

TRUE MASONIC WISDOM

The Character, Mission and Teaching of St. John the Baptist.

An Interesting Sermon by a Brother Mason on the Subject Set Forth Above.

(A Masonic sermon at Winnipeg, Manitoba, June 25, 1893, by Rev. Bro. C. B. Pitblado.)

We are met for the purpose of meditating upon the character, the mission and the teaching of John the Baptist, in their bearing upon Masonic character, conduct and teaching. As John introduced men to Christ, so Masonry may introduce us to Christianity. Now, what was the distinguishing feature of John's character which we should try to imitate? Evidently it was moral courage. John was a man in the true heroic meaning of that word. He could deny self with decision, and he could denounce sin with fearlessness. He could abstain from all self-righteousness and he could condemn all vice without being unkind. He could live on locusts and wild honey without complaining about his hard fare or boasting of the abstemiousness. He could tell the Pharisees they were a generation of vipers, and urged them to come to repentance, without sending them to perdition. He could guide his desires by his reason. His animal propensities never ran away with his manly self-control. He began to reform the world by reforming himself. He showed what self-denial meant by denying himself. He tried to get other people to do right by doing right himself. As some men analyzed his food and criticized his dress, they called him a sour ascetic, but as we look beneath his coat of camel's hair and within his leathern girdle, there was a man. He had the consciousness of God's presence with him. He felt that he was on God's side in opposing sin, and he was as bold as a lion in condemning wickedness.

He had the courage of his convictions. He could preach the necessity of repentance to all self-religious sinners, whether in the palaces or slums. He could condemn all hypocrisy with emphatic denunciation, whether in orthodox church or sceptical club room. He could tell the Pharisees and Sadducees that they were a generation of vipers that need to bring forth fruits that would prove their repentance before he could receive them. He could boldly face the despotic tyrant Herod and say in reference to his so-called wife: "It is not lawful for thee to have her." He did not believe in patting gilded transgressors on the back and striking ragged sinners in the mouth. He did not call the man who stole a million a genius and the man who stole a dollar a thief. He did not hit over the left when he struck the rich and straight from the shoulder when he pummeled the poor. He could kiss misfortune anywhere, but he would scourge wickedness everywhere. He could endure death, but he could not by false testimony condone sin. He was on the side of all that made for righteousness, sincerity, purity of heart and life. He was a fearless reformer, a bold reprover of sin, a preacher of repentance, a thoroughly courageous, God-sent man. He never perverted any principle by compromise. He never tolerated wrongdoings by cowardice. He never condoned sin by silence. He was a man in his uprightness; he was a hero in his manliness; he was a martyr in his faithfulness. If he was not a Mason, he might have been. So far he is a model for every man and every Mason. No moral coward can ever be a true Mason.

But you will notice that the moral courage of manliness of John did not rest upon the ground that he had reached perfection. He was far from assuming that position. He had not arrived at the resting place in human life which was good enough for him or any other man—he was only traveling toward it. He had not reached the hill-top of human attainment—he was only climbing to it. He had not penetrated to the inner shrine of the temple of knowledge—he was only in the porch. He was not the true light, but only a reflector of its radiance. He was not the perfect man, but only the witness who identified him before men. High as his degree of knowledge was, there was a higher degree to which his attainment was only a stepping stone. Worthy as his character was, there was a worthier manhood just above him. Bright as the light was which he radiated upon men, it was only a candle illuminating the darkness of ignorance enough to bring us into the perfect sunshine of true knowledge. John stands ready, not to recommend himself to our confidence, but to introduce us to One infinitely his superior. He said: "He that cometh after me is preferred before me. I indeed baptize you with water of repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." John was high, but Christ was still higher. John was a reflector of light, Christ was the true light. John represented high attainments that had been arrived at; Christ represented the highest attainments that could be reached. John represented what was probably good enough; Christ represented what was

certainly the very best in all that pertained to human life and human character. John represented the foundation of a grand structure. Christ represented the completion of a perfect building. John would never have been seen on the horizon of history had it not been for the coming of Christ. His manly character shines bright just in as far as it represents christian virtue.

It is when John comes closest to Christ in his life that he presents to us the noblest manhood in his character. And so you will find that the nearer we get to Christ as men, the better we will work as Masons. The more fully that we develop christian character, the better we will practice Masonic conduct. And from the low but broad ground of Masonic beliefs you can easily rise to the high ground of christian faith. On the foundation of Masonic virtue you readily build the structure of christian character. From Masonic obligations can readily come the virtue of christian trustworthiness, and never will Masonry be better illustrated than by true christian manhood. A disciple of John the Baptist can naturally easily become a follower of Christ. A true Mason may naturally become a good christian. Let us see what John or a disciple of John was, in order to understand what he may become.

