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SERMON

OCTOBER, 1908



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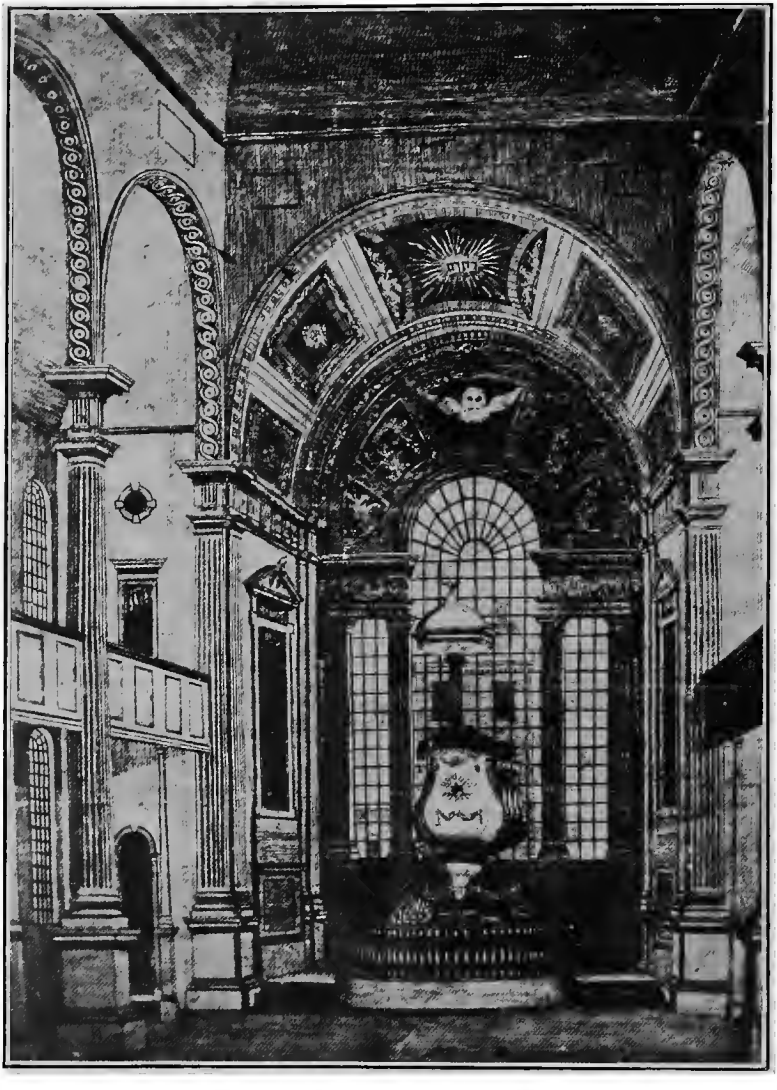

CHRIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

INTERIOR DURING THE PROVINCIAL PERIOD.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

CHRIST-CHURCH,

PHILADELPHIA;

BEFORE THE

MASTER AND BRETHREN

OF

LODGE No. 2

OF

FREE and ACCEPTED

MASONS.

On *Sunday* the 18th of *October*, 1908,
being the *150th Anniversary* of said LODGE.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart.
LUKE 10:27.

By REVEREND EDGAR COPE, M.A., B.D.,
a Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

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PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER, 1908
APPROVED AND AUTHORIZED TO BE PRINTED AND PUBLISHED
GEORGE B. ORLADY, GRAND MASTER

PRESS OF
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FREE MASONRY AND RELIGION.

LUKE 10: 27: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strengh, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

Brethren of Lodge No. 2, Free and Accepted Masons, my first word is that of congratulation, in that you planned to present yourselves for a religious service in this time-honored Temple of God, which has occupied for many decades such an important place in the hearts of American people, and within whose walls have gathered from time to time the noblest characters of the nation, who did so much in laying the structure of this great Republic upon the best and surest foundations. Many of these were faithful and loyal members of the Craft, and to them we are informed was committed the honor of laying the corner-stone of what has been called the Cradle of this great Republic—Independence Hall, when the ritual of Free Masonry was used.

