of masonry is "as expansive as the blue arch of heaven itself, and co-extensive with the boundaries of the world."

But *it* is only the atmosphere of the masonic life, and not the organic power itself. There is a force in masonry which separates its place among mankind from all societies of charity or mutual benevolence, and which distinguishes it from the works of the church itself throughout the world.

#### MASONRY AND MORALITY.

Nor yet again does masonry consist in a scheme for the instruction of men in the principles of morality, and the enforcement of righteous conduct, as its primary, and chief object, in the sense that would render its aim the cultivation of personal morality as its great and sole end.

This is the work of the church, and religion *can*, not only present these truths with all their inherent force and power, but she speaks with the direct authority

of God, armed with Divine wrath, and she offers, beyond this life, the reward of the just, in the blissful abodes of immortality.

The solemn and impressive words of Job, in that wonderful book of the oldest dialect of Scripture, come down to all men alike:

"If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless have not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without a covering, if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,—then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone."

Yet it must not be supposed that masonry does not cherish the purest principles of honor and justice. Every brother is familiar with the definition, so far as it may go, that Freemasonry is "a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols,"

#### GENIUS OF MASONRY.

But yet there is something still, in the central cove of masonry—the heart that sends its circulating principle through all the ramifications by which it clasps the world—the seed of the tree, whose branches shade with impartial protection all the tribes



of earth.

In the words of a masonic brother,\* so far as the true genius of our institution may be revealed to the world,

"I hold that the central idea of Masonry, the foundation stone upon which the superstructure rests, is the recognition and practical application of the great principle of the universal Brotherhood of Man. Whether he drew his first breath amid polar snows or under the burning sun of the tropics; whether he owes political allegiance to an Empire, a Kingdom or a Republic; whether he be clad in the purple of Dives, or the rags of Lazarus; whether his skin be bleached with the hue of the Caucasian, or be clouded with the 'shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun;' whether he worship his God in a Protestant Church, a Catholic Cathedral, a Jewish Synagogue, or a Mohammedan Mosque; the great lesson which Masonry teaches to its votaries is, that 'a man's a man for a'that.' Love of country is a glorious and beautiful thing in its place, and one of the noblest passions that can animate the human breast. 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.'

Political preferences and affiliations are good things in their place. He is unworthy of his birthright as a citizen of this Republic, who has not fixed views upon the great questions of public

\*G. M. Whitehead, of New Jersey. Address, 1868.

policy, which agitate the State and country.

But the great heart of humanity, weary of the unceasing and harassing strife of this busy and selfish world, longs for some common platform, where rumors of contentions on these and kindred subjects can never reach it more. And this eager longing of the human heart the Masonic institution alone can satisfy."

These truths, brethren, are apples of gold, in pictures of silver. They present an expansion of the definition propounded by Anderson, on the revival of speculative Masonry, in 1723†—

"The end, the moral, and purport of Masonry is, to subdue our passions, not to do our own will; to make a daily progress in a laudable art, and to promote morality, charity, good fellowship, good nature and humanity."

It was said of Socrates, the noblest specimen of the heathen sages, that he spent his life in the endeavor to subdue the *passions*, which has ever been the aim of the best of men.

The work of Masonry is directed toward the building up of the loftiest manhood. The graces of benevolence and of charity are the natural movements of the hand of the fully matured humanity that our ancient craft develops.

It is not only a science but an art. Like the graceful touch that embellishes the fairy pinnacles of Milan, or the tower of Co-

†Oliver, Book of the Lodge, page 4.



logne, climbing heavenward for centuries, the genius of Masonry adorns the industries of men, and teaches the last secrets of the arts, wherever men seek to express strength in architecture, beauty, in painting and sculpture, and wisdom in words whose rhetoric befits the music that has strayed to earth from her celestial spheres.

So, too, do the secret and inviolable signs of masonry constitute a universal language around the globe, to express a common sympathy, a common greeting, and a common appeal for aid in time of woe.

“Like warp and woof all destinies  
Are woven fast,  
Link'd in sympathy like the keys,  
Of an organ vast;  
Pluck one thread and the web ye mar;  
Break but one  
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar  
Through all will run.”

Sir John Herschel says of Truth, and the life of the astronomer is, from its very nature, the never ending pursuit of mathematical truth.

“The grand, and indeed the only character of truth, is its capability of enduring the test of universal experience, and coming unchanged out of every possible form of fair discussion.”