I know that Masonry is not in itself religion, but it is the soil out of which religion naturally grows. No real atheist can be a true Mason any more than a piece of coal can be a diamond. Without faith in God we can have no confidence in ourselves. Unless we recognize our responsibility to God there can be little binding force in our solemn obligations. Unless we are sincere in the declaration that we trust God we can have no assurance that we can trust each other. In fact, unless we accept the Bible as God's revelation to us, we can have no light either in our lives or our lodge rooms. It is the recognition of our true relation to God that makes us either true men or good Masons. It is the recognized authority of God that makes the moral law the supreme rule of life. All righteousness has its beginning in the fear of God. All human virtue has its foundation in Divine authority. All real manliness has its root in true godliness.

Out of our Masonry, therefore, should grow strong religious belief not rank skeptical unbelief. Our society should be a school of religious faith, not a nursery of doubt. Our temples should be sanctuaries of the living God, not sepulchers of religious life. If this is not the case, then all our obligations are only made to be broken, all our symbolic teachings are only empty delusions, and all our ritual a solemn mockery. If the Godhead is not the foundation of our manhood, then Masonry has no solid foundation on which to rest. Lay a good foundation—do not be satisfied with a mere foundation, but proceed to complete the building.

I know that Masonry is not in itself philanthropy, but it is the blossom from which the fruits of brotherly kindness should grow. No unbrotherly, unjust, uncharitable, cruel man can be a true Mason any more than a thorn bush can be a fig tree. Masons are men, but they are more—they are brethren. It is a great deal to develop the character of true manhood; it is a great deal more to cherish the spirit of real brotherliness. It is something to wear the robe of an unspotted reputation, by which we maintain our respectability in the community; it is a good deal more to make the robe of charity, by which we can cover up the faults and failings and infirmities of our brother. It is a great deal to refrain from injuring our brother in anything. It is much more to help him in his every time of need. It is a great deal to resent an injury that may have been perpetrated against us by a brother; it is much more to forgive him as we hope to be forgiven. It is a great deal to act with kindly consideration towards each other; it is a great deal more to help each other with loving brotherliness. It is to the cultivation of all the fruits of brotherly love that we have pledged ourselves to each other. And unless the blossoms or professions of Masonry produce the fruits of brotherliness, it represents only barrenness in the world. Without brotherliness our professions are at best but green leaves of pretension, and our vows are nothing more than beautiful blossoms of false promises. In God's garden we are nothing but cumberers of the ground. If brotherliness is not the fruit of Masonry, then we have no justification for living. Let us not rest satisfied with mere beautiful blossoms, but let us bring forth the ripe fruit of brotherliness.

I know Masonry is not perfect spiritual life, but it is the mirror in which spiritual truth is reflected on the mind. A thorough materialist cannot be a true Mason. Our manhood derives its dignity from the conviction that we are sons of God, and not mere organized clods of the dust. Our brotherhood gets its chief significance from the truth that God is the Father of our spirits, and not merely the Creator of our bodies. Man came from God. He did not just roll himself out of a dust heap. Our whole conduct derives its importance from the fact that we are heirs of immortality, not mere creatures of a day. We have souls as well as bodies—we have a life beyond the grave—we

have eternity after time. Let us not rest satisfied with a mere shadow of life, let us secure the reality. Unless this conviction of immortality enters into our life, all our efforts are wasted strength. The sky of our future is simply the pall of death, and our grandest human achievements consist in building the sepulchers of despair. But for every true Mason, the life of God is in him—on his sky of the future the star of immortality shines brightly, and his chief labor is to prepare material for that spiritual temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Every true Mason works in the conviction that he is an immortal being. And let us remember that nowhere does true godliness shine out so conspicuously as in the person of Christ. He is the express image of the Father's person. Why as Masons may we not receive this light from God, through Christ, into our hearts? Nowhere is brotherly conduct exemplified so perfectly as in the self-sacrificing life of Christ. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. Why as Masons may we not copy His example? Nowhere is immortality or a future life brought out so fully as in the teaching of Christ. He brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel. Why as Masons may we not sit at His feet? These, then are the qualities of Masonic manliness. It begins in faith in God. It lives in the warmth of brotherly love. It shines in the light of immortality.

