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ODD FELLOWSHIP

IN SONG

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ODD FELLOWSHIP

IN SONG.

THREE FAMOUS POEMS:

THE THREE LINKS

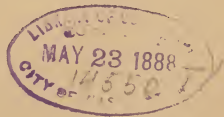
THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

A SEEKER AFTER TRUTH

BY

REV. A. J. HOUGH.

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1888.



Alfred J. Stough

THE THREE LINKS.

Friendship—Love—Truth.

CHARACTERS: SAUL. DAVID. JONATHAN.

News of the battle reached the King
And David with his bag and sling,
The giant's head still in his hand,
Confronted Saul, at his command,
And told in simple, artless way,
How he had left at break of day
His flocks on Bethlehem's pastures spread,
And hurried to the camp with bread,
Beheld the giant drawing near,
And Israel shrinking back with fear,
But knowing then that God and right
Were stronger still than wrong and might,
His bag and sling for arms he took,
And five smooth stones from out the brook,
On God reposed, to him appealed,
And ran alone into the field;
One stone brought down the giant—dead,
And all his army turned and fled.

Beside the King, and hearing all,
Stood Jonathan, the son of Saul;
And through this story, simply told,
A mystic bond of heavenly mould,
That link of Friendship we have found,
The two young hearts together bound.
Then Jonathan, with impulse sweet,
Laid down his bow at David's feet,
Unloosed the girdle he had worn,
The sword through many a battle borne,
And girt his friend with noble pride,
And hung his own sword at his side,
Then threw his mantle, stranger thing,
Around his friend before the King.

A wondrous scene? yes; think it o'er,
Odd Fellowship means that, and more.
Our bow—the mind—divinely wrought,
That wings the arrows of swift thought,
The girdle, sign of manhood's might,
The sword, our weapon for the right,
All these Odd Fellowship contends
Are ours to help and serve our friends.

Nor must the son of Saul exceed
Odd Fellowship in noble deed.
For well he knew in that same hour
The son of Jesse came to power.
Yet Jonathan stepped out and down,
Glad that his friend would wear the crown.
The world may shake its prudent head,
The creeds pronounce that spirit—dead,
Odd Fellowship seeks but to lead
All men to emulate that deed.
In Friendship's link together bound
We honor worth wherever found,

And help it upward to a throne
That seemed prepared for us alone.
The wearer of our first grand link
The spirit of this scene must drink
So freely that his soul will bend
In homage to a nobler friend.
Though one should all our honors wear
And pass beyond the highest chair,
Yet self for friend cannot forget—
That spirit has not touched him yet.
Though high his rank and clear his claim,
He's but an Odd Fellow in name.
For Friendship's link forever ends
All rivalry's, and we are friends.

That mantle of the son of Saul
Has a deep lesson for us all.
We cherish, succor and defend
Then strip ourselves to serve our friend,
Counting him worthy of our best
As we would count some honored guest.
And he who shrinks when suffering calls
Has no place in our hearts or halls.
But, deeper—in the sign we see
The mantle of that charity
We fold about a brother's name
To hide his faults and guard his fame,
Richer than robe to David given,
And wrought upon the looms of heaven,
Not to be lightly laid away,
But used, like sunlight, every day.

The heart of Saul with anger beat
To hear the song sung through the street
With—Saul his thousands—for refrain,
And—David tens of thousands slain.

Then brooded o'er the gloomy king
An evil spirit's fateful wing.
And watching David from that day
He sought to take his life away.
That spirit broods about us still,
And Saul his rival seeks to kill.
In forum, mart, in church and state,
The little seek to stab the great,
Driving them even to the wall
With the fierce enmity of Saul.
Be ours like Jonathan to throw
A shield between them and the foe,
Rising above ignoble ends,—
That is Odd Fellowship, my friends.

Before the king, with radiant face,
Came David to the minstrel's place,
Awaking on his harp strings there
The song of hope, the cry of prayer,
The chords of love, faith, pain, regret,
The ages never can forget.
And at the strains, now sweet, now wild,
The King grew gentle as a child,
But when the minstrel changed the theme—
A martial air, a patriot's dream,
The clash of arms, the flight of foes,
The King defiantly uprose,
And hurled a javelin at his head—
The music ceased, the minstrel fled,
The warriors crowding through the hall
Beheld the weapon in the wall,
And like a beast too late to spring
Upon the prey crouched there the King.
When David comes, to-day, unknown,
By right of worth to take his throne
Though chrisomed and divinely led

The javelins fly about his head;
Nor might of sword nor power of song,
Nor love of right, nor scorn of wrong
Can shield him from the hate of Saul—
His javelins still ring on the wall.
But fronting hate's unholy powers
We set a brotherhood like ours,
Heart linked to heart, hand grasping hand,
One line, unbroken, through the land.

