

THE  
TRUE PRINCIPLES AND PRECEPTS  
OF FREEMASONRY.

A SERMON PREACHED IN WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

ON THE OCCASION OF THE INSTALLATION OF

THE R. W. BROTHER

SIR EDMUND A. H. LECHMERE, BART., M.P., F.S.A.,

AS PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER OF WORCESTERSHIRE,

BY THE V. W. BROTHER

REV. CHARLES JOHN MARTYN, M.A.,

RECTOR OF MELFORD, AND RURAL DEAN,

*Past Grand Chaplain of England, and Deputy Provincial  
Grand Master for Suffolk.*

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TO  
THE R. W. BROTHER  
SIR EDMUND ANTHONY HARLEY LECHMERE, BART., M.P., F.S.A.,  
PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER,

TO  
THE V. W. BROTHER WILLIAM MASEFIELD,  
DEPUTY PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER,

AND TO  
THE PROVINCIAL GRAND WARDENS, OFFICERS, AND BRETHREN  
OF THE PROVINCE OF WORCESTERSHIRE,

THIS SERMON,  
PREACHED IN WORCESTER CATHEDRAL, ON THE 7TH AUGUST, 1878,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INSTALLATION OF THE PROVINCIAL  
GRAND MASTER, AND NOW PUBLISHED  
BY THEIR ESPECIAL REQUEST,

**Is Dedicated,**

BY THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND BROTHER,  
CHARLES JOHN MARTYN, M. A.,  
*Past Grand Chaplain of England, and Deputy Provincial  
Grand Master of Suffolk.*

MELFORD RECTORY, SUFFOLK.  
*August 7th, 1878.*



## A S E R M O N.

2 CHRON. II. 4.

“Behold, I build an house to the Name of the Lord my God,  
to dedicate it to Him.”

**N**EARLY three thousand years ago, the most wonderful and most historic people, who have ever taken rank amongst the nations of the earth, were fast approaching the zenith of their magnificence and glory. Originally selected to be the favourites of Heaven and “the chosen people” of God, the Jews, as we *now* call them (those descendants of “Abraham the faithful,” and the children of Jacob or Israel, that mighty “Prince of God,” who wrestled successfully with the Angel at Penuel), had been gradually subduing the fair Land of Promise,

until nearly the whole of Canaan lay beneath their rule. "Saul," their first king, had "slain his thousands," and "David," their second king, "his ten thousands," and now, at length, peace was established, and prosperity and plenty reigned throughout their vast dominions. David, indeed, full of years, glory, and honours, had been gathered to his fathers, and Solomon, his son, now sat upon the throne of Israel. Mightily had the kingdom spread, and "from the river Euphrates, unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt," all men bowed beneath the sovereign sway of Solomon; and it is written in the sacred records, that "they brought presents and served Solomon all the days of his life." Still this was not all. Vast armies were at Solomon's command, gold poured into his treasury from Ophir, and from other places, in unparalleled abundance, and huge tracts of country yielded obedience to his word. But above and beyond *all else*, the spirit of God was in his heart, "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." God had asked him at Gibeon what He should give him, and his answer had been, "Give me now, I beseech Thee, wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can judge this Thy people that is so great?" And his humble speech had

“pleased the Lord,” and every worldly blessing, in addition to unequalled worldly wisdom, *had* been given him.

And now, at length, “Solomon determined,” in compliance with the pious wish of his father David, “to build an house to the name of the Lord,” and so 150,000 workmen, under the superintendence of 3,600 “Menatschims, or prefects, or more familiarly speaking, overseers of the work,” were told off to prepare for this enormous undertaking; and then he sent to Hiram, king of Tyre, his father’s friend, to send him “cedar trees, and fir trees, and algum trees from Lebanon,” and asked him to cause his servants to cut the necessary wood, and to “send it down in floats by sea to Joppa,” whence it could easily be carried to Jerusalem.

