

AN ADDRESS,

7c #X.

DELIVERED BEFORE

HARMONY LODGE, NO. 17,

AT

BARNWELL C. H., (SOUTH CAROLINA,)

24th June, 1850.


BY

BRO. S. W. TROTTI.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE LODGE.

AUGUSTA:
PRINTED BY JAS. McCAFFERTY.
1850.

75c
366.1
7756A



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Lyrasis Members and Sloan Foundation

ADDRESS.

IT is curious to contemplate the career of man, and the changes through which he has passed, since our first parents were driven from the garden of Eden. Formed in the image of his maker, and endowed with the noblest attributes, the father of the human family entered his beautiful Paradise. "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall," his strength yielded to temptation, and his disobedience brought down upon himself and his descendants, the judgment of an offended God. Banished from the blissful abode of love and happiness, and bearing within him, the eternal principles of good and evil, he goes forth to till the earth, and earn his bread in the sweat of his brow. The mists of time hang heavily over the first wanderings of our race, and the veil of oblivion, has been thrown across the path of their early pilgrimage. But little is known of the human family beyond the flood, other than that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth," "and it repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart," "and the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth," and the decree of the Omnipotent was fulfilled, "the windows of heaven were opened," the waters covered the earth, and all the human race perished in the universal deluge, save Noah and his family. In a rude ark constructed of gopher wood, and floating like a speck on the troubled waters, were gathered all that remained, of the hapless sons of Adam.

With no ordinary interest, we contemplate the descent of the ark upon Mount Ararat, and the beginning, as it were, of a new creation. The guilty Cain--his hand red with a brother's blood, had perished from the earth. The guilty generations that lived before the flood, had been swept away by it, and God had made a new covenant with man, not that he should never sin again, but that the world should never more be destroyed by water. Man was still to be subject to the sentence of condemnation, that was pronounced at his fall. He was subject to sin, and with good and evil placed before him, and the everlasting principles of good and evil struggling at his heart, and engaged in fearful conflict for the ascendancy, he planted his foot on dry land, and entered again upon his mission on earth. The fiercest passions of our nature were soon at work. Crime once more polluted the earth. The wicked cities of the plain were destroyed by the command of the Most High, and bloody wars devastated the nations. The Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, in their turn, made the earth groan with the violence of their conflicts; and Greece and Rome springing into pow-

er, with their mailed warriors pushed their conquests, wherever the foot of man had trod. The breezes of every land and ocean, bore up in triumph the eagles of victorious Rome, and even the nations that had felt the prowess of her arms, themselves started forth on a career of conquest. It has been said, that if all the blood, that has been shed by England alone, in her different wars, was collected into one reservoir, it would be wide enough and deep enough to float the British Navy. Such has been the violence of human passions, that in sketching the career of every country, whether ancient or modern, the pen of history, must be often dipped in blood, and we are almost led to adopt the conclusion of the philosopher, who remarked, that a state of war, is the natural state of man.

But we should do great injustice to the high and noble purposes of our mission on earth, if we looked only on the gloomy side of the picture of human life. Man is destined to live beyond the grave: he bears within him an immortal spirit, that will survive the frail crust of clay that encircles it. All is not evil, even in this fallen world. Tyrants may devastate the land with wars. The fiercest passions of our nature, may heave and roll like the billows of the ocean. Injustice and oppression may rule the hour, and sin tempt us in a thousand forms. But God is everywhere! Bright spirits from the spirit land watch over us, "and there is not an angel added to the hosts of heaven, but does its blessed work on earth through those who loved it here." Disobedience brought death and sin into the world, but the good has not been banished from it. If oppression drag its victim to the stake, Mercy is there to plead for him. If disease paralyzes the hand of the poor, Charity bends over the sufferer, and is ready to relieve his wants. Thus, in all the relations of life, the good and evil are placed before us.