Then Jonathan and David met,
The plan was made, the hour was set,
When arrows flying near or far
Should tell of peace or tell of war,
And David went to sit alone,
And wait beside the Ezel stone.
Then to the feast that day the King
Came like a fiercely maddened thing.
"Why comes not David here?" he cries,
With murder flashing in his eyes.
But Jonathan our second link
Of Love had found, and could not shrink
From danger for his brother's sake,
And, rising, fair excuse to make
For David's absence from the feast,
The rage of Saul the more increased;
He cursed his son while breaking bread
And hurled a javelin at his head.

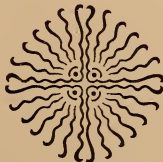
Then Jonathan knew David's doom,
And rose, and left the banquet room,
Called for his quiver and his bow,
Beckoned a little lad as though
He went to hunt on mountains lone,
Then sought at once the Ezel stone.
"Run! find the arrows that I shoot!"

And the young lad was fleet of foot,
And ran, and running heard the cry—
“Did not the arrow past thee fly!
Make haste, speed, stay not!” David heard,
And understood the warning word.
Back to the city, wondering, slow,
The lad went with his master’s bow;
Then Jonathan and David met,
Their hearts were sad, their cheeks were wet,
They kissed, embraced, vowed there, alone,
Then parted by the Ezel stone.
Ah, brothers, of the Second link
In our fair chain, do we so sink
All thought of self that we may shield
Our brother in life’s open field!
Forego our comfort, pleasure, ease
To bear him messages of peace?
For love is sacrifice and power,
The soul’s imperishable dower;
It wings the arrows used in strife,
To save, not take a brother’s life,
And rises from a splendid feast
Before a King to serve the least,
In deeds, all merciful, unknown,
Beside some sheltering Ezel stone.

More Jonathans we need this hour
Helping young David’s into power,
Sheltering, shielding the oppressed,
Uplifting all that are distressed,
Willing to lose their own fair name
That they may spread a brother’s fame;
Then Saul may let his javelins fly,
Odd Fellowship will never die,—
But rise up in proportions fair
As it is rising, everywhere.

They parted, but the link of Truth
Bound heart to heart each noble youth;
Though Jonathan fell, fighting, slain,
No link was broken in the chain,
For life nor death, nor pains nor powers
Can break that three linked chain of ours.
It holds in sickness and in health,
As firm through poverty as wealth,
Uninjured by hate's fiery breath,
And breaks not at the touch of death.
Bind it about you, brother men,
Who hold the plow, adz, brush or pen;
The Saul of hatred must depart,
And David of the valiant heart
The larger soul, the finer brain
Come up into his place and reign.

The link of Friendship is the hand
Open for service on demand,
The link of Love, a heart that grows
More dear to friends when pressed by foes,
And that untarnished link of Truth
Shines on the open brow and smooth,
The symbol of immortal powers
Though crowned with thorns or crowned with flowers.
Hail, Jonathan—Love did prevail,
And David, worthy of it, hail!



THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Or Secret Life The True Measure of Character.

Scene—The lonely road of eighteen miles between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Actors—Four Robbers, a Jew, Priest, Levite, Samaritan.

Just what we do, unbiassed, free,
Just what we are where none can see
On lonely paths we travel o'er,
Just that we are and nothing more.
Our public acts the world may scan,
The secret life reveals the MAN.

Here, far away from man's abode,
Upon this lonely mountain road,
Between two noble cities laid,
Men, as they are, will be displayed.
Above—Jerusalem; below—
The walls of ancient Jericho,
With eighteen miles of road between—
The wildest, loneliest ever seen,
As if the sea at some God-word
Had turned to stone and never stirr'd.

Four men, well dressed, are passing now;
They raise their hats, full low they bow;
Their forms such finished grace display,
Sons of some noble house are they.

