A

SERMON,

Preached on St. John's Day,

BEFORE THE LODGES

No. 4, 8, and 12,

ANCIENT YORK MASONS:

IN CHRIST's CHURCH,

MONTREAL.

By the Rev. JAMES TUNSTALL.

MONTREAL:

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1798.

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Saint Paul's Lodge No. 12, (Ancient York Maſons, under the Patronage of His Royal Highneſs Prince Edward) held in the City of Montreal, in the Province of Lower Canada.

On the Motion of Brother Radford, ſeconded by Brother Sullivan,

Reſolved unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Lodge, be Preſented to the Reverend Brother Tunſtall, for the excellent Sermon he Preached on Saint John's day laſt, before Lodges No. 4, 8, and 12, at the requeſt of St. Paul's and Union Lodges. And requeſt a copy of the ſaid Sermon, in order to its being Printed for the Edification of the Brethren in general.

Brother Martin, and Brother Radford, to conduct the Buſineſs.

Extract from the Minutes,

GWYN RADFORD, Sec'ry.

Of Saint Paul's Lodge, No. 12.

February 13th, 1798.

SERMON.

GENESIS, 13 chap. 18 ver.

And Abram ſaid unto Lot, let there be no ſtrife between me and thee, for we be Brethren.

HOWEVER unequal I may be to the taſk I have undertaken, in attempting to fulfill the intention of that laudable inſtitution, of which I have the honor of being a member, I cannot but feel a great ſatisfaction in making a common cauſe with the reſt of my Brethren in the celebration of the preſent ſolemnity.

It will not be objected to me that I am treating a ſubject, known only to the Society to which I belong: The Myſtery of our order may in part be known to others; and certainly the effects and advantages of this aſſociation are ſcattered abroad, ſo as not to have eſcaped the penetration of a diſcerning public— It is before you then, before the moſt impartial and unprejudiced

unprejudiced reaſon, that I ſubmit my proofs, if I advance any thing that is contrary to it, or what does not agree with the moſt invariable rules of our Society.

I muſt admit at the ſame time, that in ſpite of the equity of our principles, ſo abhorrent to the ideas of Party Spirit, the order of Ancient Maſons has found both its Adverſaries and competitors:—And perhaps there was never any party in the world that had not its oppoſers. The trueſt Religion upon Earth has had more obſtacles to encounter, than even falſehood and [illegible]; and can we ſuppoſe that the creed of Masonry, which pretends neither to inſpiration nor infallibility, ſhould have eſcaped the enterprizes of innovation? Still we ſee and acknowlege amongſt our Brethren of modern denomination many that are highly reſpectable from Rank and other qualities that diſtinguiſh them from the croud; and for whom on account of a ſimilarity in ſome objects of our inſtitution, we could wiſh to cheriſh a more intimate union. But in order that the world at large, (which is too apt to ſuffer itſelf to be impoſed upon by miſrepreſentation or by blind prevention, ſo as not to be able or willing to diſcern the ſeeming differences of things) in order, I ſay, that the world by theſe means may not form concluſions to the great diſparagement of the common Corps of Maſonry;

ry; I ſhall in the firſt place, lay before you the principles of Maſonry as univerſally acknowledged.

In the ſecond place, I ſhall give you a ſhort account of the Ancient order of York Maſons—and conclude with an exhortation to the Brethren of that order.

If we trace back Man to the firſt Rudiments of Nature, untutored, unſocial, without the Arts or knowlege of Living, we find him an inhabitant of the woods, and more ſavage than the beaſts of the field left under the guidance of his own malignant paſſions. We ſee him without ſecurity, without comfort, aiming his fury chiefly againſt his own ſpecies; "The hand of every man is againſt him," and his againſt his fellow. By degrees almoſt imperceptible, he ſlowly emerges from barbarity, and adopts the plans of order, and improvement. The Divine Rays of knowlege ſtill further illuminate him, and at laſt he learns the uſe of the kind interchange of the ſocial Affections, and that univerſal Love which is to ſerve as the baſis of his happineſs. Hence we find him beginning to form the firſt bands of Society and ſurveying the works of Nature at large, and after the example of the great Architect of the world, purſuing his plans with Symmetry and Order—Cities riſe—Aſſociations form—And the firſt principles of Maſonry expand themſelves in the mind of man; preſcribing a ſuitable action with thoſe relations he ſtands in to his common humanity, his fellow-creatures.

tures, and his Creator. Still the inſtitutions of Maſonry, however good and excellent in themſelves, were merely human or ſocial. And Human Laws, however they may be calculated to the general good of Society, yet it is Religion alone, that ſecures the end of it—Hence we find that Maſonry derives its chief and beſt Doctrines from that great ſtore-houſe of Divine Wiſdom, the Old and New Teſtament.—It is there we find the ſtate of Mankind, whether Civil or Religious, illuſtrated and enforced by the beſt precepts. In them we find drawn the Tabernacle of God, and that great Prototype of the Craft, the Temple of Solomon. There we find the Righteous and all Merciful Scheme of Salvation, the Spiritual Houſe of God; of which Chriſt our Savior, is the chief Corner Stone. And upon this valuable Stone we may ſecurely truſt, and build. Here David may find ſure footing;—Here Moſes may reſt his heavy hands till Iſrael prevail;—Here Jacob may repoſe ſafely in his Solitude, and behold the Ladder that reaches to the Gates of Heaven;—Truſt but here, and the very Gates of Hell ſhall loſe their prevailing power.—Moreover, the delight of Chriſt is to be with the Sons of Men, and to grow with them into one frame and conſtitution—What ſhall we ſay then of thoſe Builders who reject this Stone from their Religious Edifice? Hear what the Evangeliſt ſays, "Whoſo falleth on this Stone ſhall be broken, but on whomſoever

whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Let then this Sacred Truth prevail with us, my Brethren, over all Hereſy in opinion, till it burn up and conſume the precious Superſtructure of Wood, Hay, and Stubble, and true Maſonry, like oft tried ſilver appear again in its native purity and candor. In this condition we received it from our Fathers; ſo ſacred a depoſit let us religiouſly keep, and tranſmit with the ſame pious care to our Poſterity.