Tried by that test, our beloved craft triumphantly points to the successive trials of centuries, only to come forth fairer than ever for the blessing of mankind.

If I may be allowed to formulate a description, Masonry is the systematic pursuit of truth, as a

science; and as an art, it is the practice of the highest brotherhood of man.

The royal Duke of Sussex, so long Grand Master of England, declared that,

“Masonry is one of the most sublime and perfect institutions that ever was formed for the advancement of the happiness and general good of mankind. It holds out allurements so captivating as to inspire the brotherhood with emulation to deeds of glory, such as must command, throughout the world, veneration and applause and such as must entitle those who perform them to dignity and respect.”

A Masonic brother,\* says of our craft,

“The true intent and design of all its ceremonies, mystic rites, forms and symbols, is to elevate and improve, not only its devotees, but mankind; and whenever the pure teachings of Masonry fail to improve and elevate, and make men better, and more considerate and thoughtful, the fault is with those who impart its mysteries, by its forms and ceremonies, or in those who receive them.

Masonry fixes, defines, and points out all the duties of man to himself, and his relations to society. It enters the family, and points out the obligations we owe there, requiring us to perform all the duties of a good father, a kind husband, an obedient son,

\*Grand Master Nash, of Minnesota, in an Address in 1867.



and an affectionate brother.

It goes from the family to the social and business circles of society, and requires us to be true and faithful to our friends, faithful to all the promises we make, the pledges we give, and the vows that we voluntarily assume.

It makes it obligatory to be faithful to our country, and to maintain its honor and dignity. It is silent on no subject that concerns man and all his relations."

In referring briefly to the historic monuments of our craft, it is not, my brethren and companions, that your speaker would presume to instruct those at whose feet he would gladly sit to learn the mysterious lore, and to catch the traditional memories of our ancestors, but it may not be without interest to remind those of our friends without the portals of the order, of the just claims to antiquity which have been adverted to, in all its descriptions.

To say nothing of the traditions which under the prohibition of written chronicles, have been retained of Masonry in the East in remote ages, spreading to Europe and the British Isles, with the gradual enlightenment of the earth in the arts and sciences, I will point you to the well ascertained assemblage of Freemasons in Yorkshire, nearly a thousand years ago.

Modern investigations by those best qualified to pronounce, confirm the ancient belief that in 926 A. D., a Lodge was instituted near the city of York, under the

charter of King Athelstane; and near that city, an ancient lodge exists, whose charter is yet preserved, written in Anglo-Saxon.

Here and there, scattered through profane history may be found the fossil remains, as it were, of masonic existence under the tedious folios which contain the strata of annual social progression.

In the twelfth century the order advanced to Scotland, where among a people of such intelligence and native force of character, the order reached a high degree of prosperity. James I of that kingdom specified the revenue to be paid by each Master Mason to the Grand Master.

In the thirteenth century we learn that the masons of Germany accepted the obligations which affiliated them with their brethren of England.

In later days efforts were made to circumscribe the growing influence of Masonry, as by the Act of Parliament in 1425, under Henry VI, prohibiting the meetings of chapters, and the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth, strove at one time to destroy Masonry in England altogether, but her mistaken wrath was turned aside.

There are numerous references in local histories and personal biographies to the social influences of Masonry for several centuries succeeding, down to the present day. Of these may be noted the diary of Ashmole, the antiquary, who was made a mason in 1646.

On the accession of George I,



the operative masons, then deprived of Sir Christopher Wren as their Grand Master, as we are informed by Masonic historians, met together on St. John the Baptist's Day, at their place of gathering in St. Paul's Church, in the year 1717, and the only four lodges in the South of England being present, together with various old Masons, in the words of Preston,\* the lecturer and historian,

"The oldest Master Mason and the Master of a Lodge having taken the chair, a list of proper candidates for the office of Grand Master was produced, and the names being separately proposed, the brethren, by a great majority of hands, elected Mr. Anthony Sayer, Grand Master of Masons for the ensuing year; who was forthwith invested by the said oldest Master, installed by the Master of the oldest Lodge, and duly congratulated by the assembly, who paid him homage."