The *reason* of this special request is given us in the words which I have chosen for my text, for “behold,” said Solomon, “I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to Him.” Hiram, king of Tyre, was worthy of the trust reposed in him. Not only did he send all the requisite materials, but he also sent one who was in himself a host, “Hiram Abbiff, the prince of architects,” a man whose name will never perish so long as masonry, as at present practised, holds its place amongst us. The son of a skilful Tyrian artificer, and of “a woman of the daughters of Dan”

(the former widow of a man of Nephthali), Hiram Abbiff, or Adoniram, as he is sometimes called, was indeed a worthy and a fitting man for the great work to which he was appointed ; and by his marvellous skill and “ his unshaken fidelity ” even unto death, he has left behind him a glorious name, and a most eloquent testimony to the great fact, “ that, to the just and upright man, death has *no* terrors, equal to those of falsehood and dishonour.” My brethren, I will not now proceed to speak to you of the great work “ which those three mighty men performed ; ” I will not ask you to follow out the details of that glorious temple, which gradually, and yet so noiselessly, grew into completeness and magnificence upon the summit of “ the Holy Mount Moriah ; ” neither will I say more of those successors of “ Moses, Aholiab, and Bezaleel,” forerunners in their turn, of “ Zerubbabel, prince of the people, Haggai, the prophet, and Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest,” by whom the work, begun and completed, in former times, was afterwards restored, after the Babylonish captivity. For indeed, time as well as words would fail me, were I even to *try* to illustrate *all* the virtues—

“ Of him, who most things understood,  
Of him, who sent the stone and wood,  
Of him, who nobly shed his blood  
In doing of his duty.”

Moreover, I have other points of which I wish to speak to you to day, for “we are,” you know, “not operative, but rather speculative, or Free and Accepted Masons” who are gathered here this afternoon. Still I cannot *quite* leave the mention of those old masonic worthies without continuing the old masonic distich concerning them, which probably is well-known to many of you who now hear me, and saying,—

“Blest be that age, and blest each morn  
On which those three great men were born,  
Who Israel’s Temple did adorn  
With Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty !”

And now let me say that which perhaps you may think I ought to have said at first, viz., how pleased I am to see such a large and influential gathering of my masonic brethren, and so large, and, I would hope, so sympathizing a general congregation, assembled together in this magnificent cathedral church to-day. Indeed I am quite sure that I am only expressing the feeling which is uppermost in the minds of the newly-installed Provincial Grand Master and of all the Freemasons of Worcestershire, when I tender, as I now beg to do, their warmest and most hearty thanks to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, for allowing them the use of their cathedral



on this occasion; for the admirable arrangements they have made for the suitable accommodation of the brethren; and for the beautiful and impressive service in which *they* have permitted *us*, and *we* have been privileged, to join. Truly, my brethren, I always think when I look round upon such glorious monuments of the piety and devotion of a long past age, as is this noble and this stately pile in which we are now assembled, that something of the spirit of king Solomon must have animated those, who, in spite of numberless difficulties, were minded, so many years ago, to raise such splendid fabrics in God's honour! Surely they must have said in the words of our text, "Behold, we build an house to the name of the Lord our God, to dedicate it to Him." For indeed the labour and the expense must have been so great, that nothing but a true and fervent zeal for the glory of their God, could have induced them to undertake so grand a work, and to carry it through to its completion. But, as I said just now, we who are gathered here to-day, and who are bound together by that "mystic tie" which is so little *understood* and which *therefore* is so often ridiculed by the outside world, "are not operative," as were the builders of old, but rather "speculative" Masons. And, therefore, I shall now endeavour, while I seek to impress a few of the useful lessons which our great craft teaches, upon

my masonic brethren, to give the general congregation also, *some little idea* of what Freemasonry, as now practised by us, really is.

