

December 27, 1865

Hayden, Lewis

*Caste Among Masons: Address before Prince Hall
Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the
State of Massachusetts, at the Festival of St. John the Evangelist
Boston Athenaeum – Pamphlet Collection*

ADDRESS.

THE dial of time reminds us that it is high meridian. Each oscillation of yonder pendulum warns us that we should make haste, not only to discharge the duties which are before us, but also to be ready always to obey with willing hearts and hands such new truths, as the Supreme Architect of the Universe makes known to the earnest seeker after the truth and right. So that in this, the vineyard of our Lord and Master, no idler ought to be found. For who among us can understand the mysteries of God, which are only revealed to him who conforms to that requirement laid down in the great light of Freemasonry, and always resting upon yonder pedestal, which is as follows: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Now let us look back upon our last Masonic year and see what has been done by us. Have we cause the widow's heart to leap with joy? Can we say, as one of old, Eyes were I to the blind! Or have we led the blind in ways they did not know: making darkness light before them, and crooked things straight? Or in what way has God shown that unto us he hath revealed any special light? What evidence have we of the fact? It is not enough to proclaim it by the mouth alone. For it is written: "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." Then turn to the law of love steaming from every page of that sacred volume, and let me ask, Do you love one another? For such love is the fulfilment of that law. If so, then, amen and amen. It was the spirit of love to God and man that caused you to send your greetings in establishing Lodges in the States of

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Virginia and South Carolina. And we have faith to believe that it will not cease, until its influence is felt throughout those regions, where, for the past two hundred years, nought has been heard but the groans of the outraged bondmen. God be thanked! The morning-light is breaking; and although the dark and damning curse of slavery is disappearing, yet its hissing may still be heard. This causes us truly to feel, when we look over these fields of labor, that the harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Who among you are able and willing to come over and help us in our noble and glorious undertaking, in lifting up the down-trodden of this our native land? Oh, for such another Most Worshipful Grand Master as our patron St. John the Evangelist, to occupy again the chair in this our time of great need! For it is his anniversary that we are here to commemorate. Me-thinks instead of hearing his voice from the Isle of Patmos, saying, Fear not! we should find him standing amid the Carolinians, crying with a loud voice to the one class, How long, oh Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell in these States of blood, robbery, crime, and wrong? And to the other,—who have thus been wronged and outraged,—that he might impart light and information, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” I could but think, when you sent me, your humble servant, to Virginia and the Carolinas, that the time would yet come when, and as fast as the principles of our Order were made known, we should have reason for rejoicing that it was in our power to lay the foundation-stones in those States. To speak more particularly of our labors in that

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direction, I will here name the Lodges. The Lodge at Richmond is called the "James River Lodge." Its master is Brother Peter Randolph. The one at Petersburg, named "The Pocahontas Lodge," has for its master Brother H. H. Eilbech. That at Charleston, S.C., has been duly warranted and constituted under the name of "Hayden Lodge, "No. 8." Its master is Brother Robert S. Lord.

I will now speak of the character of the people—their seeming hopes and prospects. I regret to say that at Richmond they did not present so hopeful an aspect, so intellectual nor so dignified a character, as I found among the people of Petersburg and Charleston; for while at Richmond there seemed to be jealousies and bickerings, so that in the words of the Scriptures, like Ishmael of old, their hands are against every man, and every man's hand against them;—at Petersburg they had already formed land associations, building companies, &c.; and they appeared to be united and harmonious, under the leadership of such men as Eilbech, Scott, Colston, and others. The large brick building in which the Lodge is held, a four story building, is owned by themselves; while, at Richmond, we obtained a room in which to form the Lodge with great difficulty. I found in Charleston, S. C., a still higher class of people, even, than at Petersburg, as regards general education, the mechanical arts, and all the elements which tend to make a first-class society. In proof of this, I have brought with me a list of applications for initiations to their Lodge, the signers of which will compare favorably with the members of any Masonic Lodge, either white or black, in the United States—whether we take into consideration proficiency in the mechanical arts, or social and mental endowments. Of the

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people of Charleston, whether in order or not, I am constrained to say, that the many acts of kindness and the generous hospitality received at their hands, during my sojourn among them, have made an impression upon my heart, which neither time nor changing fortune can ever efface. I regret to add, that in each of the places I visited, there is evidently a deep and unalterable purpose in the hearts of the old oppressors to blast, or at least to crush out, the rising hopes and dawning prospects of their late bondmen. I rejoice, on the other hand, to be able to say that there is among our people that unwavering trust in God, and that abiding faith in the justice of their cause, which enable them to look to the future, not only with hope and confidence, but with exultation, feeling that—

“Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers.”