Now far up the rocky height
A lonely traveller comes in sight.
Slowly he threads his winding way,
His form is bent, his beard is grey,
The locks that o'er his shoulders flow
Are white as Hermon's driven snow.
Nearer he draws! a noble face!
Some patriarch of that favored race
Which gave the Christ; a wealthy Jew;
And on he passes from our view.
Hush! there's a cry! a wail! a shriek!
The strong are striking down the weak!
And there the victim from the rocks
Is struggling, sinking 'neath the shocks
Of brutal blows; he falls at last;
And lo! the well dressed men that passed
Have robbed the Jew in open day
And left him bleeding by the way.
A man may wear a fine black coat,
Salute you well, then cut your throat.
The biggest rascals in the land
Will move with manners the most bland,
And pious stories glibly tell;
They look like heaven and act like—well,
A lonely place, no eyes about,
Will find that sort of people out.
Jerusalem and Jericho
The public life may read and know,
But on the lonely roads between
The measure of the soul is seen.

Here comes a Priest, a man of God,
With sympathies both deep and broad,
A love that knows nor race nor creed,
Call to him, Jew! He will give heed!
The moans which tell of thy distress,
The open wound, thy nakedness,
Will move the man who loves to pray—
Call to him Jew, across the way.
Call louder! Holy themes and high
Engage his thoughts. *He's passing by!*
Saw you the look of high disdain
That answered to the cry of pain?
The air of awful saintliness
With which he gathered up his dress,
Acting, as plain as speech could be,
“You'd better die than trouble me!”
The climber of grand altar stairs,
The maker of unending prayers,
The keeper of all heavenly balms,
The singer of seraphic psalms,
The friend of souls, their hope, their guide,
He passes by the other side.
If we have love beyond a doubt
A dying man will call it out.
A lion, brute, will heed the yelp
And anguish of its wounded whelp.
And soulless bird that sings and flies
Will answer to its own that cries.
What made the priest, that man of prayer,
Pass by, his nose up in the air?
He wrought his noble actions when
They could be seen and praised of men.
That bleeding Jew, in this lone place,
Has torn the mask from off his face.
In spacious temples he was loud

And lacrymose before a crowd.
He gave munificently where
The throng would cry out "there, look there!"
He *seemed* to have a generous heart
When he was acting out a part
In some fine play; but that lone Jew
Has laid him bare and looked him through.
He would have seen that bleeding brow
Up in Jerusalem just now;
He would have heard that cry of woe
Along the streets of Jericho,
And helped his brother like a God
With tongues to tell the deed abroad;
But here, where none stand by to see,
No tongue, hands, eyes or heart has he.
His life to low self-seeking ran;
He was a priest, but not a man,
A scandal to the name he bears,
Just a machine for making prayers.
We may be great where men can praise,
What are we on life's lonely ways?
The whispered word of hopeful cheer,
The silent falling of a tear,
The friendly hand, the generous deed,
Known only to the heart of need.
Shew clearer than a dress parade
The stuff of which our souls are made.

Here comes another of his kind,
But smaller, and so walks behind.
A Levite (would the tribe had ceased),
Apeing the manners of the priest,
Puts on the same "don't-touch-me" look,
Takes just the gait his master took,
Treads in his track where ere it goes,
The same precisely, heels and toes.

No! he is crossing to the place
Where the Jew lies; looks in his face,
Walks round him, views each wounded limb,
Stares in the eyes fast growing dim,
Treats him as so much broken clay,
Then pigeon-toes himself away.
This doer of religious chores
Inside of Temple hours and doors
Who held religion as a trade
And only worked it when it paid,
No thought had he of swoons or pains,
But simply looked on the "remains",
As people walk our dead about
To see if they are well laid out.
He served his Maker by the piece
In handling pots and blood and grease,
And having dressed the last beast's limb,
Nor man nor God had claims on him.
He loosed himself from holy things
When he untied his apron strings.

Poor Jew, thy sorrows have not ceased,
For riding slowly on his beast,
Comes one who bears thy fiercest ban,
The loathed and lost Samaritan,
The scum and refuse of all lands—
Cover thy face up with thy hands!
Upon thy nation and thy tribe
He will heap jest and scatter gibe,
Hurl curses at thy Holy Place,
And call thee dog right to thy face;
Answer thy cries with oath and hiss—
Would God that thou hadst died ere this!
He lingers; it is but to kill!
Beside the Jew the beast stands still!
Above the wounded, dying man

Leans that abhorred Samaritan.
He seeks the knife beneath his cloak
That carries death in one swift stroke;
He draws it! no! that's oil! that's wine!
He looks like love, heaven born, divine,
Big tears are streaming down his cheeks,
How tender are the words he speaks,—
“My brother, in distress thou art;
I am thy brother; here's my heart;
Thy wounds shall drink my oil, my wine,
Then on this humble beast of mine
To a near inn safe thou shalt ride,
And I will walk close at thy side.”