A still further reason for congratulation is found in the fact that by your presence in this sacred Temple, we are returning to the ancient usages, customs, and landmarks which were so indelibly stamped upon the lives and hearts of our ancient brethren, for if there is one thing which stands out prominently in the history of the fraternity, it is that of being a religious organization. From a careful review of

Holy Writ, we are at least half inclined to accept the statement of one of the most popular and voluminous Masonic writers of the nineteenth century, the Rev. George Oliver, who declared that Moses was a Grand Master, Joshua his deputy, and Aholiab and Bezaleel Grand Wardens.

These men were filled with the "spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works; —to work in gold and in silver and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, in the carving of wood,—to make any manner of cunning work"; terms which are very similar to those descriptive of the ability of Hiram, the widow's son, one of the master workmen of Solomon's Temple. We know that the Tabernacle which Moses was bidden to erect served as a model for the Temple; that the object of the two sacred buildings was identical,—namely to furnish a holy place in which God was to dwell, and to which men were to repair to worship Him, and thereby foster and strengthen their religious instincts.

Whether or not we accept the interpretation suggested by the Rev. Mr. Oliver, I think no man familiar with the fraternity is willing to ignore the tradition that the Grand Masters Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram the widow's son, were engaged in erecting a Temple for the worship of the One Only and True God; and no one will gainsay the fact that it was necessary for them to give the secrets and signs of their Fraternity to the members of the Craft. So through the ages we read of Masons wandering over Europe, living in tents, building cathedrals,

abbeys and churches, until we hear of Sir Christopher Wren, a master mason, collecting other masons, who were engaged in the erection of St. Paul's Cathedral, in London. These men were known as operative masons, and because of their occupation in church building were exempted by the church authorities and kings from burdens imposed upon other workmen, and thereby styled Free Masons. It was not until 1646 that a change was made from operative to speculative masons, when a Colonel Manwaring was received as an "accepted" member of the fraternity.

On more than one occasion in the history of this country (as early as 1755) Masonic religious gatherings such as we have this evening were held in this church, and sermons preached by eminent divines, among them a brother Mason, the Rev. Dr. Wm. Smith, Provost of what is now the University of Pennsylvania. As you doubtless know he subsequently became a member of Lodge No. 2. So intimate was the relationship between the Craft and the Church that a minute of Lodge No. 2 is on record of June 12, 1770, unanimously changing the night of meeting of the Lodge from Tuesday to Wednesday, in order that the brethren, members of St. Paul's Church, Third below Walnut Street, would not be deprived of the usual week-day lectures of that parish.

We have just cause, therefore, for congratulation; for like the two pillars Boaz and Jachin, figurative of strength and stability in the ancient Temple, the Masonic Fraternity ever impresses upon the minds of those who knock at her doors for admission the two principal foundation stones of her existence;

namely,—the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man; and these fundamental truths form the eternal principles upon which the fabric of Religion is so firmly established the world over.

1. As our object is to recognize the relationship between masonry and religion, we can ask the question, —what is religion in its broad sense?

That there is no antagonism between the two is evident from the study of history and the words of well-informed members of the Craft. Old records exhibit an eminently religious spirit. These ancient constitutions always begin with a pious invocation of the Trinity, and sometimes of the Saints, as they tell us "The first charge is that a Mason shall be true to God, and holy Church, and use no error or heresy." Older records prescribe that a Mason, while left to his particular opinions, must be of that "Religion in which all men agree," that is to say "the religion which teaches the existence of God and an eternal life." It is a matter of further record that when the fraternity was passing through troublous times in this country, and efforts were being made to cast discredit upon it, Benjamin Franklin, a member whom Masons delight to honor, in overcoming the scruples of his mother, wrote: "The Masons have no principles or practices that are inconsistent with Religion or good manners."