This, let me be understood, is the feeling of our people in the cities. With the dwellers in the country, it is different. Away from the cities and the seaboard, the condition of the colored man is deplorable enough to-day. Lacking the intelligence and opportunities of the freemen in the city,—never having enjoyed the same advantages,—he is still almost completely at the mercy of his old master. If the latter treats him kindly, it is well; but if ill-used and oppressed, in nine cases out of ten he has no remedy. There is no power under heaven to which he can appeal for redress. The United-States army can do nothing for him, for it has gone. If an agent of the Freedmen’s Bureau happens along, no complaint can reach his ear till it has been forestalled by the story of the master and his interested attentions. The

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power of organized and concentrated effort, which may be available in the city, is denied to him. What then can he do? On what possible loop can he hang one solitary hope? God help him! for Andrew Johnson will not,—although he was to be our Moses to lead us to liberty and equality; instead of which, I fear he will prove to be the Pharaoh of our day. In this we ought not to be deceived; for it is plain that he who undertakes to be the friend of the black man in this land of negro haters, will not have the negro haters all over the country singing praises to him, as you see they are now doing to our said Moses; so much so, that the astonished people stand off amazed, and know not what to do or to say. First they look at him; then at Gettysburg; then at Pittsburg Landing; then at Milliken's Bend; then at Andersonville; and then at a murdered President. With all these things before them, and ere they have had time for reflection, they are startled by the perpetration of some new act of high-handed infidelity, which well serves his purpose to hide some former wrong. As an evidence of some of his new acts of infidelity, they beheld him, within three days after the murder of our ever-to-be-lamented President, Abraham Lincoln, standing up before God, and in the presence of an outraged nation, solemnly declaring that he would make treason a crime, and punish the traitor. Has he done either? No. Then, what has he done? you ask. My answer is, that he has done much to make treason a virtue, by elevating traitors to offices of honor and trust,—to be paid for their services in such offices by the taxing of the widows and orphans, whose fathers and husbands their own hands have slain. By these acts he has honored and given new license to trai-

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tors to perpetrate outrages and crimes. Humanity revolts and refuses to believe that man, made in the image of God, could so debase and belie his nature as to be guilty of such wrong against his fellow-man. But did they not murder their slaves with impunity while they had a moneyed interest in them? If so, will they not slaughter the freedmen in whom they have no such interest, with such an one at the head of the nation fostering and honoring traitors? Were it not that we are forbidden to speak against those in authority, I should say, the Lord rebuke thee and deliver us from such a Moses.

"Blessed are the clamorous and contentious crew,
To them eternal rest and peace are due.
Blessed all who hunger and who thirst to find
A chance to plunder and to cheat mankind;
Such die in peace; for God to them has given
To be unjust on earth, and go to heaven.
Blessed is the wretch whose bowels never move
With generous pity or with tender love;
He shall find mercy from the God above."

Now let us ask why it is that we rejoice at having established Lodges in the Southern States among our people? Of what advantage will it be to them, and at this particular time? To answer this aright would take more time than the present occasion will permit. Let me call your attention to a few facts.

It cannot be denied that in the emerging of nations or people from a state of oppression, more especially when the oppressor is allowed to prey upon them, there must be jealousies and want of confidence in each other, which can only be removed by associations of the strongest possible ties known among men. And as there are none known to men whose obligations and duties are so sacred or more holy than ours, we feel that when they have taken upon

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themselves such obligations, and as they progress in the lessons therein taught, confidence is restored, and each can trust the other with safety; and, in place of confusion, discord, and ruin, each heart is filled with those truly Masonic virtues, "brotherly love, relief, and truth."