Take home the lesson, as ye can,
The secret life reveals the man.

How we have erred in judgment, all,
Calling that great which is so small,
Calling that low which is so high
And Godlike, it can never die.
We see, but only see in part,
We see the face, but not the heart.
Beneath some cursed and hated name
May sweep a soul with love aflame,
And priestly robes may hide a gaunt,
Disfigured soul, all froth and cant.

Samaritan, well named the Good,
We hail thy sign of brotherhood,
It breathes through every cry of need,
And answers in each loving deed.
It knows nor sect, nor creed, nor race
But shines in every human face.
Links North to South and East to West,
And throbs in every human breast.

Deep as the soul of man it goes,
Wide as his sympathies it flows,
High as his hopes, deep as his fears,
Awaking joys, suppressing tears,
And in the face of clique and clan
Proclaims the brotherhood of man.

Odd Fellows are we? if 'tis odd
To bear the oil and wine of God
In lowly, humble ministry
On lonely ways where none can see,
Odd Fellows may we ever be,
Giving to fallen man the grip
And sign of our Odd Fellowship.



A SEEKER AFTER TRUTH.

“What is Truth?” the cynic Pilate asked the great
High Priest of old:

It is deeper than all language and in symbol must be
told,

Only patient seekers find it after long and weary quest,
For its home is in the heavens and the quiet human
breast.

To the wicket-gate a seeker of the noble and the
True

Comes with meekness waiting, knocking for admis-
sion. Let him through.

At his left hand Friendship guards him; at his right
hand Love upholds,

And the spotless robe of virtue round his manly
bosom folds.

“What is Truth?” Sound forth the music; lead the
humble seeker on;

Prove him worthy; make him ready; then the veil
shall be withdrawn.

He is treading in the footsteps of the sages and the
seers
Who obtained the Truth before him, after weariness
and tears.
Let the music softly tremble, lead the seeker on his
way,
After searching comes possession, after darkness comes
the day.
Out of Friendship Love came springing, out of Love
Truth shall arise,
Fairest flower, imperial virtue, with strange lustre in
her eyes.
He who wins her; he who serves her; he who speaks
her accents grand
Must condemn the wrongs and falsehoods running riot
through the land.
Midst the strife of warring factions firm and stable he
must be,
Like a rock of refuge rising in a wild and stormy sea,
And his life will be so blameless and his soul so calm
and fair
That the cloudless face of heaven may be seen re-
flected there.
He has worn the pink of Friendship, he has worn
Love's sacred blue,
Now he comes to take the Scarlet, a diviner, deeper
hue.
It is glowing like the jasper underneath the heavenly
walls,
With the semblance of His glory who illumines the
heavenly halls.
All the splendor of the sunset, all the beauty nature
shows
In the dying of the maple, through that fiery symbol
glows.

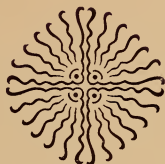
And the story of the martyrs who for Truth have
 lived and died,
 Torn asunder, scourged and tortured, crowned with
 thorns and crucified,
 In that Scarlet sign is flaming! what a noble band
 were they!
 He who wears it must be worthy; lead the seeker on
 on his way;
 Sound the music softly, slowly; banish every idle
 thought,
 Let the sacred symbols tell him of the Truth so brave-
 ly sought.
 He beholds the Eye Eternal in a blaze of glory burn;
 Are his aspirations worthy? There is One who can
 discern!
 Not a motive deeply buried in the soul can hidden lie
 From the piercing penetration of that scrutinizing Eye.
 Yet it beams on human frailties full of gentleness,
 and mild
 As the eye of mother resting on the weakness of her
 child.
 Now the Three Links rise before him with a lesson
 to be taught
 That commands the veneration of the mightiest in
 thought.
 What the pure in heart have prayed for, what the
 sainted sought to gain
 Is triumphantly accomplished in the secret of that
 chain.
 For behind it breaks the vision of a brotherhood
 sublime,
 Out of every tongue and people, out of every creed
 and clime,
 Bound together in a union broad as Love itself is
 broad