It is not contended by intelligent Masons that much has not been added by the great lights in speculative Masonry since the revival of the craft in 1717, which was undeveloped or fallen into disuse before that period. The spirit of Masonry is one of progress, but is of slow and steady growth. But the declaration of Mackay, in the most learned and comprehensive work upon what ever pertains to our craft, after

\*Mackay, Encyclopædia of Masonry, page 645.

the results of the most severe investigations have been duly considered, is given in the following language:

"There is unquestionable evidence that the nodes of recognition, the method of government, the legends, and much of the ceremonial of initiation, were in existence among the Operative Masons of the Middle Ages, and were transmitted to the Speculative Masons of the eighteenth century."

In 1729, the Duke of Norfolk selected Daniel Cox as Provincial Grand Master for the colony of New Jersey, but organic history in this country begins with the establishment of St. John's Lodge in Boston, in 1733 under charter from the Grand Lodge of England, the warrant being granted by Lord Viscount Montacute, Grand Master.

\* The Ancient or Scottish system was introduced into America, by charter from Lord Aberdeen in 1756, and the two were maintained side by side in various states until their union in 1792, left but one Grand Lodge in each state. General Joseph Warren who fell at Bunker Hill was the first Grand Master of the Lodge organized under the authority referred to, of the Ancient Grand Lodge of Scotland.

#### MASONRY IN NORTH CAROLINA.

The early annals of masonry in North Carolina are of surpassing interest, while they are not free from points of uncertainty in date



as to respective events. Thus Mackay the historian reproves the carelessness of Grand Secretary Williams of North Carolina, who informed the Grand Lodge of Kentucky in 1808, that "the Grand Lodge of North Carolina was instituted by charter from the Grand Lodge of Scotland, by Henry Somerset, Duke of Beaufort, as Grand Master. But he himself asserts probably the true date of the Provincial Grand Lodge of North Carolina was by the appointment of Joseph Montford as Provincial Grand Master toward 1769, by the Duke of Beaufort of the Grand Lodge of England, and that in 1771, said Montfort constituted St. John's Lodge at Newbern.

Here it may be well to state that the unpublished manuscript history of James Banks, who had examined this topic with filial zeal, contains an extract from the Freemason's Monitor, printed in 1797, which recites the establishment of masonry in Boston, as stated, by authority of Viscount Montacute, Grand Master of Masons in England, and further states that on "October 2nd 1767, a dispensation was granted by the Grand Lodge in Boston, to the Right Worshipful Thomas Cooper, Master of Pitt County Lodge in North Carolina, constituting him Deputy Grand Master of that Province. He was commissioned with power to congregate all the Brethren then residing, or that should afterwards reside in said Province, into one

or more Lodges as he should see fit." Banks follows this with a statement that, "The first Lodge, according to the author of the "Monitor," was established at Crown Point, in Pitt County. In a subsequent edition of the Monitor, published in 1818, the author has omitted this statement relative to the institution of Lodges in this State; and writes as follows:

"The Grand Lodge of North Carolina was first constituted by virtue of a charter from the Grand Lodge of Scotland, A. D., 1771. It convened occasionally at Newbern, and Edenton, at which latter place the records were deposited previous to the revolutionary war. During the contest, the records were destroyed by the British army, and the meetings of the Grand Lodge suspended."

On which our author comments: "These are substantially all the statements that can be gathered from "the Books" relative to the history of Masonry in North Carolina."

I venture to extract further from the unpublished manuscript of Banks as follows:

"In the communication of the Most Worshipful Robert Williams, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and Tennessee in 1812, he says:

"I fortunately received into my possession the Great Charter under the sign manual, sealed with the seal, and impressed with the Coat of Arms of the Duke of Beaufort, Grand Master of the



Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons, in England, dated at London, the 14th day of January, A. D., 1771, constituting and appointing Joseph Montfort Esq., of Halifax N C., Provincial Grand Master of America, authorizing and empowering the said Joseph Montfort as Provincial Grand Master, to make, constitute, and regulate Lodges in his then Majesty's province of America.

This document is important in the history of Masonry in this State, as it shows in what manner several of the oldest Lodges under our jurisdiction obtained their authority.

The Royal White Hart Lodge No. 2, in the town of Halifax, is one deriving its original constitution from this source. The Great Charter was preserved among the Archives of this Lodge in Halifax, and is claimed by them; from whom the temporary possession was obtained by me, accompanied with a promise to return it.

