Louis Marchand

BROTHERLY LOVE

EXPLAINED AND RECOMMENDED,

IN A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE

SOCIETY

OF

FREE AND ACCEPTED

MASONS,

AT QUEBEC,

ON MONDAY the 27th of DECEMBER, 1779.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE HENRY, M. A.

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TO THE

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

THE HONOURABLE

JOHN COLLINS, ESQ;

GRAND MASTER

OF THIS PROVINCE,

And to all the RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

And WORSHIPFUL BRETHREN

OF THE

ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE SOCIETY

OF

FREE AND ACCEPTED

MASONS

IN QUEBEC,

This Diſcourſe, delivered and publiſhed at their Requeſt, is inſcribed

By their Affectionate Brother

And humble Servant,

G. H.

A

SERMON, &c.

Let brotherly Love continue. HEB. xiii. 1.

SO far as Theory goes, all are agreed, all Parties and Denominations, that the Genius of Chriſtianity is a Spirit of Love. In almoſt every other Point there have been Diſputes; but in this, I'm perſuaded, there never was one. Moſt evident it is, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles, from the Beginning to the End of their Miniſtry, breathed nothing but the pureſt Love, and the moſt fervent extenſive Charity. It appears in the New Teſtament, in Reality to be what St. Paul has called it, *the End of the Commandment*, or, in other Words, the ultimate Deſign and Intention of the evangelical Diſpenſation. We are aſſured by that ſame Author, that if we have not Charity, or Love, whatever other Gifts, or Attainments

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tainments we may have to boaſt of, ſo that we could ſpeak with the Tongue of a Seraph, had all Knowledge and underſtood all Myſteries, had all Faith, ſo that we could remove Mountains; yet ſtill we are Nothing; and conſequently, can have no rational Ground to hope for the Favor of God. And yet, to the Scandal of Humanity, and the Reproach of Chriſtians it may be ſpoken, there is no one Precept in the whole New Teſtament that has been ſo often, ſo univerſally, and ſo ſhamefully tranſgreſſed, as this. Inſtead of that brotherly Love which is the Characteriſtic of the Religion of Chriſtians, and which ought to ſhine throughout their whole Conduct, a Spirit of Variance and Strife, of Bitterneſs and Contention, has broken in upon the Chriſtian Church, and ſplit into a thouſand Factions, that Society, which of all others ought to be the moſt ſtrictly and inſeparably united. The Goſpel which breathes nothing but Love is become a Matter of Contention, and the Chriſtian Society has been undermined and rent in Pieces, by the inteſtine Feuds and Animoſities of its own Members. They have excommunicated, reviled, and almoſt always, when they had it in their Power, perſecuted each other, and upon the Score of their religious Differences. Much Blood hath been ſpilled in theſe unnatural Quarrels.——Whoever ſeriouſly conſiders this melancholy State of the Chriſtian World, will be eaſily convinced that there is no one Point of our Religion more neceſſary to be earneſtly preſſed and inſiſted on, than that of brotherly Love, here recommended by our Apoſtle.

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THE Method of treating this Subject, which I think will render it moſt profitable, and ſuitable to the preſent Occaſion, is this.

FIRST, I ſhall briefly conſider, what is included in this Duty of brotherly Love; or, what are the Acts and Inſtances in which it muſt exert itſelf.

SECONDLY, I ſhall point out ſome of the great Advantages, the bleſſed Fruits and Effects which the general Practice of it would produce in the World.

THESE two Heads comprehend the whole Subject, which is to employ our Thoughts at this Time: And, being conſidered, they will naturally lead to ſome Reflections, which, I hope may be uſeful, and tend to raiſe in us becoming Sentiments as Free-Maſons.

I. LET us conſider, what is included in brotherly Love; or what are the Acts and Inſtances in which it muſt exert itſelf.

No one but will readily own that Charity or Love is a fine, indeed, the moſt praiſe-worthy and excellent Quality. But, my Brethren, the ſincere uniform Practice of it is another Matter: And it highly concerns us to look into our own Hearts, that in this we be not defective.