Now it is a question we all of us must often have heard asked, "What *is* this Freemasonry of which we *hear so much*, and of which we *know so little*?" My brethren, I cannot give you a better answer than that which our text to-day supplies: "Behold, we build an house to the name of the Lord our God, to dedicate it to Him." *There*, brethren, is after all "the great secret," the wonderful "mystery," which binds us all together. It is the building up, not of an house of stone and wood, after the manner of our operative brethren of old, glorious as such an object was, but the building up of that most noble temple of the living God, the human heart: the forming and the perfecting, of a good and exemplary character, in our fellow-men. *This* it is, which is the grand aim and object of our modern and of our speculative Masonry. Freemasonry, is, to use the words in which even the most junior and unpractised member of our body could describe it to you, "a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." Its grand desire, is to render its disciples, better servants of their God, better members of society, better fathers, better sons, better husbands, better brothers; in a word, better men. Freemasonry *teaches* us to be, what Christianity would

*have* us be—imitators and followers, of all that is great, and noble, and excellent, and good, and true. Freemasonry teaches us “to speak well of a brother, as well absent as present, and when that unfortunately cannot be done, with honour and propriety, to adopt that excellent and truly masonic virtue, silence.” Freemasonry teaches us to “measure our actions, by the rule of rectitude, to square our conduct, by the principles of morality, and to keep our conversation, and even our very thoughts, within the compass of propriety.” Freemasonry teaches us to provide for, and to be mindful of, “the wants of others;” to care for the aged, the indigent, the widow, and the orphan ; to try and lighten the load under which our fellow-creatures may be groaning ; and, in a word, to fulfil the great and golden rule, of “doing unto all men as we would they should do unto us.” But then, perhaps, it may be said, and as you all know, it very often *is* said, “Why do you want any *particular society* or *bond* to teach you all these things ? Does not *Christianity* teach you all this and much more ?” I answer, most certainly it does so ; and if men would only pray to God to help them to live up to their obligations and their duty as *Christians*, we should need no Freemasonry, or indeed anything else, to help us on our way and teach us better ; for we should have arrived at that millennium state, of which we

often read and hear, when "the people shall be all righteous," and when everything shall be perfect and excellent, I will not say to an *unnatural*, though I may say, to an unknown, and hitherto an unexperienced extent. But it is just because I *think*, and because I *know*, that human nature is *so* weak, and *so* frail, and so greatly in need of every help and every assistance it can find to make it good, and because I think Freemasonry *is* such a help, that I am so devoted an advocate and admirer of it. Not because I wish, *for one moment*, to exalt it, as some would do, into a religion, or to put it for an instant, *even in thought, into comparison with* religion; but because I hold it to be such an excellent helpmate and *handmaid to* religion and religious practice—*this* is why I love Freemasonry so much. Depend upon it, brethren, in dealing with men and women, you must think *of* them and legislate *for* them, not as they *ought* to be, but rather as they *are*. If all people did always exactly as they ought, there would be no need of clergymen, or schools, or indeed of laws, or anything else, to teach them their duty, and cause them to perform it, but *as it is*, such helps are needed.

We all know, and probably all confess, that it is the duty of every conscientious and right-thinking man, whether he be Churchman or Dissenter, to go either to church or to chapel;

but we all know, too, do we not? that there are thousands of persons who will never, of their own accord, enter either the one or the other; and so, if we would bring these persons under any religious influences whatever, *we must go to them, if they will not come to us*, and try to bring means and influences to bear upon them, to which they *will* attend, and which will, by God's blessing, gradually bring them round to a better mind, and lead them on to a more perfect life. Now this is just the ground which Freemasonry occupies with respect to religion. It is a great system of *pure morality*. It does not profess in any way, or shape, or manner, to interfere with any man's religious or political belief or prejudices. As far as Freemasonry is concerned, a man may be a Churchman or a Dissenter, a Jew or a Christian, a Mohammedan or a Roman Catholic, so long as he acknowledges his faith and belief in the one true God; since it is only infidels, atheists, or professed heathens, whom we exclude, on the ground of religion, or rather because they repudiate religion altogether. In politics, too, a man may be a Conservative or a Liberal, or hold whatever opinions he chooses, \* provided he pays strict attention and obedience to the laws of the craft and the ordinances of the realm or state under whose protection he chances to be living. And indeed loyalty to the