Some account of that Ancient Body of Free Maſons who have delivered to us theſe records, may juſtly merit a place here; which will lead me to the Second Point I propoſed to handle—A Brief detail of the paſt and prefent ſtate of that Ancient order of York Maſons.

England is the Country where our Order has from the beginning appeared with the greateſt Eclat.

We read that Prince Edwin firſt ſummoned all the Ancient Maſons at York, A. D. 926, at which time the laws and regulations were made for the perpetual Harmony of the Brotherhood. The Innocence and Integrity of its firſt principles have to our days been conſpicuous, without having incurred the ſhadow of ſuſpicion or reproach.

It has admitted amongſt its members, the honeſt men of all Parties—Catholics and Proteſtants, Preſbyterians,

byterians and Epiſcopalians. Nevertheleſs, the Order, though it included within its boſom, characters whoſe views, deſigns and ſentiments were utterly oppoſite; yet it has maintained its integrity in the midſt of times the moſt troubleſome, and the moſt tumultuous. For theſe diviſions could never ferment in a Society, where party doctrines never became the ſubjects of diſpute. A Society inſtituted for the purpoſe of keeping peace amongſt the Brethren, could not, and ought not embrace any party. The fierce and angry language of debate were baniſhed the Lodges. It reunited all parties without forming any of its own. Under ſuch wiſe and wholeſome regulations the Society of York Maſons preſerved inviolate their moſt Ancient Syſtem. Till in the year 1702, the age and infirmities of our celebrated Grand Maſter Sir C. Wren, brought along with them a gradual inattention to the Lodges, and at length the annual feſtivals were entirely neglected.

With this illuſtrious period decayed the pride and glory of Ancient Maſonry. Novel forms of Doctrine crept into the inſtitution in lieu of thoſe which were ſanctioned by the moſt venerable Antiquity.—Modern Taſte corrupted the genuine pile, by which the neceſſary attendants of Revolutionary plans were introduced, the compoſite maſs of Modern Phraſe, and Modern diſcipline.

However the Ark has not been loſt, though it

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has ſo long remained in the hands of the ſtranger.—Though new ſuperſtructures have been raiſed, ſtill the Ancient Foundation has not been ſhaken. The Ancient Spirit of Maſonry has been revived in this our Country, and theſe our latter days, and now bids fair under the Auſpices of our Illuſtrious Maſter Builder, His Royal Highneſs Prince Edward, its moſt zealous Defender and Protector, to ſtand the monument of Strength and Beauty to after Ages.

And let me call upon the Brethren whoſe high privilege it is to enjoy the benefits of Maſonry under ſuch a Patron, to preſerve and defend it againſt all its enemies. Let us exhibit the great fundamental of Maſonry, as well as of all civil Society, our Love of Order. And above all, let us expoſe and repel the unfounded and malicious attacks of thoſe from without, who would confound the peaceful innocence of our myſteries with thoſe Clubs and Societies, which in other Countries have been the teeming nurſeries of Miſrule and Anarchy. Let it be ſhewn a thing impoſſible that a Maſon can entertain one factious thought, whilſt under the happy dependance on Engliſh Liberty he enjoys in this country, and would contribute his ALL to the ſupport; (of what even Enemies have proclaimed) the beſt of Laws, the beſt Conſtitution, the beſt King, and the beſt Religion in the World.

I muſt ſtill beg leave to add a few words by way of exhortation,

exhortation, more particularly addreſſed to the Brethren on the ſcore of the relation ſubſiſting between them, and the modern Brethren of our Order.

There is but as little probability that Mankind ſhould be uniform in their ſentiments, as that they ſhould ſpeak the ſame language. Far then be it from us, my Brethren, to ſuffer Envy or Jealouſy to ſwell in our breaſts; which poſſeſſed the choſen Sons of Jacob; They carried their averſion ſo far that they could not ſpeak peaceably unto Joſeph. Now though in this caſe they did not contend who ſhould be the greateſt, yet it was in effect the ſame, they could not bear a Superior.

We may ſee in this inſtance to what lengths paſſion and virulence may unhappily drive us, ſo as to unlooſe the common ties of Nature, and in its conſequences ſo dreadful as not to ſpare even a Brother.

Let us not then prejudge our younger Brother leſt we be not able to judge at all, and ſo eſtabliſh a falſe opinion of him—But rather let us ſtrive to break down the Partition wall, as St. Paul calls it, which now hangs betwixt us and Him. In a building we know the corner is the point where the ſides which ſtand and look different ways, meet; ſo the walls of different aſpects find there ſtrength and connection.—So let us, following the dictates of our common Principles, adopt the ſame connecting tie, ſo that we

may

may be drawn, and knit together in the bonds of Peace, and Mutual Love. I ſhall conclude all with a Collect, wherein the Doctrine and Application are finely drawn together in theſe few words :

O Almighty God who haſt built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner Stone, grant us to be joined together in Unity of Spirit, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. AMEN.

FINIS.