THE proper Expreſſions and Fruits of this inward good Affection in the Mind, are as various as the Neceſſities of ſome of Mankind, and the Abilities and Opportunities of others to relieve them. As our preſent Condition is imperfect, one Way of ſupplying its Wants is by the ſocial and compaſſionate Diſpoſitions God has

planted in Mankind; ſo that the Cares of every one are not confined to himſelf, but as parts of the ſame Syſtem, the ſame Society, or as Members of the ſame Body, every one ſhould be ſolicitous for the Good of his Brother, and the Good of the whole Republic of Mankind. And by the bye, it was I conceive, to revive and enforce ſuch noble and generous Sentiments and Maxims, that the Society of Free-Maſons was inſtituted. The great Deſign was to unite all Men of Senſe and worthy Qualities, not only by a reciprocal Love of the fine Arts, but ſtill more by the great Principle of Benevolence, where the Intereſt of the Fraternity might become that of the whole human Race; and where every Individual of every Country might live without Diſcord, and enjoy the Rights of private Judgment with Safety, and without Diſturbance or Moleſtation. But to return from this Digreſſion.

The Happineſs of the Souls of Men, reſulting from their Integrity and Virtue, is the greateſt in its kind, that they are capable of, and the longeſt in its duration; and therefore, to promote it is the firſt Demand of brotherly Love. To inſtruct the ignorant, to reclaim the diſobedient, to turn the wicked from the Error of their Ways, to ſtrengthen the weak, comfort the feeble-minded, to encourage the ſincere, and excite them to growing Diligence and Zeal in religious Wiſdom; theſe are the nobleſt Offices we can poſſibly perform to our Brethren, becauſe they ſerve the higheſt Ends, and produce the beſt and moſt laſting Effects. And theſe are the charitable

charitable Offices which the Apoſtles very often and with great Earneſtneſs recommend; as they ſeverely inveigh againſt the contrary Faults; ſuch as offending, weakening, cenſuring, judging, deſpiſing and grieving one another; particularly, the New Teſtament urges two Inſtances of Charity, the forgiving of Injuries, and forbearing the weak. You will find it is the current Doctrine of the Apoſtles, that we ought to practiſe theſe conſtantly, and they are preſs'd with the greateſt Warmth, and enforced with the ſtrongeſt Arguments. How often do they call upon us to lay aſide all Animoſities and Contentions, all Bitterneſs, Clamour, Envy, Revenge, Wrath and Evil-ſpeaking; to forgive one another, and to receive one another, as Chriſt received us to the Glory of God; on account of leſſer Differences in Religion (which in this imperfect State are unavoidable) not to break the Unity and Peace of the Church, not to alienate our Affections, nor withdraw from the religious fellowſhip of each other? Scarcely is there any thing more frequently and largely treated on than this; tho' too little attended to by the generality of Chriſtians.

But, beſides theſe Offices of brotherly Love, there are others injoined by the natural Law of Benevolence, and which the Goſpel, ſo far from overlooking, peculiarly enforces, thoſe, I mean, which relate to the preſent Condition of Mankind. The wiſe and ſovereign Providence of God has ſo ordered, that there is a Diverſity in the State of Men; ſome are indigent, others in a Capacity of relieving; *the rich and the poor meet together*, the diſconſolate

diſconſolate and the comforter, the diſtreſſed and he who is able to help him. In all theſe and other Caſes of a parallel Nature, Reaſon and a compaſſionate Heart will readily ſuggeſt to a Man, how he ought to ſhew his Charity; that it is by feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, viſiting the ſick and the Priſoner, and taking in the Stranger. To theſe good Works the Law and the Prophets witneſs as Duties of perpetual Obligation. And our Saviour, inſtead of diminiſhing from the Value and Importance of them, preſſes them with the greateſt earneſtneſs. In the Account he gives of his own diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments at the laſt Judgment, theſe he mentions as particular Examples of the Works he will liberally recompence; not ſo as to exclude others, but to ſhew that they are of great Account in God's Sight. And let it be remembered, that we muſt exert ourſelves in the Practice of them according to our ſeveral Abilities. For brotherly Love is not an unactive Affection reſting in the Heart, but ſhews itſelf with Vigour in genuine beneficial Fruits. We muſt love one another, *not in Word and in Tongue*, as St. John expreſſes it, *but in Deed and in Truth*. Kind Words and fair Speeches, without inward good Will and Affection; and this manifeſted in ſuch uſeful Services as we are capable of, are only empty Compliments, a Counterfeit of Charity, but not the thing itſelf.