sovereign of our native land, and to our Grand Master, as the sovereign of our Order, is forcibly inculcated on all who serve under our banners, and more especially on those who occupy a prominent position amongst us ; since each brother, before he assumes the government of a lodge, is called upon to make a solemn promise, that he will be “ a peaceable subject, conforming to the laws of his country, and that avoiding conspiracies of all kinds, and paying proper respect to the civil magistrates, he will work diligently, live creditably, and act honourably towards all men.” Such are the actual words of the declaration which the newly-installed Provincial Grand Master, of Worcestershire, has made to-day, and thus, you see, brethren, that a thorough system of morality and subordination, is held to be the mainspring of our Order, and if any one, by word or deed, violates that strict code which is laid down, he is, by his own act and deed, excluded, and has only *himself* to blame for the position in which he is placed. And hence it comes to pass, that a Masonic Lodge, is a sort of neutral ground, where men holding all sorts of different opinions, can freely meet, and be on friendly terms, because all topics of religious or political discussion—those two topics on which people are unhappily so prone to disagree—are, in the Lodge-room, most properly, and most rigorously, excluded.

But there is another objection often urged against Freemasonry. It is said, that "Masons never meet except for social reasons," that "there is always *sure* to be a dinner or a banquet," that "Masons *talk* a great deal about their charity, but it seems to begin at home, by taking care of themselves." Now, brethren, I quite allow that there is some truth in all this. Masons, like members of any other society, *do* often, undoubtedly, dine together ; and *sometimes*, no doubt, a case *may* occur where one or two of those who gather round the table, *are* led into excess. That this should *ever* be so, we must all regret ; but is this state of things, I wonder, confined to members of the craft alone ? Is this, I would ask, a sufficient reason for condemning the whole body for the excesses of a few ? Here and there, of course, amongst such a large society as 100,000 men, such as the Masonic Order numbers under its banners, in England and its dependencies alone, such things *may* occasionally be found. But you might as well condemn Christianity, because a few professing Christians, here and there, sometimes commit murder, and adultery, and every imaginable wickedness ! You might as well repudiate *every* lawful and every excellent thing, because there always are *some few* who *always will abuse* it. Surely this is no fair plea to urge against

our Order, as a whole. When men meet together for three or four hours' work or intercourse, if it be for no other purpose than for mere ordinary conversation, instead of meeting in a Masonic lodge—where I can assure those who have not tried it, that the effort of memory, and the exercise both of mind and body, is really often most severe—*some* kind of recreation and refreshment, is usually needed, and if that recreation and that refreshment, be conducted in a rational and proper manner, and in a right and proper way, as I am bound to say—from a considerable amount of experience extending over more than twenty years—it generally *is*, in all Masonic gatherings, I cannot *but* think, that it tends to make men, better and more charitable, in their judgments one of another, to make them better friends, and, in a word, to make them better and more intelligent members of society at large. And then, as to the *charity* side of the question, and charity, you know, is one of the great virtues on which we, as Masons, pride ourselves. People talk about our clothing, our dress, our jewels, just as if this were all we thought about! In answer, I would say, “Just go and visit our Masonic Boys' School, at Wood Green, or our Girls' School, at Battersea. Look at more than 200 boys in the one, and nearly 200 girls in the other, children of decayed or indigent Freemasons,



of those who, when they entered into Masonry, as little thought *their* children would want help, as *I* do now, that *mine* will ; think, I say, of these children, educated, boarded, fed, and clothed, and afterwards very often placed out into the world, by means of Masonry, and *then* say, whether there must not be some real charitable feeling in an Order, whose members *never* meet without making a collection from each man present, either for our “poor and distressed brethren,” or for some other benevolent object ; which a few years ago, subscribed in thirteen months, upwards of £22,000 for the Boys’ School alone ; and which every year contributes upwards of £10,000 to each of our three noble Masonic Institutions ! Look again at our great “Asylum for Aged Freemasons and Widows of Freemasons” at Croydon, where many of our aged and infirm brethren, or their widows, who have in former days, and before the cold blast of adversity overtook them, lived in comfort, if not in affluence, but who are now, often by no fault of their own, in very reduced circumstances ; look at these, supported, just when most they need it, in the enjoyment of every necessary, if not of every luxury ; and at our annuitants numbering upwards of 300, who receive annual pensions of from £30 to £40 apiece, and who may reside at their own homes, all thus provided for, by the liberality of