What was the mission of John the Baptist, of which Masons should take special notice? His special mission was to prepare men for receiving the Messiah. He was to bring the Jewish people into a right form of mind for receiving the Deliverer, which he did by preaching repentance. He was to plow the soil of Judaism, so that it would be prepared for the seed which Jesus would sow, which he did by declaring the coming of the kingdom of God. He was to receive and introduce Christ to the world, which he did by baptizing Him at Jordan and pointing Him out as the promised Messiah. He was to prepare the candlestick of Judaism for having the lamp of christianity placed upon it. He attacked the narrow views of the Jews in order that he might bring in the broad claims of humanity. He tried to break down the exclusiveness of the Jewish race in order to reorganize the unity of the human family. He struck heavy blows at intolerance of religion, in order that he might establish the brotherhood of man. He scourged out all unrighteousness that he might bring in true brotherliness. He pulled out the weeds of sectarian feeling in order that he might sow the seed of brotherly love. He thrust out Ananias, the priest, to bring in Christ, our brother. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His path straight." His whole energies were to be absorbed in removing the obstacles that stood in the way of the reception of Christ. He was to be a voice rather than a person, in declaring his message. He was to be heard rather than seen in doing his work. The messenger was to be almost forgotten, in view of the importance of the message which he delivered. He was to be absorbed in Christ, as the light of the morning star is absorbed in the light of the glorious sun. He was to give place to Christ as the apple blossom gives place to the fruit. His great object was not to call attention to himself, but to the Savior. If he was seen it was only to be reflecting the light of Christ. If he was heard it was only to be speaking about Christ. If he was to be honored, it was only to be as the forerunner of Christ. Just as we are to see the moon shining in the light of the sun, so are we to see John the Baptist shining in the light of Christ the Savior. His great business was to show men the way to Christ, not bring them to himself. He did not turn men away from Christ. He brought them to Him. He did not substitute his own teaching and virtue and work for the teaching and virtue and work of Christ. Just so Masonry should not turn men away from Christ, but bring them to Him. It should not make their own work all the religion they want, but use it to recommend the teaching and life and work of Christ. Before John is Christ; before Masonry is Christianity.

When we are voyagers on the ocean, it may not matter to us who keeps the lighthouse that stands upon the rocky shore, but it is of essential importance that we see the radiance of the lamp he has lighted, and that we steer by its guidance. John set the lamp upon the lighthouse that showed the way to Christ and the harbor of true safety. Here is a lesson for us. It matters not whether we are seen or not seen, whether we are known or unknown, whether we are remembered or forgotten, but it is of importance that we keep the light of truth so set on the lighthouse of our institutions that its clear radiance shall warn men from the rocks of ruin and guide them into the harbor of safety.

When we are receiving our messages across the electric wires it may not matter much who the telegraph operator is, but it is of supreme importance what the telegram says, from whom it comes, of whom it speaks, what directions it gives. John was simply the telegraph operator, who delivers God's

message about Christ and the way we are to receive Him. Here is the lesson for us. When the revelation of God's truth thrills our souls, it matters not whether men recognize who or what we are, but we will so arrange that the testimony we bear shall be a Divine message about God's truth and man's duty.

When we are traveling on the railroad it may not matter much who the overseer is who keeps the track clear from all the hindrances and obstructions which might stop or derail the train. The essential matter is that the road be kept clear. John was simply the overseer who tried to remove the obstructions—the unbelief, the prejudice, the vice, the sin—that stood in the way of men coming to Christ. He tried to make a clean, straight pathway between the soul and the Savior. The lesson for us, that whether men recognize it or not, whether we are praised or blamed, whether we succeed or fail, we are to labor that all unbelief and prejudice and vice and love of sin shall be removed from our own hearts and lives and the hearts and lives of our own fellow-men that we shall have unobstructed access to Christ and He shall have free entrance into our souls. Masonry that recognizes the mission of John the Baptist must honestly accept the work of Christ. If we are like John the Baptist, we will be burning lights that show the way to Christ. Solomon may introduce to the temple, John the Baptist brings us into direct contact with the Savior.

What was the teaching of John to which Masonry especially should pay heed? He taught the whole truth as it was revealed to him. He placed the light of Christian truth on the candlestick of Jewish traditions. He made the ritual of the temple reflect the doctrine of the church. He made the symbolism of Judaism the foundation of Christianity. His teachings were all summed up in the words which he uttered when pointing to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It is as he said, think of Christ as God's solution of the great problem of sin. See in Christ the sacrifice presented for the sinner. Meditate upon his pure unblemished character as the Lamb of God. Behold in him the conqueror of all evil. Perceive in Him the revelation of Divine sonship. Recognize in Him the perfection of all manliness. Find in Him the exemplification of all true brotherliness. Look at Him as the perfect manifestation of true Godliness. Accept Him as the proof and pledge of God's infinite love to you. Trust Him as the propitiation for past sin, and the ground on which you can hope for future blessedness. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