Placed, then, in a world, where good and evil are engaged in fierce and continued conflict, and where we must come under the influence of one or the other, what does it behoove us as thinking men to do? Is it not our duty, to array ourselves on the side of truth and do all the good we can? There was not only courage, but wisdom in the remark of Lieut. Bassinger, when he exclaimed at Dade's massacre, "I am the only officer left alive, and we must do the best we can!" In every situation in life, we should do the best we can. It is this high resolve, that has enabled a few individuals to accomplish wonders in the advancement of civilization. It is this active, and upward and onward principle, that has contributed so much to scatter the fruits of benevolence and charity over every land, and which has been in no small degree instrumental, in establishing and perpetuating the noble institution, of which I am to-day an humble representative.

The ancients worshipped Truth as a goddess, and very properly regarded her as the daughter of Time. Time is indeed a mighty arbiter in disposing of the events of this world, and has fixed its seal of approbation to the institution of Masonry. No other human institution has conferred so many benefits on mankind or been of such long duration. With no ordinary pride, we can trace the origin of our order to a period when even the lights of history grow dim. "Old Mortality," brushing away with pious hand the dust from the records of the past, has enabled us to travel down the long vista of years, until we enter the magnificent temple of King Solomon, and behold there among the workmen, who raised that stupendous pile, the first germ of our association. By the side of the mountain we see the little rivulet, sparkling in the sun, so small and feeble at its source, that even a child might impede its progress in the hollow of its hand, and yet deepening as it progresses, until it swells into the majestic river, bearing on its broad and capacious bosom the commerce of a thousand lands. And so from a small beginning, we trace the institution of Masonry for a period of nearly three thousand years. Our Order was at first composed, as its name implies, of workmen or Masons, but gradually embraced others who approved its objects, precisely as the South Carolina Mechanics' Institute, formed for the advancement of the mechanic arts, consists of persons engaged in every occupation in life, who desire to prosper the interests it was intended to promote. We feel that Providence has blessed our institution. God blasted the efforts of presumptuous man, to erect a tower that should reach to heaven; but each passing century has witnessed the progress of Masonry, and thousands of the human family scattered over every portion of the civilized world, rejoice on this day, to celebrate the anniversary of St. John, and glory in the name of an ancient free Mason. The few, humble workmen, who long ago, in the deep and solemn silence of the temple, established the first degrees of our Order, little dreamed that they were themselves laying the foundations of a temple that would stand in all its glory, when no trace could be found of that Solomon the wise. They little dreamed that they had set their square and compass to a work that would endure forever.

"They builded better than they knew
The conscious stones to beauty grew."

Masonry, it is said, has its secrets. What is the secret of its preservation through so many changes of time, and revolutions in government? What has sustained unimpaired for so many centuries, an institution whose members are scattered over every portion of the world? I do not fear that I shall incur the censure of my brethren, in telling you what that secret is. Masonry is founded on Truth, and

has for its objects, the exercise of Charity, and the promotion of peace on earth and good will amongst men. Masonry leans on the Bible for support, and from that eternal fountain of Truth, derives those instructions which make her mission one of comfort to the afflicted and consolation to the distressed. If our institution had not been sustained by the Bible, it would have perished long ago. It never would have received the approbation of so many of the good and wise of every country. But masonry is no substitute for the church. No mason believes or will say that it is. It is the duty of the church to proclaim the Gospel—to persuade man to repentance—to teach him the necessity of being born again—and to point his hopes to the blood that was shed on Calvary. Masonry acts in an humble sphere, but one which God approves and humanity exults in. It is one of the charms of Christianity, that its influences are felt beyond the pale of the church, and that others besides those who have been converted from death unto life, acknowledge its sacred precepts. The hand that gives a cup of cold water to the lips that are parched with thirst, has performed a Christian duty, though that hand may never have grasped the cup of the communion. To the Bible and the influences of Christianity we are indebted for all the benevolent associations of the day, though a majority of their members may not belong to any church. Without detracting from the gorgeous light of the sun, but on the contrary only reflecting its brightness, the polar star, one of the smallest in the firmament, directs the mariner over the trackless ocean. So Masonry detracting nothing from Christianity, but bearing many of its most beautiful precepts inscribed on its banner, goes forth to comfort the afflicted and relieve the miseries of “the houseless child of want.”