Religion has been defined by an eminent theologian as the knowledge of God, of His Will, and of our duty towards Him. This view may not always have been clearly understood, owing to the lack of reasoning ability on the part of barbarous nations or tribes, but a

careful study reveals the fact that whether men worship the deities, or the one only and true God, man is by instinct religious. Edmund Burke said: "We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal." Lord Herbert, the Deist, and John Wesley, the Churchman, united in designating the power to know and the disposition to worship a Supreme Being as that alone which chiefly discriminates man from all other animals. "Cicero asks the question,—"What nation is there, or what race of men, which has not, without any previous instruction, some idea of the gods? Now that in which all men agree must necessarily be true." History, statesmen, legislators, poets and artists have appealed to religion as one of the most powerful means of impressing the imagination and the heart. It was Voltaire who declared "If there were no god, we should be obliged to invent one."

It is on record that an address was delivered before the French Academy, in the nature of a confession of a man who was left at an early age without the tender care and protection of his mother. His father, intending to rear him free from any idea of God, was surprised to find him rising early every morning to worship and reverence the sun, which appeared to him as the all-powerful benefactor. No matter how degraded were some of the tribes found by Livingstone in darkest Africa, there was not one which did not have some idea of a supreme being, or someone higher than themselves. To the ignorant untutored mind the mother, whether living

or dead, absent or present, was the representative of this higher being.

It must be acknowledged, therefore, that men have always sought after God, if happily they might find Him; and the words of St. Paul are full of meaning to every well informed member of the Masonic Fraternity, when he says: "Him therefore whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you."

What has been said about the universal recognition of the great Architect of the Universe might equally be affirmed concerning the innate conception of the Brotherhood of man. Even among savage tribes the rights and privileges of each member were recognized. Families and individuals combined to protect each other from what they conceived to be the lawless acts of enemies, and to extend social courtesies and kindnesses.

2. Undoubtedly the earliest conception for the formation of the Craft was based upon the universal aspiration for a deeper and more accurate knowledge of God and His Will—by the erection of a Temple, in which He could be sought, where a knowledge of Him might be fostered and encouraged. There was also a recognition of the rights and privileges of those who had labored in the construction of the Temple of God in Jerusalem, so that in their journeyings to more distant parts they might recognize each other, and all the privileges which they had in common, and thus be cemented together in one broad bond of brotherhood; and at the same time be instruments in advancing from a crude form the belief and



CHRIST CHURCH,

SECOND STREET ABOVE MARKET STREET, PHILADELPHIA,

WHEREIN THE SERMONS WERE DELIVERED BEFORE THE GRAND LODGES OF BOTH "MODERNS" AND "ANCIENTS" IN PROVINCIAL DAYS.

Christ Church was founded in 1695, under a provision of the original charter of King Charles II to William Penn for the creation of the Province of Pennsylvania.

The parish was subsidized by King William III (William of Orange).

Here the Colonial Governors had their State Pew.

The Penn family pew was No. 60. John Penn, the last male member of this line, is buried near the steps to the pulpit.

Communion silver presented in 1709 by Queen Anne.

Whitefield preached here in 1739.

The tablet to General Forbes, the victor of Fort Duquesne, 1758, may be seen in the chancel.

The pulpit dates from 1770. The candelabra in the centre isle is for candle-light, and has hung in place since 1749. The gravestones and tablets are mostly of colonial and revolutionary days.

Continental Congress attended here a service of fasting and prayer in 1775, shortly after the battle of Lexington.

The Baptismal Font dates from 1695.

The church organ, built in 1765, has been rebuilt twice, except the front case and keyboard.

The chime of bells pealed forth the Declaration of Independence in response to the Liberty Bell, July 4, 1776. They were taken from the city with the Liberty Bell by Continental Congress at the British occupation of the city, and were subsequently rehung in the tower by Congress.

Many members of the convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, 1787, worshipped here during the sessions.