I have since addressed the Lodge respectfully, in my official capacity, soliciting this instrument as proper to be deposited among our Grand Archives; it being the original authority of the craft in our state, and the foundation of that jurisdiction which we now exercise.

The Lodges constituted under this charter in the regal government of this country, were mostly those, which after the Revolutionary war assembled in convention at the town of Tarborough

in A. L. 5787, and established the authority of which we are now possessed."

Grand Master Williams farther refers to the preparation of a copy of the said paper. It may be interesting to note that there is in our Archives at Raleigh, a copy of a charter to the Royal White Hart Lodge, itself hoary with age, bearing date August 21st 1767, and a paper filed with the same, gives the record of a meeting of said Lodge on Friday May 20th 1767, at which the charter "was unanimously and gratefully received and it was ordered that the Secretary write a letter to the Grand Lodge of England returning thanks for the honor which the Grand Master has been pleased to confer on them and that the said charter be copied in our book of Records." The names of Joseph Montfort, Master, and the several officers and members are duly recorded.

It is worthy of note, also, that military or travelling Lodges were constituted during the revolutionary war, and various North Carolinians admitted to the privileges of the order. Hayden, the masonic biographer of Washington, affirms that a lodge was organized in a North Carolina regiment, in 1783.

Returning to the the narrative by Banks:

"It thus appears that Lodges were constituted in North Carolina by virtue of charters from England and Scotland and Massachusetts, and also by virtue of



charters from Joseph Montfort of Halifax, Provincial Grand Master of America.

The various sources from which the several Lodges derived their powers, and the difference in their numbers, doubtless created the difficulties that arose upon the organization of the Grand Lodge in 1787. The charter from the Duke of Beaufort, so minutely described by M. W. Grand Master Williams, still adorns the walls of the Grand Lodge in Raleigh, and is an object of veneration to all the members of that body, at its annual communications.

Joseph Montfort, upon whom the Chartered honors were conferred, was a native of England. He died at Halifax in 1776, and his daughter married Willie Jones, one of the framers of the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the State. \* \* \* \* \*

Of the charter to Thomas Cooper of Pitt, no trace or record is known to exist."

After the shock of the revolution had passed away, and our forefathers returned to the arts of peace, a call was made for the gathering of the Lodges in Convention, at Fayetteville in 1786, but this did not meet a satisfactory response, and it was not until Dec. 9th 1787, that a convention of seven Lodges met at Tarborough, and organized the Grand Lodge. The records have been preserved in detail. Banks says of this important body:

"It will be seen from the pro-

ceedings of this convention, that the members did not presume to derive their power to organize the Grand Lodge, either from England, Scotland, Massachusetts, Thomas Cooper, or Joseph Montfort, Provincial Grand Master of America, but it recognized all the Lodges that had been regularly constituted by charters from these several sources, and feeling that North Carolina was a free sovereign and independent State, the Convention of Masons from the several Lodges named felt that they had a right to organize a Grand Lodge for North Carolina, subject only to the Book of Constitutions," and the 'landmarks of the order. The wisdom of the deliberations of the Convention when published will command the approval and excite the admiration of the Sons of Light wherever read.'

The first regular communication of the Grand Lodge took place at Hillsboro, July 23rd 1788. At the same time the Convention was in session, and at the same place, to consider the question of accepting the Constitution of the United States, on the part of North Carolina, Samuel Johnston was Grand Master, and Richard Caswell Deputy Grand Master. This harmonious Lodge of masonic brethren was formed from bodies under various jurisdictions, several years previous to the general movement for consolidation in the several States, to unite in but one Grand Lodge, for each State which occurred



about 1792.

Questions of precedence were under consideration at repeated intervals, until the Grand Lodge authoritatively decided in favor of the seniority of the venerable St. John's Lodge, No. 1, of Wilmington, which I have the honor to address and to congratulate, this day, upon the vigor of youth and the honors of age.

I have ventured, my brethren, to stop by the way in a review of our Masonic ancestry, because the facts to which I allude are imperfectly known, or unpublished, and current Masonic history is painfully incomplete in regard to our own annals.

To form a correct judgment of the character of a society or a family, the knowledge of its individual members is a fair criterion. Tried by this test, what has Masonry been, in North Carolina?

As the eye glances along the familiar and time-honored names of the members who were present at the first communication of the Grand Lodge, what feelings of reverence fill our hearts, in the contemplation of so much learning, wisdom, goodness, and patriotism, brought by some superb alchemy into the union that formed 'one entire and perfect chrysolite.'