THESE are ſome of the chief Branches of brotherly Love: let me only obſerve upon this Occaſion, that it is a free and unlimited Grace. It muſt not be confined in its

its Exercise to any Relation, any Sect, Party or Denomination, but must reach forth its Bowels to all. Genuine Good-will is essentially communicative, and a Man of this Character cannot hide himself from the Misery of his Fellow-creature, be his speculative Opinions or purely religious Principles what they will.—He tenderly sympathizes with the distressed, contributes all he can to their Relief, and rejoices in diffusing the Effects of his Bounty far and wide.

We are bound indeed to love some more than others, and assist some rather than others; such in whom we see the Image of God, ought to carry away the largest share of it, according to the Degrees of that Image that we perceive in them. And whilst we reserve a higher Degree, and peculiar Instances of Love, to the most worthy Objects, the excellent of the Earth; we do but imitate the great Father of the vast intellectual Family; who, tho' his tender Mercies are over all, yet more peculiarly loveth the Righteous, and his Countenance in a more gracious Manner beholdeth the upright. But none should be excluded from our Charity, and the proper Exercises thereof. Different Opinions in Religion, different Modes of Profession, and little accidental Varieties among good Men, should not disturb or interrupt their Charity; nor should ill-Treatment extinguish this humane Disposition; many Waters of this kind must not quench the Flame of Love. Our Hearts ought to be formed into a Correspondence with that Precept of the best Philosopher that ever appeared in the World, the blessed Messenger

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of Peace and Immortality. *I ſay unto you, love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you.* True it is; we are not bound to think well of thoſe who we plainly ſee are very bad; nor can we be bound to believe they are not our Enemies, when it appears evidently that they are ſuch; nor are we bound to wiſh them ſuch Succeſſes or Bleſſings, as may be a Means to harden them or make others ſtumble; yet we ought ſtill to carry in us a Temper diſpoſed to forgive, and to be reconciled to them, and to wiſh them ſuch a Meaſure of good things, as may be really Bleſſings to them; we ought ever to pray for a good Mind to them, and for every thing that may bring them to it; that ſo we may be thereby encouraged to live on other Terms with them. Prayer, as it is the eaſieſt Act of Charity, it being only the hearty Wiſh of a good Mind directed towards God, ſo is it the moſt perfect and moſt valuable Act, and therefore by our Temper in Prayer, as by feeling the Pulſe, we will be able to judge how true and how fervent our Love to our Brethren is. What the Efficacy of our Prayers for others may be towards them, is hid from us: but ſince God has made it a main Act of Chriſtian Charity, we are ſure it will have a very good Effect, if not on others, yet at leaſt on ourſelves. But I muſt diſmiſs this Head, leſt I ſhould treſpaſs upon your Patience, which I would not willingly offend; and proceed

II. To point out the great Advantages, the bleſſed Fruits and Effects, which the general Practice of brotherly Love would produce in the World.

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INDEED the Benefit and Bleſſings of it would be incredibly and inconceivably great: Inſomuch that this preſent mortal State, would be a ſort of Anticipation of that new Heaven and new Earth, wherein Peace and Concord, Love and Friendſhip are to reign in full Perfection for ever and ever.—It would at once by the bleſſing of God, put an end to all our unhappy Diviſions and Animoſities. Read the beautiful Deſcription which the Apoſtle Paul gives of it, in the 13th Chap. of his Firſt Epiſt. to the Church of Corinth; and you will ſee how conducive it is to this End. *Charity*, ſaith he, *ſuffereth long and is kind, Charity envieth not, Charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no Evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* Were we then endowed with this heavenly Principle, this noble Chriſtian Generoſity of Mind, Strife and Contentions would be no more heard of among us. It would ſweeten, elevate and enlarge our Minds, and keep us from being jealous and ſuſpicious of one another without a juſt Cauſe; for it *thinketh no Evil*, it *beareth all things*, and *hopeth all things*. It would extinguiſh or allay the Bitterneſs and Wrath of our Spirits, for it *is kind*, and would effectually diſpoſe us to *be kindly affectioned one towards another*. It would keep us from carrying our Reſentments at any time too far, and lay a ſufficient Reſtraint on all Purpoſes of Revenge, for it *is not eaſily provoked*, it *ſuffereth long, beareth all things, and endureth all things*. Then would Debates (if there muſt