It has been said that “Truth is great and will prevail,” and yet it has been remarked, with no less confidence, that “it is astonishing to see with how little wisdom the world is governed.” These declarations are somewhat inconsistent, and yet in a certain sense each is correct. Truth is great and will prevail when truth is the chief object pursued. Truth is the chief object with the man of science, while unfortunately popularity is the great aim of the politician. Mr. Clay was reported to have said that, he “would rather be right than be president.” It was a sentiment that any politician might have uttered, but which I fear very few would really entertain. Mark, then, the progress of truth, when applied to science and when applied to politics and government. We stand to-day midway the nineteenth century, and we are startled with the wonderful achievements of science. Intelligence is traversing space on the wings of the lightning. Man is navigating the air. The bowels of the earth and the depths of the sea, have been penetrated by the searching hand of science. Surgery

—Medicine—Chemistry—have each astonished mankind, with its discoveries; and yet in the political world Truth lags behind. Ours is the only country on earth that has established a republican government, and there is not a nation on the globe, that has acknowledged and adopted the plain principles of free trade. The reputation of the man of science depends on his capacity to establish the truth of what he proposes, while the success of the politician, too often depends not on the truth, but on the popularity of his measures. Christopher Columbus sought from court to court, the loan of a small sum of money sufficient to fit out an expedition to go in search of a new world, and was refused the amount because his project was regarded as ridiculous, and Robert Fulton was denied the use of the hall of the house of representatives at Washington, for the purpose of delivering a lecture on the application of steam, because, as Congress said, his scheme was too visionary and absurd to be seriously entertained. But these noble men were not discouraged by the unpopularity of their projects. They had formed in their own minds grand conceptions, and they were not to be deterred by any unfavorable circumstances from demonstrating their truth. They labored on in good faith and full of hope. And from the moment that the daring Genoese planted his foot on the soil of the new world, and from the moment that Fulton saw his boat, gliding over the waters of the Hudson, propelled by steam—History took charge of their names, and faithful to her trust, will hand them down to distant and admiring generations. Not all the Kings and Congresses of earth, could now cast a shadow over the fame of the bold navigator who gave a new world to the old, or him whose genius bound the new world and the old together by the power of steam. Masonry claims to be a laborer in the great field of Truth, and the same God who blessed the labors of the humble fishermen of Gallilee, has approved the efforts of the poor workmen of the Temple. Masonry is admirably constituted for the advancement of truth. Existing under every form of government, and yet never mingling in any political alliances and combinations—relying on the Bible for support, and yet excluding none from membership on account of differences in religious opinions, it has acquired that confidence so essential in the performance of the duties of its mission, the promotion of peace on earth and good will, and the exercise of that heaven-born charity, which is not confined to relieving the wants of the needy, but which embraces the most liberal allowances for the faults of others. Looking, too, with equal eye on the poor and the rich, the weak and the powerful, Masonry endeavors to teach man the real dignity of his nature—the sublime purposes of his existence, and to impress upon him the truth of the noble sentiment—

"Honor and shame from no conditions rise,
Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

Masonry has done more than any human institution to promote charity, peace and good will among men; and did time permit, it might be interesting to trace its influence on the early ages of Christianity. With pride, we might follow the plumes of the brotherhood, as they waved on the march of the crusaders, and burn with admiration at their gallant deeds on the plains of Palestine. Never was the character of the Christian soldier more beautifully illustrated, than when the Knights Templars threw down their victorious weapons, as the conflict was over, and became the nurses of the sick and wounded. It was the chivalry of that age, that contributed so much to place woman in the proud position she now occupies in every civilized nation, and it was Masonry that made so many noble contributions to that age of chivalry. With lofty satisfaction, too, could we contemplate the period when the ancient free masons constituted a gallant guard on the out-posts of christendom. I allude to that memorable occasion, when besieged by the Turks, their fortress was cannonaded, until it was crumbling into dust at their feet, and when with unconquerable courage the Knights of St. John closed their ranks, and presented with their bodies a living wall of fire around the rock of Malta. But it is as an institution for the promotion of Charity and Benevolence, that I prefer, at this time, to present its claims to the consideration of those who really desire the happiness of their fellow men.