Caswell was there, soon to be called from earth while exercising the functions of Grand Master and attending the subsequent convention at Fayetteville, which united North Carolina with the United States of America.

And with Caswell, were remem-

bered, as brethren of the mystic tie, the statesmen whose descendants gave their names to one ninth of the territory of the old North State—Caswell, Johnston, Cabarrus, Stokes, Davie, Davidson, Polk, Alexander, and Caldwell.

The lamented Banks, in the manuscript from which we quote, eloquently declares of other members of this same body of patriots, and faithful workers of the craft

"Strike from the roll of North Carolinians, the names of Jones, Potter, Taylor, Avery, Duffy, and Hall, and you would blot out from the memory of the people, a tithe of their knowledge of the principles, on which property, life, liberty, and reputation is preserved, by the joint action of the eloquent advocates, and the incorruptible judge.—

'Strike from the list of North Carolinians the names found upon the roll of your earliest masonic temple, and you would blot out the remembrance of one seventh of those who up to this time have been called to the office of Governor of the State.

The roll presented is one of which the craft may well be proud, and though they have all passed away, yet their memories shall remain as green as a sprig of acacia among the Sons of Light."

The last survivors of the first Grand Lodge were William Boylan, and Judge Potter who died in the 93rd year of his age.

By 1798, thirty active and



zealous Lodges existed in North Carolina, and it is known that the early patriotism of our brethren was exhibited by the presence of members from every Lodge within our jurisdiction in the army or navy of the United States during the war of 1812.

Even before the incoming of the present century our Grand Lodge had exchanged fraternal relations with all the Grand Lodges of the United States, and was beginning to be known abroad.

In December 1813, she became the Mother Lodge of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, and subsequently extended the privileges of Masonry to Mississippi, her Grand lodge being formed from lodges chartered by North Carolina, first granted to Friendship Lodge in 1814, as our records show.

This rapid glance at masonic history, can not omit the painful retrospect of the period when political fanatics sought the destruction of our venerable order in America, upon which to mount to place and power, and William Wirt became their nominee upon the Anti-Masonic platform, for the national Presidency. A tempest swept over the land, and many lodges went down, including for a time even the Grand Lodges of Michigan and Vermont. Mortal men have the weakness that separates from the inflexible strength of celestial spirits, and even a Galileo quailed in the presence of persecution.

In common with all other jurisdictions, North Carolina suffered, and when the Grand Lodge assembled in Raleigh, Dec. 1st 1834, only six lodges were represented—two from Wake, two from Duplin, one from Camden, and the remaining one was that venerable and time-honored body St. John's Lodge, No. 1, which I have the privilege to address. Bro. L. H. Marsteller was its representative, and he was placed in the Grand Master's chair in the following year.

In that period of extremepolitical excitement, of false and specious accusation, and of popular fury, it was a display of courage, in your ancestors, entitling them to a bright page in history, and you, as their children and successors, to a just pride in their tame.

The darkest period had passed, and by 1839, the steady growth of our order had begun which has culminated in the life and power which it exhibits to day in the 236 active lodges and 11,482 members that acknowledge the jurisdiction of North Carolina. For this prosperity it is largely indebted to the light shed abroad by St. John's Lodge, especially after the reforms of her rules and working in 1842, under the influence of brother

#### FANNING AND KINDRED SPIRITS.

And here let us pause by the newly made grave, that has worn the green robe of but a single spring to drop a tear to the mem-



ory of your brother Phineas W. Fanning. For sixty years a brother of the mystic tie, a leading spirit in your councils, and in those of Royal Arch Masonry, from 1824,—Grand Master of North Carolina thirty five years ago, and for three successive terms, and afterwards proud to be the Master of his venerable Lodge. Just as he adorned with the loving labor of his own hands the hall, which the now aged Bishop Green dedicated for you this day, forty years ago save one, so did he adorn a long life with masonic works and deeds.

Your committee, whose chairman was that distinguished brother, Alfred Martin, of whom I will not speak, because he is yet among his brethren, declared of the departed Fanning in touching terms that,

“After the labors of more than three score years in the Great Temple of Masonry, he has quietly folded his Masonic mantle around him, and calmly laid his weary body down to enjoy that eternal rest, which we trust awaits the just and the true in the life beyond the grave.”