be any) be managed without intemperate Heat.—We ſhould be far from being angry, that we cannot convey our own Sentiments into anothers Mind; which when we are, we make ourſelves leſs capable of reaſoning aptly to convince, and render the other leſs ſuſceptible of Conviction.—It would make us benevolent, and condeſcending to one another; for it *ſeeketh not its own things*, it teacheth us not *to pleaſe ourſelves*, but *every one his Neighbour for his Good to Edification*: It would keep us from cenſuring, reviling and reproaching one another; and on the contrary, teach us to be tender of the Reputation of our Brethren, and to have the ſame Care one of another; it *worketh no Ill to his Neighbour, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but in the Truth.* If ſuch a Love did govern in us; were we all of one Heart, and of one Mind, united in the Bonds of pure and undiſſembled Love and Affection, what Strength and Beauty would it give us? It would make us Ornaments to our Profeſſion. The God of Peace and Love would delight to dwell among us, and the World would be forced to ſay of us, as Balaam did of old concerning the Children of Iſrael, *How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles, O Iſrael!* Or, in a Stile more ſuitable to the preſent Occaſion, How pleaſant and delightful are your Aſſemblies, and your peaceful Lodges, O Free-Maſons!—In ſhort, it would produce a ſort of Heaven upon Earth, as I hinted before, and revive a golden Age. Bloody Wars and vexatious Litigations would ſoon ceaſe; private Injuries and domeſtic Conteſts would be laid aſleep; Societies would be pleaſant, and Commerce ſafe: Religion

would

would flouriſh, Prejudices abate, and Truth prevail by its own Evidence.

I SHALL now conclude with ſome Reflections, which, I hope may be uſeful, and ſuitable to the preſent Solemnity.

I. FROM what has been ſaid, it is eaſy to ſee wherein the Eſſence of true unadulterated Chriſtianity conſiſts; not in Metaphyſical Speculations, and Scholaſtic Refinements; not in a blind Zeal for the Circumſtantials and Appendages of Religion; not in outward Pomp, and a Multitude of ceremonious Obſervances, things that are apt to divert the Attention from what is much more important, and which can only pleaſe weak and uncultivated Minds; but in eſſential immutable Morality, in the Exerciſe of thoſe Virtues that are of eternal neceſſary Obligation, in Love to God and Benevolence to Men.

INDEED the Light of Nature teaches us that theſe Virtues conſtitute ſubſtantial ultimate Religion; and we find that the wiſer Heathens, ſuch as Socrates, Plato, and others, were abundantly ſenſible of this, and tho' they generally complied with the eſtabliſhed Superſtitions of their reſpective Countries, yet they were perfectly convinced in their own Minds that ſuch Services could not be pleaſing to God, nor recommend them to his acceptance. And therefore their great Buſineſs was to illuſtrate and enforce moral Duties, and conſidering their Situation and Circumſtances, it muſt be owned

they have herein acquitted themſelves with juſt Applauſe. The Subſtance of the Religion of Moſes and the Prophets, was likewiſe compriſed in the Love of God and of our Neighbour, and it is the conſtant Language of the Old Teſtament, that the greateſt Zeal in external ritual Performances is of no Account in the Sight of God, when ſeparated from thoſe Virtues.——But Chriſtianity hath glorioufly improved both the Religion of Nature and that of Moſes. Its main Duties are the ſame in Nature and Kind, but then they are ſet off to vaſtly greater Advantage.—Our Lord explained the moral Law in its full Extent and with admirable Simplicity, and enforced the Practice of it with new and moſt perſuaſive Arguments; particularly he hath carried the Principle of Benevolence to its utmoſt height, hath laid a peculiar Streſs on it, encouraged it with additional Motives, and made it the Badge and Characteriſtic of his Diſciples. *A new Commandment*, ſays he, *I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you that ye alſo love one another. By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.*