All the world preaches Charity, and yet how few in good faith practice it. How few search for the wretched hovel, to relieve the wants of its hapless inmates, or who even speak charitably of the faults of their neighbors. Many are urged to practice charity, and do good, on the ground that it is just as easy as not. But this is not true. If it were as easy to plant the flag of your country on the battlements of the enemy, as not, there would be no great merit in the action, for there certainly could not be much merit in doing that, which required neither effort nor loss nor risk to accomplish. It was said, I think, of Sir Philip Sidney, that he gave the only draught of water he had to a poor wounded soldier who lay near him. Parched with thirst himself, was it as easy for him to do such a generous and magnanimous act, as not to have done it? The man who gives to another in distress, may really be not very well able. It is not without great inconvenience to himself, that he can accomplish a good action, and in all such cases the merit rises in proportion to the difficulty to be encountered. Masonry urges us to overcome the selfish feelings of our nature, to make sacrifices when we can accomplish good. It reminds us of our

relations to our fellow men, and our dependence upon each other, and speaks to all in the language of the peerless Rebecca in the beautiful romance of Ivanhoe, "in wounds and in misery the Gentile becometh the Jew's brother."

Those who have never drank of the cup of sorrow, know but little of its bitterness. Those who have never felt want, know nothing of the ills of poverty. Cheering as the return of the dove to the ark is the comfort that comes to the child of misery and woe, and sweet in the sight of God must it be to see man, who he made in his image, mindful of his fellow man. It is related of Dr. Franklin, that on one occasion he presented a sum of money to a poor man in distress, and said to him, if times should ever grow better, and he should feel able to pay back the money, not to be particular to look him up, but hand it over to the first worthy man he might find in the same distressed situation that *he* was then, and that would be payment to him. That is the kind of "charity that blesses him that gives, as well as him that receives." It was true masonic charity, and Franklin was a mason. How much of human misery might be relieved, if there were many such Franklins.

I have endeavored to show that good and evil are placed before us in life, and that it is our duty to do all the good we can, and that, as Masonry promotes the exercise of charity and good will among men, it should receive the approbation of all who desire the welfare and happiness of their race. But even our Saviour was not without his enemies, and there has been at times more or less opposition to the institution of Masonry. It has been argued by some, that if there is so much good in Masonry, why is there so much secrecy about it? It is indeed marvellous that our institution has existed for so many centuries, and this little pebble is all that its enemies can find to fling against it. It is not stout enough to hurt a fly. They who urge this objection do not certainly reflect that it is the tenderest relations of life that are guarded with the most secrecy. In affliction, it is to the ear of private friendship that we unfold our thoughts; and charity, one of the great objects of our institution, should be performed in secret. It is a misfortune to require the help of others and it adds to that misfortune to have it proclaimed from the house tops. The man who would do good for the sake of good, should be content that the knowledge of it, should rest in his own bosom. It might be an inconvenience to some, to find themselves restrained in being the trumpeters of their own charitable deeds; but I am persuaded that, in the sight of God it would be more agreeable that the perfume of the flower should linger where it bloomed, around the heart. Those who object to Masonry, on account of its secrecy, should consider the conclusions

to which their reasoning would lead. The right of trial by jury is justly sacred to our people, and yet, at least twice every year, you see this oath administered to your juries—"The states counsel, your fellows and your own, you shall well and truly keep secret." Surely those who oppose Masonry, because it has its secrets, are not for abolishing the trial by jury. But it is useless to dwell on a topic that requires no argument.