Now for the wisdom of our movement in the establishment of Lodges in the South: The God of our fathers has answered this, in that, as we are informed by the Rev. Dr. Oliver, He permitted the children of Israel to remain in Egyptian bondage for many long years, to acquire a knowledge of the mysteries of Masonry, before being permitted to make their exit to the land of promise; and that as soon as the necessary improvements were acquired, they left their yoke of slavery to improve and practise its mysteries. If God himself had the Egyptian bondmen thus enlightened, who shall say that the same knowledge ought not to be conferred upon American freemen, or question the wisdom for so doing?

We ask these questions knowing that there are those who question both the right and the wisdom of this proceeding. They are of that class, and that class only, of Masons who believe in the doctrine that none but such as are *freeborn* can or ought to receive the benefits of our Order. Why and how should it be so? Were the children of Israel free when in Egyptian bondage? Or has the Almighty changed, and in the change given to the Masons of these days a right to become, as they have been, the apologists and supporters of human slavery? His love and kindness change not. We believe it to be true, that of one blood he has created all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth. And Masonry teaches this as a lesson;

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for upon its gateway is written these words: "Masonry regards no man for his worldly wealth or honors." Therefore, it is the internal, and not the external qualifications of a man that secure to him the benefits of the Order. But we find the contrary to be the practice of the Masons on this continent. Indeed, my brethren, the Grand Lodge of England, also, for many years followed the same rule, and maintained the word *freeborn* in her Constitutions—as is now the universal law of the white Lodges of America. The Grand Lodge of England contained this provision until the year 1847—in which year it was altered so as to read *freemen* instead of the word *freeborn*. And for what reason did our English brethren who composed the mother Grand Lodge promulgate and practise this error? I know not, except upon the principle that England maintained negro slavery in the West India Islands, and that for this reason alone she continued to observe the established rule. It cannot be said of them that they were ignorant of the language contained in the Constitutions known as the new book of the Constitutions, by James Anderson, printed in 1738, on page 144 of which book are found these words: "The men made Masons must be freeborn (or no bondman)." There is something a little strange about the above citations. We have had the word *freeborn* for a landmark; and, at the same time, the other words which opened the doors of our Lodges to the good and true men of all colors wholly suppressed—that is, the words "*or no bondman*," the meaning of which can only be that the applicant or candidate should be, at the time of applying and when received, be a freeman.

There may be other reasons, which have not hitherto been

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It cannot be denied that slavery had already been introduced into America, and that, too, by English traders, who, to a greater or less degree, had insinuated themselves into the Church. Not only had they done this, but they had called to their support the masses. The evidence appears more vivid, in the fact that the bishops and cardinals were called upon to decide the solemn question, whether or not the negro was entitled to the Christian’s baptism. Notwithstanding they decided in the affirmative, the Masonic fraternity saw slavery safely housed in the Church. Attack it they could not, without at the same time engaging the Church; for they knew then, as well as they do now, what is meant, or what is embodied in the all-important words a Mason makes use of, when he says, *my brother, a Mason*. They, foreseeing the storm which would arise should they adhere to the words “*or no bondman*” (which would have admitted the colored man), hid themselves therefrom, and resolved that neither politics nor religion should ever enter their walls: thus shutting their doors against the cry of the oppressed.

But in the abolishment of slavery by the Parliament of Great Britain, we now behold the sun in the East arising in all her beauty and glory, and without a cloud intervening between her and God’s children. Yes, all is clear in the East. Look, and behold the Grand Lodge of England, the Grand Lodge of Ireland, the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the Grand Orient of France, the Grand Lodge of Hamburg, the Grand Lodge of Berlin, and the Grand Lodge of Frankfort-on-the-Main!—all, all of them admit and ac-

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knowledge a man for his *virtues* and not for his *color*. The last-named of these Lodges has not only adopted this as a rule, but has made friendly manifestations, which, in our present condition, causes us to feel that she has proved herself to be a friend indeed.