the Masonic body ; (and brethren, believe me, that in speaking of these charities, I am speaking with some amount of real and practical knowledge of the vast amount of good done by these institutions, and of the admirable manner in which they are managed, for I am a vice-patron of them all, and a trustee of one of them.) Look again at our Lodge, or Fund of Benevolence, which, every month, gives relief to the amount of some £400 to the various cases of distress which are brought before it, and which are all well vouched for and strictly inquired into. Or turning from our own immediate charities, look at the splendid Reredos, the gift of the Freemasons of Gloucestershire to Gloucester Cathedral ; at the aid they are now giving towards the restoration of Tewkesbury Abbey ; at the beautiful window which the Worcestershire Masons have given to this glorious cathedral in which we are now assembled ; and such are by no means isolated gifts. Look at our contribution to the Indian Famine Fund, the Persian Relief Fund, and numerous kindred objects, (and while I am on this subject, let me remind you that your alms are asked to-day, on behalf of two most excellent institutions, the Worcester Infirmary, and the Worcester Dispensary, to which I trust you will give, whatever you can afford, in the true spirit of Masonic

liberality ;) and last, but not least, look at the noble gift of £4,000 made only two years ago to the National Lifeboat Institution, as a thank-offering to God for the safe return of our beloved Grand Master, the Prince of Wales, from his Indian expedition. Look, I repeat, at all these things, and *then* say (for I leave you each to judge) whether there is not *some* good in the Masonic body as a *Charitable* Institution, and whether it really merits all the sneers so often levelled against it by ignorant and foolish people.

But then people say again, “ But *why* do you want a *secret* ? why not throw all these benefits open to the world ? ” Now, surely, brethren, this is a childish question. Why does a man belong to any club, or subscribe to any society whatever, but because he hopes to gain some benefit restricted to the members of that club, or that society, from which the outer world are necessarily debarred ? Why should not, by the same reasoning, *every* person have an *equal* right to anything he fancies which he sees in a shop window ? Why should the man who *pays* for it, *alone* be deemed to have a prior claim ? Freemasonry, as I have said, and as I have tried to show, is a great social institution, “ it is founded upon the purest principles of piety and virtue, and it possesses many great and invaluable privileges, and in order to secure those privileges, to worthy men,

and we trust to worthy men alone, vows of fidelity and secrecy are required," since if *all the world* were acquainted with the distinguishing "sign and word" of a Freemason, the privileges would be *universal*, instead of being restricted to the members of the Order, and the *society*, as *such*, would be worthless and at an end. *That* is the reason why we have our peculiar secrets, because by means of them, we can distinguish one another, and thus know who are fit and proper persons for relief from our own private funds, or to be made partakers of any other of the special privileges belonging to Freemasons, and who are not. My brethren, I might go on to tell you more about Freemasonry, and explain to you, how "every character, figure, or emblem, depicted in our lodges, has a moral tendency, and serves to inculcate the practice of virtue, in all its genuine professors." I could tell you what most of our signs and symbols *mean*, and could show you, how there is a deep significance, underlying many of those emblems, upon which you have thoughtlessly, and perhaps scoffingly, often gazed. But time will not permit me longer to dwell upon this subject now. Yet, as I conclude, I will just give you three emblems, by way of example, all known, of course, to my Masonic brethren, though not to others, just as a specimen of our system. The square, the level, and the plumb-rule, are well-known