George Washington and Martha Washington regularly occupied Pew No. 58 from 1790 to 1797, while he was President. The same was the official pew of John Adams while President, and was used by the Marquis de Lafayette on his second visit to this country.

Benjamin Fraaklin was a member of the committee which built the spire, and occupied Pew No. 70; since used by members of his family.

Robert Morris, Treasurer of the Revolution, who is buried beneath the Parish House, sat in Pew No. 52.

Francis Hopkinson, Secretary of Continental Congress, and his son, Judge Joseph Hopkinson, author of the national hymn, "Hail Columbia," occupied Pew No. 65.

General Charles Lee, of the Continental army, is interred beside the southwest door; and nearby was laid to rest, after the battle of Princeton, General Hugh Mercer, 1777.

Rt. Rev William White, D.D., first Bishop of Pennsylvania, is interred before the chancel rails; and his episcopal chair is beside the altar.

General Cadwalader, of the War of 1812, occupied the Cadwalader family pew, No. 55.

Henry Clay, during the time of his temporary attendance, sat in front of the west column, north aisle.

In the churchyard are interred Peyton Randolph, first President of Continental Congress; Commodores Truxton, Bainbridge, Biddle and Richard Dale; Eleanor, daughter of Nellie Custis (Mrs. Lewis), daughter of Martha Washington, and several signers of the Declaration of Independence, and other persons of distinction.

The American Episcopal Church was organized, its constitution was framed and the American Prayer Book was adopted in this church, 1785.

At the southeast of the nave is the "Washington Door," through which was accustomed to enter the "Father of his country."

trust in the Supreme Being, the great Architect, to a more enlightened knowledge of Him.

The supreme object of the Craft has ever been to bring men from darkness to light. It is indeed an honor to feel that the fraternity in the earliest days had a mission in the work of uplifting the natural state of men's minds. As seekers after God they were taught in times of great trouble and distress to place their trust in the Almighty. Such is the meaning of the prayer offered by King Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, when he stood upon a brazen altar, stretched forth his hands to heaven, and prayed to Almighty God that men might come to know Him, and that He might be recognized as their God; that they might find forgiveness of their sins, and their hearts be kindled anew with the spirit of forgiveness, charity and brotherhood. Such was the object of Free Masonry, to lift men into a higher religious conception of Almighty God; to remove from their minds the feeling that He was an austere being, a God of fire, and a God of vengeance; and to bring before their minds the thought that He was a Father, and still further, that men must live together as brothers.

The Fatherhood of God then and the brotherhood of man were the great thoughts which Free Masonry desired to promulgate and to teach everywhere. No other meaning can we give to the committing of the secrets and signs which our three Grand Masters passed to their successors, as they went abroad to foster a belief in the one only and true God, and to extend the right hand of fellowship and kindness to

one another. This meaning finds its highest exemplification in the words of the text—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." These words are quoted from passages in the Old Testament.

3. As Masons, therefore, and men of intelligence we would be remiss in our duty if we failed to recognize the fact that God led men by degrees to a fuller understanding of Himself; that He allowed means to be used, among them Free Masonry, which would prepare them for a better understanding of the relationship of Himself with man, until the time came for Him to reveal Himself in His Son, the Desire of all nations. Virgil, in his sixth eclogue, and many other writers, proclaimed that the Chief Deity would send a representative to visit this earth, and to bring about a closer relationship with the God and humanity. In fulfilment of this universal expectation we are, therefore prepared for the statement of a Hebrew of the Hebrews, who said: "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world." It was to this Son that Philip said: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

Free Masons who refuse to advance under the teaching of the Son of God are reminded of the legend of Leonardo di Vinci, told in connection with the painting of the Last Supper, which he had painted on the convent wall in Milan. The monks gathered around

the picture, eager to criticize its detail, to admire and applaud its most insignificant accessories. Voices were loud, disputes fierce, until it was by common consent agreed that if there was one thing better than another about the picture, it was the drawing and coloring of the table-cloth. The impatient painter listened with flushed cheek and flashing eye, until the last of the Order had spoken, and then seizing his brush, with one dash of color blotted out every admired detail of the table-cloth. He had brought them to look upon the face and figure of Christ, and they could be absorbed with so paltry a thing as the painting of a bit of cloth.