The man that receives John for his teacher should receive Christ for his Savior. The Masonry that accepts John is opening the door for Christ. Masonry, in its foundation, is manhood; in its walls and arches it is brotherhood; in its altars and shrines it is Christianity. All the symbolism of Masonry finds its fullest explanation in the truths of Christianity. The temple itself was a type of the incarnation of Christ. The traditions connected with the erection of the building have their most significant meaning in the Christian work by which the temple of Christ is now being built up. The sacrifice of all prefigured the crucifixion, all the ritual of the temple service gets full interpretation in the truths and experiences of redemption. The whole mysteries of Masonic rites, as founded on that service, find a key for their solution in the work and life of Christ. Masonry becomes a complete structure in Christianity. John represents the lighthouse, Christ is the harbor. John was the blossom, Christ is the matured fruit.

The foundation may be strong and broad, but it can never be substituted for the house. The lighthouse, though stable and bright, is not used for the harbor. The blossoms, though very beautiful flowers, can never be used as ripe fruit. Let us not take up our abode in the walls of the foundation. Let us not cast anchor beside the lighthouse. Let us not be satisfied with the mere blossom of experience. The beautiful blossoms of Masonry become ripened fruits in Christianity. The lighthouse of Masonry leads to the safe harbor of Christianity. And every Christian may work cheerfully with Masons, because John, their patron saint, leads to Christ, the Christian's Savior. Thus, then, we see that Masonic virtues may naturally become Christian character; Masonic brotherliness may naturally become Christian philanthropy; Masonic teaching may naturally become Christian doctrine. Oh, if we were only true in working out our principles to their true Christian development, what a benediction we might be to each other and to the world!

Romanism and Democracy.
The priests of the Church of the Sacred Heart on West Fifty-first street, near Tenth avenue, New York, made attacks upon the A. P. A. last Sunday, and called upon their parishioners to vote the Democratic ticket.
Fr. Summers officiated at the 6 o'clock mass. He said: "This is the first time in years that a Catholic priest has

PRICE 15 CENTS
A. P. A.
MANUAL



and Complete EXPOSE OF THE PRINCIPLES & OBJECTS OF THE AMERICAN PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION (COPYRIGHTED.)

FOR SALE BY AMERICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY.

talked from the pulpit on politics as I am now forced to do. We are compelled to come out against the A. P. A., a secret organization antagonistic to our church. We must do battle with this enemy, and at once. The Republican party has refused to denounce this secret organization, and I asked every man here to vote a straight Democratic ticket. Let me assure you that I speak as an individual. I have not been authorized so to do by my superiors. My sense of duty as a priest forces me to advise you in this matter."

For a moment the large congregation sat in profound silence; then half a dozen sturdy state Democracy men reddened with anger, and rising from their seats, stalked out of the church.

One of their number paused just inside the threshold, and in a low voice, but plainly audible to those seated in the rear of the church, said: "He's a priest, but when he says he speaks without orders, I believe he lies."

At the 7 o'clock mass, when Fr. Roach presided, the pulpit services were a repetition of his predecessors, save that Fr. Roach slightly outdid his leader in political vigor, denouncing the A. P. A. in unmeasured terms, and calling upon Catholic voters to stand by the church. Again indignant parishioners rose and left the church.

High mass drew an enormous gathering. Fr. Wallace occupied the pulpit. With the excitement at fever heat and in a silence of strained intensity the priest spoke even more vigorously than either of his predecessors and in the same strain.

MAGNET PILE KILLER
Not a Common Salve or Ointment, but a SPECIFIC Used for Rectal Diseases Only.
A Quick Relief and Positive Cure for Piles, Hemorrhoids, Itching, or Burning of the Rectum, in Any Form.
READ Testimonials \$1.00 PER BOX.
MAGNET CHEMICAL CO., Valparaiso, O., U.S.A.

W. N. SMITH, OHIO, ILL.
BREEDER OF THOROUGHBRED OXFORD DOWN SHEEP, BRED BRONZE TURKIES, B. & W. PLYMOUTH ROCKS, LIGHT BRAHMA AND CHICKENS.
S. L. Wyandotte Stock and Eggs for sale. Circulars free. 7-6-70

A GRAND DISCOVERY!
WANTED—A live man or woman in every county where we have not already secured a representative to sell our "Kawado" Biller's SOLID METAL KNIVES, Forks and Spoons to consumers, a solid metal, white or silver, as you wear; our goods guaranteed to wear a lifetime; not about one-fourth that of silver; the chance of a lifetime again average from \$50 to \$100 per week, and most with ready sales everywhere, so great in the demand for our Solid Metal Goods. One Can Kill Ten Dollars' worth in daily use. Case of samples Free. Address: BILLY BILLY, Biller's Warehouse Co., Dept. 20, Boston, Mass.