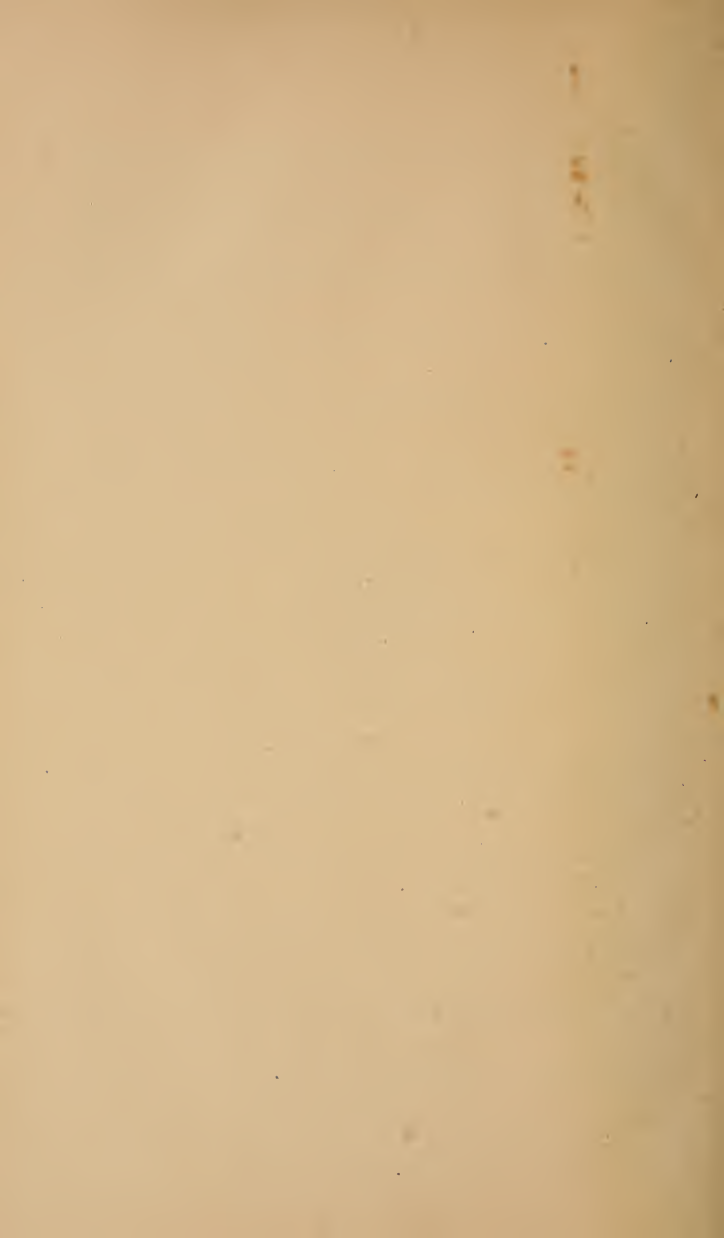
For a ministry as tender as the ministry of God.
Ah! but turning there confronts him the sad lesson
of decay,
As the leaves that fall in autumn, so this mortal dies
away,
All the hopes of human glory time shall scatter and
annul—
Is the lesson borne upon him in the Cross Bones and
the Skull,
And the Scythe with steady swinging through the
grass and through the flowers
Is a solemn sign and symbol of this human life of ours.
He will mark the flying moments, he will use them
as they pass,
For the Mower is before him, and his scythe is in the
grass.
But the Bow, the Arrows, Quiver, what a noble sign
they make
Of that covenant of mercy he must never, never
break.
All his plans may foil and fail him, all his hopes in
sorrows end
But his heart shall never falter in allegiance to his
friend.
Should he turn away oblivious to his brother's plead-
ing call,
He's no Jonathan, no David—he is imitating Saul.
Bound together in a bundle as the Sticks before his
eyes
This great Brotherhood the forces that would con-
quer it—defies!
There is boundless strength in union; close the ranks
up where they part,
That is how Odd Fellows triumph, hand in hand and
heart to heart.