And now leave the questioning of the wisdom and the right of conferring the benefits of Freemasonry upon the *colored free American* to such of our white brethren as dispute these points,—for there are such. I allude to that class who are believers in that sickening and false statement, that none but such as are *freeborn* should or could receive the benefits of our Order. These men, defeated and driven from their original position against those of *free birth*, turn upon us and ask, with an air of triumph, what right we, being *colored* (that is, even if we are *freeborn*), have to the name of Mason. They say, do you not know that we, as *white* men, claim all the Masonic rights and authority on this continent? Yes, it is true, you do so claim; but we say you have forfeited your right to such claim, in the fact that you have made *color* a disqualification for the admission into you Lodges. And the moment you did this, in the eye of God and all just and true Masons, you forfeited your right to exist as a Masonic body; and you have so enacted as to effect this exclusion. The world should know it; and you ought to retract, so as not to appear before the world as the worst, as well as the meanest of infidels, who, while professing a belief in God with your lips, do, by solemn resolution enacted, disregard his commands. This you have done; and in proof thereof, I will now proceed to call your attention to some facts which may be found in Chase's Masonic Digest. He says (page 211): "It is established as a general rule in

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the United States that persons of negro blood should not be made Masons, even though they have been born free."

And Morris, who is acknowledged as one of the first Masonic authorities in this country, says that "a negro or mulatto applying for admission as a visitor may be examined if he hails from a foreign jurisdiction; but he must not if made in an American Lodge." And King, speaking for the great State of New York, and not without authority, says: "We are entirely averse to the principles of initiating or admitting persons of color who were made Masons in this country."

The Grand Lodge of Illinois has gone so far as to pass a resolution on this subject; which they did in the year of Grace A.L. 5851. And now give ear, O ye lovers of God and man, that you may hear and know how anxious this Lodge is to dispense light and knowledge to God's poor children. The resolve is as follows:—

"Resolved, That all subordinate Lodges under this jurisdiction be instructed to admit no negro or mulatto as visitor or otherwise, under any circumstances whatever."

Now let us draw the contrast and compare this resolution, as well as the sayings, doings, and practice, and what is declared to be the governing principles of the fraternity in this country, with those true Masonic principles which have come down from all time and ages.

"By the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family—the high and low, rich and poor; who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support, and protect each other. On this principle Masonry unites men of every country, sect, and opinion, and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise remain at a perpetual distance."

Now, how does their course of action comport with the principles of Freemasonry as here cited? Brethren and friends, we call for your verdict as honest men. Your

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answer must be, that Freemasonry is one thing and their action another. For, while they have proved themselves to be unjust to the best interest of man by instituting a caste legislation, Freemasonry, on the other hand, regards the whole human species as one family. Now we ask, are they just or unjust? What say you? Your answer is, Not just, but monstrously unjust. Thus say you; so say I; and so say all good Masons.

Having gone thus far, we ask you to go one step farther and answer another question, which is this: Do they show by this course of action fidelity or infidelity to the principles of Freemasonry? Are they not infidels? Let us see if they are not. *Look at the position they occupy!* God says, "let there be light;" but our white brethren say there shall no light shine, either in the hearts, or on the pathway of four million of native-born Americans, for whom the Saviour of the world suffered and died. The decree of our white brethren falls upon us through no fault or crime of our own, but because through the accident of birth we are *black*.

And again it is said, "Ask, and it shall be given to you;" if you are not black, say our white brethren. And again, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." But they say to us, if you ask you shall *not* receive; and if you knock it shall *not* be opened unto you. Thus they hermetically seal the doors of their Lodges against us.

Then again, our Lord and Master on the mount of Olives said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Now we, the colored men of these United States, do hunger and thirst after light, which is the forerunner of righteousness. And this light we ask of you, white brother-

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Masons. Can you deny us? Having done so, we beg and pray you not to repeat these beautiful lines:—

"Who wears the Level, says that pride
Does not within his soul abide,
Nor foolish vanity;
That man has but a common doom,
And from his cradle to his tomb
One common destiny.
And he erects his edifice
By *this design, and this, and this!*"

Now, we ask; what have you to say? You cannot again say no; for if you should, we will then ask, what right have *you* to the name of Masons, or to ask any one to regard you as such—you who have ignored all the fundamental principles upon which the true Freemason stands?

These things which I have brought up against you are simple truths. As such, and without bitterness, I have told them.