I have said that the chief objection urged against masonry, was the secrecy of the institution. I spoke perhaps too fast. There is another objection, which, in candor, I must say, is more reasonable. I allude to the exclusion of woman, from the Lodge. It does, upon the first blush of the matter, seem that there is something wrong in an institution which professes to be charitable, and yet excludes from membership, those who were the "first at the cross, and the last at the sepulchre." But woman has been destined for a gentler sphere of action, and the chivalry of the sterner sex, relieves her from the more toilsome duties of life. Man's path lies across the rugged mountain, while woman waits, like Rebecca at the well, to sooth and cheer the weary wanderer. It is not that we love masonry less, but that we love woman more, that we desire to relieve her from the responsibilities and obligations, that should devolve on us. It is woman's purer province, to draw man's thoughts from the fleeting pleasures of this life, and fix them on the joys of the life to come. It is her's to

"Employ each art; reprove each dull delay;
Allure to brighter worlds, and point the way."

But, Brother Masons, I must not trespass too long on your patience. Before I close, however, permit me to invoke your aid, in the accomplishment of an object, in which this whole community feels the deepest interest. I allude to the erection of a suitable monument, on your public square, in honor of the gallant corps, who, a few years ago, went forth from this District to fight the battles of your country, in a distant land. It is a work of MASONRY, and masons should put their hands to it. Come up then, with your aprons on—with your square and compass and trowel in hand, and let us unite with all, that will unite with us, to send up the column, on which shall be registered the names of the gallant men, who did honor to themselves, and the Palmetto State.

Some months ago, the citizens of your District had this monument in contemplation, and efforts were made to raise funds to erect it; but from some cause or other, I think mostly for the want of organization, but little has been done. If this Lodge will lay hold of the matter, I feel confident that the work will go forward. Always organized—its members scattered over every part of the District, and meeting here

on the first Monday in every month, the lodge will have the amplest opportunity for the exercise of all its energies. I am certain that the citizens of the District are not indifferent to such an honorable undertaking, and that they are anxious to have some nucleus, around which they can rally, and carry on the work to its successful accomplishment.

We know not what the future may bring forth. Our immediate portion of the country may not always be as free as now, from the ravages of war. Villages have been the scenes of some of the most memorable events in history. It was at a village in England, that the Normans achieved their victory over the Saxons, and paved the way for the introduction of the feudal system. A village in Belgium saw the fall of the Star of Napoleon. A village in Massachusetts witnessed the first conflict between British and American arms; and it was at a village in Virginia, that the flag of England, "that had braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze," drooped in submission to the trophied eagle. Camden, in our own State, and Guilford Courthouse, in North Carolina, were the scenes of memorable battles, in that memorable war. Our own quiet village, for aught we know now, may some day be reddened with the blood of the fight. The first object of an enemy invading a country would be to destroy all rail-road communication, and in that event, we should be on the direct route, between the largest Southern Atlantic seaport, and the fertile regions of the south-west. It was the boast of a celebrated field-marshal of France, when his troops were cut down by thousands on the frozen snows of Muscovy, that he fired the last gun, in the last detachment of the grand army of the republic. If ever, in the Providence of God, this portion of our State should be made to feel the horrors of war, and its gallant defenders be driven back before superior numbers, the last gun would be fired, at the base of that consecrated monument. The name of Williams, who perished in his bed of honor, and the names and deeds of all that gallant corps, inscribed upon that immortal register, would come rushing on their thoughts, and bid them, there, perform the patriot's last and highest duty—die nobly for their Country!

When the children of Israel had passed over Jordan, the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying—

"Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

"And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the *priests feet stood firm*, twelve stones; and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night.

“Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man :

“And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel :

“That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, *What mean ye by these stones ?*

“Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord ; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off, and these stones shall be *for a memorial* for the children of Israel forever.

“And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

“And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood : and *they are there unto this day.*”

Comrades of the Square :—In this command of God, to the leader of Israel, we have an indication of our duty. Let us go in earnest to the work, that our hands find to do. Let us endeavor to perpetuate the memory of the deeds of our patriot countrymen. Let us try and erect the monument, and when the stranger, looking on its solid foundations, and its polished shaft rising gracefully towards heaven, shall ask you, “*What mean ye by these stones ?*” tell him they were placed there “for a memorial” of the gallant corps whose “*feet stood firm*” in the day of battle ; and God grant, that they who at a far distant period of time, shall stand in the places that now know us, may be enabled to say, in the words of the inspired historian, “*these stones are here unto this day.*”