Even so we may be occupied with smaller matters of everyday life, with the interests of an organization, and thus fail to rise to that supreme elevation to which we have been called. It is a pleasure to note that our ancient brethren recognized the fuller revelation as it was vouchsafed to men, their rules of conduct and duty to God and man were recognized in the acceptance of the entire Bible and the Christ-like teaching contained in the same; their time was spent in the erection of Christian cathedrals, abbeys and churches, and the recognition of obligations due to the Almighty, as evidenced in the fact that they oft recurred to this very house of prayer in the spirit of devotion and the exercise of religious privileges. For, in the recently established museum in our Temple, by no means the least conspicuous place is occupied by printed sermons preached in 1755, 1778, 1783, 1784, 1786, 1793, 1795, 1800, showing that wherever Masonry is properly understood there is nothing

antagonistic to the teaching of religion, but rather strong reasons to encourage the endorsement of whatever is taught in the Church as the pillar and the ground of the truth.

Whenever, therefore, we hear men say that the obligations of Free Masonry are enough, and that the Lodge is a good enough Church for them, we are impressed with the fact that such statements do not show the first understanding of the principles of the fraternity; and further, that they are not in keeping with its ancient customs, usages and landmarks, or with the precepts so fully exemplified by our first Master, King Solomon. For it is not enough that we should be in sympathy with the naturally religious beings who have lived in the world, but that we should follow the words of the text: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

A man must indeed be narrow who says my charity and brotherhood extend only to those who are members of the Craft, when all the while living in the world he is receiving something of the charity and kindness of other men. No, my brothers, if we are to honor our fraternity it will not be by claiming for it a position which it cannot logically maintain, for it is true of an organization as it is of an individual,—"whosoever shalt exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted," and we cannot afford to assume a position which neither our fathers nor we ourselves are able to maintain.

Free Masonry is not antagonistic to, it is not a substitute for the Church, and we will be most loyal to its teaching when we recognize that its object ever has been, and is, the extension of the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. It will be well for us to be ever mindful of the words expressed by the sweet singer of Israel, when he cried: "Like as the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, oh God. My soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?" This will bring us to the fuller understanding of our relationship with the Almighty. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." To this end was the divine institution of the Church organized; for this purpose were the Sacraments and Ordinances of our holy religion appointed, and by a faithful observance of the same can we alone understand the meaning and the answer of the lawyer who came to our Lord with the ever-important question—"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" to which the reply was made—"What is written in the law? How readest thou?" And the lawyer, priding himself no doubt upon his ability to speak clearly, answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." Then said the Master: "This do, and thou shalt live." In other words, all the love that we can possibly give to our heavenly Father, all the neigh-

borliness which we can show to our fellow men, whether within or without the fraternity, is incumbent upon us as Free Masons, and we are forced to believe that we are called upon to be Christian missionaries, to do everything within our power to keep alive, to strengthen, to extend the knowledge of God and the brotherhood of man, until the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Son.

In conclusion, therefore, we honor our fraternity most when we have a proper conception of its work in the past, and its duty in the present, looking upon it as one of the great agencies which has helped to maintain a belief in God, to promulgate the broad spirit of brotherhood, not only among our members, but among humanity at large, and to recognize that supreme organization in its conception and divine institution, inaugurated, fostered, and loved by the divine son of God,—the organization in which honor dwells, to which He has given the promise: "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." in order that the spirit of good will, and peace in earth might be established.

I am sure it was something of this spirit, this longing which influenced those in charge of the anniversary festivities of your body to appoint a religious service as the first and the principal part of your celebration, and I know of no greater wish to express to you on this occasion than that you will follow Masonically and religiously the words of the text: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

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