Think of the good for fellow men that can be accomplished in three score years. Recall the long line of faithful brothers in your lodge, and throughout North Carolina who for a century past, kept bright their working tools, and have gone in solemn procession, one by one, to receive their wages.

“They rest from their labors—how sweet their repose,

How gently they sleep after life's peaceful close,  
They rest from their labors—their wages are due,  
Their work by the Grand Master's test is found true—  
True to the Plumb-line of justice and right,  
To the Level, on which all good Masons unite,  
To the Square of morality, virtue, and love,  
And their wages are paid in the temple above.

They rest from their labors—farewell for a time,  
Through the last ceremonials, solemn, sublime,  
Of that Higher Degree, ye have ne'er passed before;  
We too soon must follow—must pass thro' the door  
Of Death, into scenes most enchantingly bright,  
To the throne of Jehovah, whose presence is Light.

O then may we all be permitted at last,  
When prepared, we the Grand Tyler Death shall have past.  
To join in the rites of the Grand Lodge above,  
Whose Degrees are the essence, perfection of Love;  
With archangel to unite in thanksgiving and praise,  
To the Holiest of Holies—the Ancient of Days.”

To the candid inquirer who would study masonry, through the lives of those who are brethren, I would point not to the exalted rank of such Grand Masters now in power as the Prince of Wales now ruling the Grand Lodge of England, or the Emperor William of Germany, nor to the grand spectacle of the interment of the late President of the United States under the escort of the Commandery of which he was a devoted Sir Knight, but I would turn even to the elder days of the republic.

Do you seek an example of generous advocacy of the rights of struggling peoples, and of long and patriotic endeavour to pre-



serve peace and harmony among the American people? Behold it in the Royal Arch Mason, Henry Clay.

Would you search for inflexible courage in battle, and unswerving integrity of purpose and character? Find it in Andrew Jackson, the Mason.

Do you look for intelligent foresight applied to the public good and the diligent application of industrial science to the building of national prosperity? See it in De Witt Clinton, the Mason.

Would you contemplate the rarest treasures of political learning, combined with the utmost simplicity and purity of personal life? Observe it in Thomas Jefferson, the Mason.

Would you note the value of unwearied industry, extraordinary perseverance, and honorable frugality, united with the most comprehensive sagacity? See it in Benjamin Franklin, the Mason.

Finally, my brethren, would you trace the complete outline of the perfect statue of human character, blended in such harmonious whole, as to have won for him an unapproachable shrine in the temple of human fame, behold it in the Father of his Country, the Master Mason, George Washington.

It is unnecessary to recite the well known incidents of the Masonic life of our great first President, but that the youthful may know that Washington cherished his masonic privileges throughout

his life, I would remind them of the words written by him to St. David's Lodge at Newport R. I. in 1791,

"Being persuaded that a just application of the principles on which the Masonic fraternity is founded, must be promotive of private virtue and public prosperity, I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the Society, and to be considered by them as a deserving brother."

And again, in the very last year of his life, he thus addressed the Grand Lodge of Maryland:

"So far as I am acquainted with the doctrines and principles of Freemasonry, I conceive them to be founded in benevolence, and to be exercised only for the good of mankind."

#### WOMAN AND THE CRAFT.

Has woman any interest in this secret craft, the gate of which no member of her sex can pass, and whose inner mysteries must never be revealed by man?

Let the words of a departed brother\* reply:

"Ask yonder Mason's widow, who unknown to those around her, found her cruise of oil replenished when it was empty—-who, in time of frost and cold, found fuel at her door—when her children's portion, seeming ignorance, was freely supplied with enlightening knowledge. Ask her, who in whatever emergency she may have been placed, was never turned away empty, or told by a

\*Banks, Unpublished Address to St. Allan's Lodge.



brother of her departed husband, to "go and beg bread."

Ask her if masonry has outlived its day, and she will reply—"That can never be, until there are no poor brothers to be relieved—no widow's hearts to be comforted, and no orphan's innocence to be guarded—no prayers for help to be answered, and no wants to be supplied."

And yet woman has sometimes been found among the enemies of our order.

Would she learn a lesson? Let her look at the depraved and abject condition of her sex, until Masonry and *Chivalry* [represented by these valiant, and magnanimous Sir Knights] in a race of rivalry in a noble cause, elevated her to her true position in social life, and declared her to be man's equal, worthy of his fondest affection, and the dearest object earth could give, on which to centre the hopes and happiness of the human heart.