But, my brethren, as we are governed by *charity*, let us throw its mantle over the faults of our white brethren, and in our prayers say, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Thus let us continue until they shall cease to practise their wrong, which in the good time coming they will do. We shall all be united, and then,—

"When, free from envy, scorn, and pride,
Our wishes all above,
Each can his brother's failings hide,
And show a brother's love!
Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above;
And he's an heir of Heaven that finds
His bosom glow with love."

"God gives short horns to the mischievous ox." Providence so curtails the means of the malicious as to make them fall short of their ends.

Notwithstanding Chase, and Morris, and King of New

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York, and the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire, and I might also make mention of those of Ohio and Louisiana, have appeared against us, there is not one line which commits the mother Grand Lodge of the United States,— which I consider the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts to be,— or in which she in any way sanctions or countenances the course of these other Lodges. God be thanked that their horns were made short, and that she stands to-day with nothing to retract in this respect! And until she shall sanction their course of action by open legislation, they must fall short of their mischievous intent. Then let us, as colored men and Masons, say, "God bless the Old Bay State!" for it will not be long before we shall hear them say:—

"Let there be light within!
Then darkness, woe, and sin,
Your night is riven:
Then in pale sorrow's eye,
The starting tear shall dry!
O speed it, Heaven."

We have claimed that we are entitled to exist as a Masonic body, and to confer the several degrees upon all applicants whom we have found worthy, without regard to color or race; which course we have followed. I shall soon show you upon what we ground our claim.

Did the Grand Lodge of England ever hold and exercise Masonic jurisdiction over the continent of America? The Masonic history of those days answers, Yes. Well, then, in the exercise of that authority they saw fit to initiate, pass, and raise Masons. And this they did in Army Lodges. Among the number so initiated, passed, and raised, were General George Washington, Prince Hall, Thomas Sanderson, Boston Smith, and many others. Hall, Sanderson, Smith, and their associates petitioned the Grand Lodge of

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England for a warrant of constitution, which was duly granted to them and their successors forever; thereby making them a regular and duly constituted Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons; and in the box in my hand, where it is kept the better to preserve it from decay, is that warrant.

There has been a great deal said on the subject of the reception of this Charter, and some even have doubted its existence, although it has, ever since it was brought to this country, been in our possession.

Through the kindness of one of the past officers of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, the following document, copied from the "Columbian Centinel," printed in Boston, has been placed in my hands.

"AFRICAN LODGE."

"By Captain Scott, from London, came the Charter, &c., which his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, and the Grand Lodge of Great Britain, have been graciously pleased to grant to the African Lodge in Boston. As the brethren have a desire to acknowledge all favors shown them, they in this public manner return particular thanks to a certain member of the fraternity, who offered the so generous reward in this paper, some time since, for the Charter, supposed to be lost; and to assure him, though they doubt of his real friendship, that he has made them many good friends.

"BOSTON, April 30, 1787."

"PRINCE HALL.

And, indeed, we have further evidence, for we were not entirely disregarded by the historians of that day. I will present you a piece of history, which, should there remain any doubt in regard to the existence of the unhallowed feeling of prejudice against color, would seem to be sufficient proof that it is not of recent origin. This is not only proven by Prince Hall's language, but by that of the whites themselves.

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“Does harmony in general prevail between the black and white citizens? Do they associate freely together? or is a pre-eminence claimed by the one, and either avowedly or tacitly admitted by the other?”

“I am not sensible of any want of harmony in general between persons of different colors, merely on account of that difference. People of loose and debauched characters, and ungovernable passions, especially when they meet at bad houses, fall into disagreements and quarrels; but these are not much known abroad, unless brought by complaint before magistrates.

“The blacks are frequently employed by the whites as servants or laborers; and receive the same wages and treatment as other persons of the same standing.

“Perhaps it may be more agreeable to transcribe what was given me in answer to this query by the aforesaid Prince Hall. ‘Harmony in general,’ says he, ‘prevails between us as citizens, for the good law of the land does oblige every one to live peaceably with all his fellow-citizens, let them be black or white. We stand on a level, therefore no pre-eminence can be claimed on either side. As to our associating, there is here a great number of worthy good men and good citizens, who are not ashamed to take an African by the hand; but yet there are to be seen the weeds of pride, envy, tyranny, and scorn, in this garden of peace, liberty, and equality.’