II. We may obſerve how exactly the Inſtitution of Free-Maſonry falls in with the Dictates of Nature and uncorrupted Chriſtiany, and how much it conſults the Intereſt and Happineſs of Mankind, by making ſo great an Account of brotherly Love, and the important moral Duties included in it. This Obſervation is ſo clear and manifeſt to every Intelligent Member who is acquainted with the Rules and Regulations of the Society, that there is no Occaſion for uſing many Words to ſhew the Propriety

priety of it.—For has not the Eſtabliſhment under Conſideration a plain Tendency, not only to diſcountenance Licentiouſneſs, Infidelity, Irreligion and Debauchery, but to inculcate every thing laudable, beneficial and favourable to Society; to form Men into good Citizens and good Subjects; to make them inviolable in their Promiſes, faithful Votaries to the God of Friendſhip, and more Lovers of Munificence and Liberality, than of Power and Grandeur; and is not brotherly Love, or univerſal diſintereſted Benevolence, which comprehends all the Duties which we owe to God and to our Fellows of Mankind, one of its leading and moſt diſtinguiſhing Qualities? So far from being that impious and immoral thing which ſome have ignorantly and maliciouſly repreſented Free-Maſonry, you know, the Obligation which is impoſed upon the Order is, "*that each Member is to protect a Brother by his Authority, to adviſe him by his Abilities, to edify him by his Virtues, to aſſiſt him in an Exigence, to ſacrifice all perſonal Reſentment, and to ſeek diligently for every thing that may contribute to the Pleaſure and Profit of the Society:*" All theſe particulars are Inſtances and Expreſſions of that brotherly Love ſo much inſiſted on in the New Teſtament: And in order the better to maintain and preſerve this friendly Intercourſe of good Offices inviolate; from the Society in queſtion are baniſhed all thoſe angry ill-natured Diſputes which ſour the Tempers and contract the Affections of Men, or which interrupt that Unanimity, Harmony, and Love, which cannot ſubſiſt but by avoiding all indecent Exceſſes, and extirpating every irregular and diſ-

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cordant Paſſion. They, therefore, who entertain unfavourable Sentiments of Free-Maſonry, and fancy that the principal Deſign of its Inſtitution was to encourage ſcandalous Diſſipation and Intemperance, certainly do it great Wrong: It may, I think, be aſſerted with the ſtricteſt Regard to Truth, that it has a very different Tendency, and ought rather to be regarded as a moral Order, inſtituted with a View to promote Peace, Love, Union and Harmony among Men, and to recall the Remembrance of the moſt ſublime Truths, in the midſt of the moſt innocent ſocial Pleaſures and rational Gaieties,

To this then let us apply ourſelves with the utmoſt Aſſiduity, to root out all thoſe unamiable Diſpoſitions which tend to defeat the wiſe and good Ends of our Inſtitution; and to require that *Wiſdom which is from above, which is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and without Hypocricy.* Let Anger, Wrath, Malice, Cenſoriouſneſs, Raillery, Contempt, Intemperance, Swearing, and every Exceſs of the inferior Appetites and Paſſions, be carefully guarded againſt. For as Peace, Serenity, and an eaſy ſatisfied Mind are what conſtitute the Pleaſure and Happineſs of Converſation; if theſe be interrupted by any of the fore-mentioned diabolical Vices, the Deſign of Society is undermined; and in that unhappy Situation how ſhould brotherly Love continue? Let us then, my worthy and much honoured Brethren, endeavour to diſtinguiſh ourſelves, not merely

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by the external Badge of our Profeſſion which we this Day wear, but by being kind one towards another, courteous and obliging, affable and condeſcending; and by carefully preſerving that good Order, Decency and Temper, to which we are bound by an Obligation, both very ſolemn and very awful: Let this never be forgotten by any of us: And above all, let us be Followers, or Imitators of God, as dear Children, and walk in Love. By ſuch a regular, honourable, and amiable Conduct as this, we ſhall not only anſwer the good Intentions of our worthy Anceſtors, in this truly ancient and honourable Eſtabliſhment, and put to Silence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men; but we ſhall likewiſe ſecure to ourſelves a perpetual Fund of inward ſolid Joy, and may rationally confide in God for all the good things we ſtand in need of, for temporal and eternal Bleſſings.

To the God of Love may all Glory and Praiſe be given, now and evermore. *Amen.*

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