AGENTS LADIES OR GENTS
to take orders for writing \$75 a WEEK, Plaster, or collecting orders for us to place. We do all kinds of plain and ornate work, manufacture the material and outfit, and teach the art. We will the only complete outfit, including the wheels, tools and materials for polishing, repairing, painting and finishing everything. Circulars and price free. Gray & Co., Printing Works, Dept. 4, Columbus, Ohio.

SPEEDY AND LASTING RESULTS. FAT PEOPLE
You can get this. No inconvenience. Simple, sure. ABSOLUTELY FREE. You can stay this. from any injurious substance. LARGES ABSORBERS REDUCED. We GUARANTEE A CURE or refund your money. PRICE \$3.00 per bottle. Send 4c. for literature. TREMONT MEDICAL CO., Boston, Mass.

WHY PRIESTS SHOULD WED.
BY DR. JUSTIN D. FULTON.
This is one of Dr. Fulton's best books. Deals with the question of celibacy of the priesthood from a religious standpoint; also the past and present history of the Roman Catholic Church. Price, in cloth cover, 1.0c Sent postpaid on receipt of price, by AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO., 1615 Howard Street, OMAHA, NEB

THE COMING AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.

By B. A. HUNTINGTON.
This is among the latest publications and ranks among the best. It deals with the foreign exerted in political affairs of our country by the Roman Catholic Church. Every American should read it. Paper cover.

Price 50 Cents.
Sent postpaid on receipt of price, by the AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO., 1615 Howard Street, Omaha, Neb. or, 807 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. or, cor. Clark and Randolph, Chicago, Ill.

FRIENDS Willing to make a first-class income with little trouble, should secure the agency for our Magic Wall Paper Cleaner, and our Magic Paint and Carpet Cleaner. They sell themselves. Friends only address for particulars, MAXWELL & CO., 263 Plum St., Cincinnati, O.

A. P. A. SONGSTER. Only One in Existence.

—BY—
REV. O. E. MURRAY, A. M. B. D.
The best collection of Patriotic Music ever offered to the public for Patriotic gatherings, homes, schools and all who love our nation.
Words and Music, 100 Pages, 102 Songs. Price 25 Cents, Postpaid.

MARIA MONK. Paper Cover 50 Cents.

This little volume relates the terrible experience of a nun who was confined in the "Black Nunnery" of Montreal. It has probably the largest sale of any work of the kind ever published, and covers Attempts to Suppress It have been made. The price in cloth is \$1.00, and in paper 50 cents. For sale by AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO., 1615 Howard Street, Omaha, Neb. Main St., Kansas City, Mo.

Fifty Years—in the Church of Rome.

By REV. CHAR. CHINIQUE.
This is a standard work on Romanism and its secret workings, written by one who ought to know. The story of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln by the paid tools of the Roman Catholic Church, is told in a clear and convincing manner. It also relates many facts regarding the practices of priests and nuns in the convents and monasteries. It has 324 pages, and is sent postpaid on receipt of \$2.00, by AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO., 1615 Howard Street, Omaha, Neb. or, Cor. Clark and Randolph, Chicago, Ill.

PATRIOTIC LITERATURE.

Send Ten Cents in Silver For Samples.
The Most Useful Ever Published Instructive and to the Point.

ALL NEW THE PATRIOTIC TRACT CO.

Lock Box 34, Station E CLEVELAND, OHIO.
FOOTPRINTS OF THE JESUITS. By HON. H. W. THOMPSON, Ex-Secretary of the Navy, Author of "The Papacy and the Civil Power." A judicial study of the Origin, Principles, and Progress of the "Society of Jesus," especially as it stands related to Civil Government. Octavo. Cloth, 259 pages, with Portrait of Author. Price, post-paid, 47c. CRANSTON & CURTIS, Publishers, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis.

FOR INDIAN TERRITORY, THE CHEROKEE STRIP, OKLAHOMA, FT. SMITH, LITTLE ROCK and HOT SPRINGS, ARK. Ticket Office, E. E. Corner 13th and Farnam Sts

FOR KANSAS CITY, ST. LOUIS AND ALL POINTS SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST. Ticket Office, E. E. Corner 13th and Farnam Sts