“Having once and again mentioned this person, I must inform you that he is Grand Master of a Lodge of Freemasons, composed wholly of blacks, and distinguished by the name of the ‘African Lodge.’ It was begun in 1775, while this town was garrisoned by British troops; some of whom held a Lodge, and initiated a number of negroes. After the peace, they sent to England, and procured a Charter under the authority of the Duke

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of Cumberland, and signed by the late Earl of Effingham.

The Lodge at present consists of thirty persons; and care is taken that none but those of a good moral character are admitted.

"I shall add the following, written by a white gentleman of the craft of good information and candor:—

"The African Lodge, though possessing a Charter from England, meet by themselves; and white Masons not more skilled in geometry, will not acknowledge them. The reason given is, that the blacks were *made* clandestinely in the first place, which, if known, would have prevented them from receiving a Charter. But this inquiry would not have been made about white Lodges, many of which have not conformed to the rules of Masonry. The truth is, they are *ashamed* of being on *equality* with blacks. Even the fraternal kiss of France, given to merit without distinction of color, doth not influence Massachusetts Masons to give an embrace less emphatical to their black brethren. These, on the other hand, valuing themselves on their knowledge of the craft, think themselves better Masons in other respects than the whites, because Masonry considers all men *equal* who are *free*; and our laws admit no kind of slavery. It is evident from this that neither avowedly nor tacitly do the blacks admit the pre-eminence of the whites; but it is as evident that a pre-eminence is claimed by the whites."*"

The foregoing extract is the testimony of an honest brother; yet you see whence comes the old charge of "clandestine" as applied to us. Let us examine the truth contained in

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This conclusion is supported by all competent Masonic authority. No question could be raised in regard to the right that the Grand Lodge of England then had to exercise Masonic authority over the Colonies, for they (that is Prince Hall, and Boston Smith, and their associates) were made Masons in 1775, and dispensed the same year, and under that dispensation they continued to work until they received their warrant.

The application for this warrant was made prior to the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, which was not established until 1783, so that our application was made to the Grand Lodge of England before the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, although we did not receive the warrant until after the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts had been established.

Allow me, brethren, in this connection, to occupy your time in making an extract from an address delivered before the Grand Lodge, June 30, 1858, by P. G. M. John V.

De Grasse:—

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"In the year 1775, while still under the yoke of British oppression, when every man, woman, aye, and even children in Massachusetts were preparing for open resistance with the British forces,—in the midst of all this tumult and confusion, this heart-felt anxiety,—alone, and at night, might have been seen wending his way to the quarters of General Gage, a colored man, who, placing his trust in God, feared no danger even in the camp of the enemy and in the silent hour of night. He knocked, and the doors of Masonry were opened unto him, and his eyes beheld the form and beauty of our Lodge. That young man you will readily recognize as Prince Hall; he there, in that British travelling Lodge, ere the first blood of the Revolution flowed upon the tender grass on the green at Lexington, received the light of Masonry, and was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason,—the first to my knowledge who was ever initiated in the Order in the United States of African descent. One year later, according to a statement which I have in his own handwriting, in company with Thomas Sanderson, Boston Smith, and others, at the very time when Washington unfurled for the first time the Union flag over the camp at Cambridge, he organized and opened, under a dispensation granted by this British travelling Lodge, the first Lodge of Masons composed of colored men in America.

"Not content, however, with the limited powers of the dispensation which he had received,—ambitious to have his Lodge enjoy the fullest rights and powers of other Masonic bodies in the country,—and as the welfare of the craft, its expansion and its perpetuity, was his constant care, and upon which he lavished every energy,—he, with his associates, petitioned the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for a charter. Our beloved Brother, P. G. Master John T. Hilton, who for many years filled with honor and great satisfaction to the craft the chair of Prince Hall, in an address delivered to this Grand Lodge thirty years ago to-day, says,

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‘Although the petition appeared in proper form, it was rejected; the cause of which sprang from that difference which color has established. But this refusal, I can with pleasure state, did not dishearten them from their laudable purpose, but rather served as a stimulant to make further trial. And here let us, brethren, indulge in the pleasing reflection, that the founders and patrons of our beloved institution, after being thus denied the means of establishing the object nearest their hearts, and upon consultation on the subject, exclaimed, with all that enthusiasm and vigor of thought so peculiar to them, “This shall never discourage us, nor move us from our purpose we have undertaken; and we will accomplish our design. We will petition to foreigners for what is denied us at home.”’