emblems of Freemasonry, are they not ? and their teaching to us, as Masons, is as follows : “ The square, teaches us to regulate our actions, by the Masonic line and rule, and so to correct and harmonize our conduct in this life, as to render us acceptable to that Divine Being, from whom all goodness emanates, and to whom we must give an undisguised account of our lives and actions. The level, teaches us, that we are all sprung from the same stock, are partakers of the same nature, and are sharers of the same hope ; and that though distinctions amongst men, are highly necessary, in order to preserve due subordination and to reward merit and ability, yet that no eminence of rank or station, should ever cause us to forget that we are *brethren*, and that he who is placed on the *lowest* spoke of Fortune’s wheel is equally entitled to our regard with him who has attained the *highest*, since a time will most assuredly come, (and the best and wisest of us, knows not how *soon*,) when all distinctions, save those of piety and virtue, must cease, and death, the grand leveller of all human greatness, shall reduce us all to the same state. The infallible plumb-rule, which, like Jacob’s ladder, forms a line of union between heaven and earth, and is the criterion of moral rectitude and truth, teaches us, that to walk with humility and uprightness before God, neither turning to the right hand nor to

the left, from the strict path of virtue, is a duty incumbent upon every Mason.

“Not to be an enthusiast, persecutor, slanderer, or reviler of religion, not bending towards avarice, injustice, malice, or envy and contempt of our fellow-creatures ; but laying aside every selfish propensity which may tend to injure others, and steering the barque of this life, over the rough seas of passion, without quitting the helm of rectitude, is the highest degree of perfection to which human nature is capable of attaining. As the builder raises his column by the level and perpendicular, so ought every Mason to carry himself in this life, as to observe a due medium between avarice and profusion, to hold the scales of justice with an equal poise, to make every passion and prejudice, coincide with the strict line of his duty, and in every pursuit to keep eternity in view. Hence the square teaches us morality ; the level, equality ; and the plumb-rule, justice and uprightness of life and actions ; and thus by square conduct, level steps, and upright actions, we hope, for our Saviour’s sake, to ascend to those immortal mansions where the just will assuredly meet with their reward.” Such, then, my brethren, are “the genuine tenets and principles of our Order,” which, as you will remember, I said was not *religion itself*, but only a most excellent helpmate and

handmaid to it, since we hold that *faith, as well as works*, are necessary in order to make up *religion*, in the true sense of the word. And when I add, that the Holy Bible is always open in our lodges during the whole time of *every* meeting, that *every* ceremony is begun and ended with “solemn prayer,” and that piety, loyalty, and brotherly love, prevail amongst us, I think we may safely say, in the words of our text, that when we make a man a Freemason, we “build an house to the name of the Lord our God, to dedicate it to Him,” and that if the Mason himself, tries, prayerfully, to carry out the principles which Masonry teaches him, he *must* become, that which our ritual tells him he *ought* to be; “so that when a man is said to be a *Mason*, the world may know that he is one to whom the burdened heart may pour forth its sorrows and find consolation; to whom the distressed may prefer his suit and find relief; that he is one whose hand is guided by justice, and whose heart is expanded by benevolence.” It is to preside over that portion of such an Order as this, which *existing*, as it *does*, and *flourishing*, as it *does*, in every quarter of the globe, has its *special local* residence, or as we Masons call it, its “Provincial Grand Lodge,” in Worcestershire, that a distinguished and popular brother, well-known to most of you, has been appointed by our Grand Master, H.R.H. The Prince of

Wales ; and he has been installed into that office by the Deputy Grand Master of England, Lord Skelmersdale, to-day, and we are now met together to celebrate, and rejoice over, his appointment. My brethren, this is neither the time nor the place, for me to dilate either upon *his* merits or upon those of his excellent and revered predecessor, Mr. Royds, the reason for whose retirement from that office we all, I am sure, *most deeply* regret ; so I will now simply content myself with saying, that the present Provincial Grand Master is indeed the *worthy successor*, of a *worthy Mason*, and a *worthy man*. May he and those with whom he will be associated in the government of this Province, endeavour always to do their duty, *in all things* faithfully and well ; and may we, brethren, *all*, whether we be Masons, or non-Masons, pray constantly for God's grace and holy Spirit, to enable us so to do our work in life, *whatever* it may be, that we may gain the applause of our brethren, the approval of our own consciences, and the commendation of our God ! Above all, let us remember that the Almighty alone, whom we Masons call by the name of "the great architect of the universe," can enable us to discharge our duties faithfully, and that if we *daily* seek His help, we shall be blessed by Him, and made what *He would have* us be, for our Redeemer's sake. So mote it be !





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