Of the shield which Masonry has thrown around woman, she ever has and ever must remain in ignorance, but of this she may rest assured, that Masonry can never forget her wants, her purity, and her happiness.

The true mason has a well-spring of content in his heart, which is the answering echo to the words that have come down through the ages from the golden mouthed saint, Chrysostom of the East,

'Charity is the scope of all God's commands.' He has tasted

that cup of everlasting joy, which Sir Phillip Sidney, who spoke these words, chose for his dying moments rather than the priceless cup of relief he yielded to another's suffering.

'Doing good', said the knightly Sidney, 'is the only certainly happy action of a man's life.'

#### MASONS AT WORK.

We are too near the men and deeds of the present day to speak with becoming modesty of the works of our craft, or with tongues free from the strong impulses of fraternal regard. Let the brotherhood of man as exhibited in myriads of touching acts during the stupendous struggle of twenty years ago, and let the pious efforts of to day which sustain that great charity, the Orphan Asylum of North Carolina, be the theme of orator and poet in generations that are to come.

And yet I will remind you of a single incident of that conflict related by a Grand Master\* of North Carolina twelve years ago, and doubtless from the treasury of his own experience:

'In March 1865, a Confederate officer was returning from a long and painful captivity to his own distressed and bleeding region. The splendid steamer on which he was still a prisoner, passed old Fortress Monroe, the wrecks of the Congress and the Cumberland, associated with the fame of the Merrimac, and entered the majestic James river.

\*Robt. B. Vance, Address to Grand Lodge in 1869.



It was a fine day, and the deck was crowded with Federal officers. It was a continuous line of 'blue,' broken only by the solitary 'gray' of the officer mentioned. As 'twilight gray' was coming on, he felt very lonely, although in a crowd. Desiring to see if any would recognize a brother 'in gray,' he simply walked across the deck.

In a moment, a man with silver locks was at his side, and the warm palm of the stranger caused a thrill in his. 'I saw you' said he, 'and you and your party [there were eleven others in the cabin] must take tea with me.' They went. As the tea was finished, an officer with shoulder straps tapped the two brothers on the shoulder, remarking 'you must now separate.' No word was spoken, but the Confederate drew from his pocket a prison ring, and slipped it on the finger of the stranger, while he took a beautiful masonic breast-pin, and placed it in the bosom of the gray: Then, while the cold, lovely stars looked down on the love of their bosoms, they gave the last true grip, never to be forgotten on earth.'

#### CONCLUSION.

And now, my brethren, I am admonished by the flight of time, that the parting hour has come for us. May each craftsman here so guide his footsteps, to use the language of the English bard:

"That his bones,  
When he has run his course, and sleeps in  
blessings,

May have a tomb of orphan's tears wept  
on 'em."—*Shakespeare.*

Men come and go, but truths never die. In the language of a devout Christian, and Grand Master\* of a sister Lodge:

"Can such principles, virtues, and truths, as we hold to be cardinal, ever die? Nay, my brethren. All else may change. The sun on his fire-throne may grow dim with age, and cease to sway the sceptre of Light o'er the empire of universal being; the silver queen that 'rules the night,' and walks the azure vault amid a bright host, of celestial sisters, may wane and wax no more; earth, the sin-cursed abode of man, may realize the long groaned for deliverance, and rise, decked with primal beauty, to roll forever amid the purified spheres and attendant worlds, constituting the new heavens and new earth; the besom sweep of mutation will carry away all the greatness and glory of man, and entomb the whole in the remorseless, starless, unrelumable night of oblivion.

The voice of wisdom, venerable as eternal centuries, comes floating down the ages, and sounds in our ears the knell to all earthly greatness and human ambition—'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.'

But can principles die? The great and vital principles of Masonry, that only, give it character and worth, like mountain

\*Rev. John D Vincil, Grand Master of Missouri, Address of 1867.



springs dancing in the sunlight of ages are drops from the ever flowing Fullness. Is not truth, beautiful angel of the skies, eternal? These must, nay, will live, for God is eternal, and 'I am' is true."

My Brethren, Companions, and Sir Knights, *Great is Truth, and mighty above all things!*













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Grissom

An address delivered before the Masonic  
fraternity and the public, at  
Wilmington