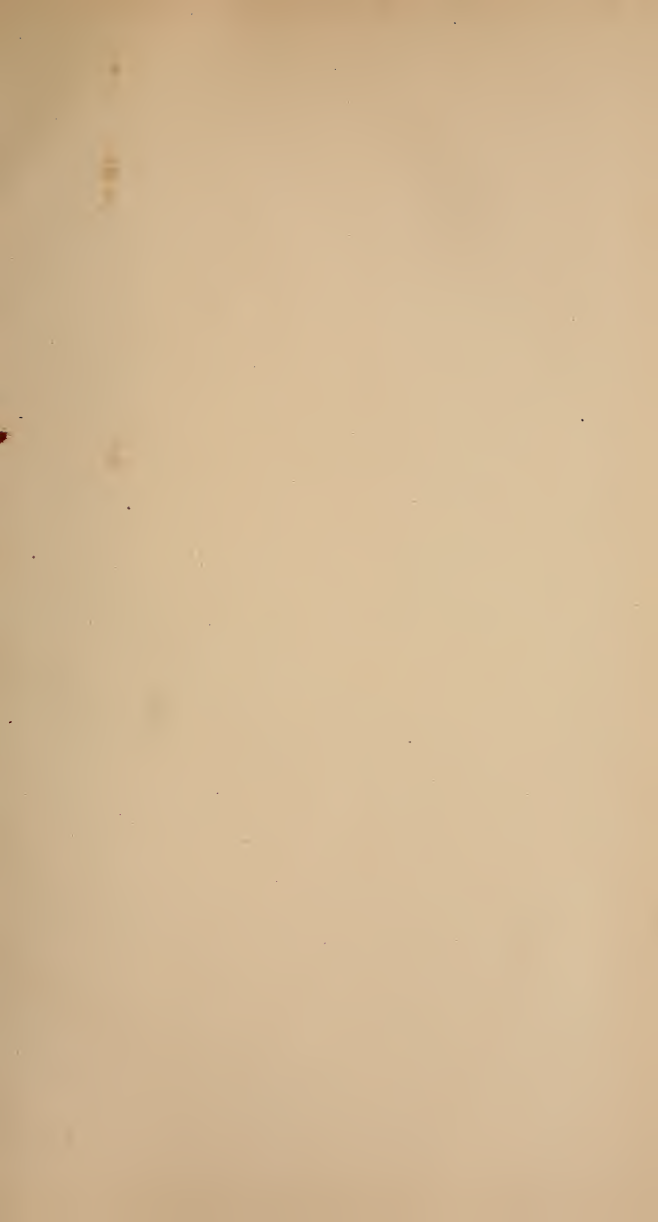
There is work before the seeker, so the Axe lies near
 at hand,
 Keen its edge, it has a mission he who heeds will
 understand:
 Clearing highways for the marching of the nations
 yet unborn,
 From the midnight of oppression to the glow of
 Freedom's morn,
 Breaking down between the people every alienating
 thing—
 That is why the axe is wielded. Take it up and let
 it swing!
 See the Heart and Hand united; for with manners
 soft and bland
 Men will meet us and will greet us with a lie in their
 right hand,
 But this Truth the tender symbol with a silent tongue
 imparts,
 That Odd Fellows in their greetings always shake
 hands with their hearts.
 In the Globe appears the grandeur of our Order's no-
 ble plan;
 It is rising to the glory of the Brotherhood of man;
 For the cry of suffering echoes all the weary world
 around,
 And Love's language is familiar where the heart of
 man is found.
 Nothing human can be foreign, is the essence of our
 creed,
 And the stranger is our brother by the fellowship of
 need.
 In the Ark appears the glory and the majesty of law,
 Shielding virtue from defilement, holding anarchy in
 awe,
 For the law is Love in spirit, and true Love is also law,

With a pity in her bosom, and a sword that she may
draw.
With the wisdom of that Serpent gliding stealthily
along
Moves the seeker on his mission in the overthrow of
wrong;
With the Scales of Justice weighing every life within
our halls
And regardless of position when the Sword of Justice
falls;
In that Book of Books beholding the grand future of
our race
When redeemed from slavish passion it shall take its
rightful place
In a universe of freedom without shackle, bond or
thrall,
And the peace of God's great gladness shall reign in
and over all.
But the sands of life are dropping in the Hour Glass
one by one,
And the Truth breaks sadly on us that this life will
soon be done,
While the Coffin with its solemn admonition closes all—
And the pride of earth is covered with a shroud and
with a pall.
Stay! not all! for rising grandly on ethereal wings out-
spread
Is the form of Hope triumphant, shedding splendor
on the dead,
And the burden of her singing as she carols through
the sky
Is the crowning Truth we cherish—that the soul can
never die!
Robe the seeker with the Scarlet; to the Priestly
order brought

He has seen the Truth eternal into sign and symbol
wrought
Just as Aaron was to Moses, eye and ear and heart
and hand
So he shall be to his brethren till they reach the
promised land.







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