“Brother Hilton has told you right; the iron will of Prince Hall, Boston Smith, and Thomas Sanderson would not yield to what men of less firmness of purpose would have abandoned and deemed further attempts useless. They determined to accomplish what they had resolved; they knew, brethren, that prejudice of color, wealth, nor religion could debar them from any of the honors or privileges of our Order. Therefore, Prince Hall addressed the Grand Lodge of England, humbly praying for a warrant of constitution. In his letter to Brother Moody at London, whom he empowered to present his petition, he states that he had been importuned to send to France for a warrant; but he says, ‘We thought it best to send to the fountain from whence we received our first light for a warrant, who we hope will not deny us, nor treat us beneath the rest of our fellow-men, though poor, yet sincere brethren of the craft.’ My brethren, you know the success he met with; you enjoy its benefits to-day; and our warrant was granted, signed, and sealed with the seal of the Grand Lodge of England on the seventeenth day of September,

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1784. There was no delay, no hesitation, no scruples in that honorable body—over which presided Lord Howard, the Earl of Effingham, and Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland—in granting to their dark-skinned brethren in a distant land the fullest Masonic rights and privileges which were in their power to bestow. To them the landmarks set by their fathers were sacred, and held inviolable; and so they remain to the present day. It embraces the tawny African as well as the fairer Saxon; it welcomes within its fraternal folds the sons of every clime and country; no religious creeds or political difference there separates us; the Hebrew and the Christian, the subject and the citizen kneel at the same altar, receive the same light; we are all upon the level: the king and the peasant, the master and the servant. Yes, brethren, throughout the world we are one true, undivided band of brothers—*except in this country*; here upon our own native soil there is a difference,—a difference founded alone upon prejudice of color, caused by the ‘peculiar institution’ which corrupts our whole country, threatening at times to destroy our government; but the cloud that darkens our Masonic horizon will soon pass away; prejudice of color and slavery will soon be no more; and, like our mother-Lodge of England, we will worship the Supreme Architect of the Universe at one altar, knowing no clime, color, or condition.

“Although, brethren, our charter was granted in London, September 17, 1784, we did not receive it until April 29, 1787, through the neglect and almost culpable carelessness of Brother Gregory, who did not take it from the office of the Grand Secretary, where it had remained over two years. It caused Prince Hall so much anxiety, that he feared it was lost; and when ascertaining it was in the possession of the Grand Lodge, he intrusted the important mission to Captain Scott, to pay for and

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"Captain Scott was true to his trust; and on the 29th of April, the Charter and a beautiful bound book of the Constitutions were delivered to Prince Hall. Great was the rejoicing that day, breather; fearful anxieties were no more; we stood erect and proud, and on the same level with any Lodge in the world; none, then, could deny our legality; and none will, with a knowledge of those facts, deny it to-day. The day of our enrolment in the list of Lodges of the Grand Lodge of England was to us, as Masons, as great an event as the Declaration of Independence was to the people of the United States.

"Although firmly established, the energies of Prince Hall were not relaxed; his interest for the craft under his care was unabated. The Lodge continued to meet at the "Golden Fleece" in Water Street. He was in constant attendance, taking every opportunity to inculcate to its members the importance of our cardinal virtues, temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice, as well as the fundamental principles, brotherly love, friendship, and truth."

That we have secured these rights no honest man will attempt to deny. The time may have been, during the continuance of negro slavery in the West India Islands and in several States of the United States, when they together may have agreed to obliterate and destroy our existence as a Masonic body. Yet we adopt the language of the Psalmist, "when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord shall take me up"; and unto us in our preservation he has been both. Not only has he been merciful in thus preserving us through many years of horrible suffering; we discover that the rod—like that of Aaron safely deposited in

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the ark of his chosen covenant—has budded, and is now blossoming as the rose. Behold the new buds! Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and all the States lately in rebellion are now spread out before us as an evidence of God's purpose of thus preserving our order. Unto Him, therefore, let our hearts, with humble gratitude, offer praise; "for his mercy endureth forever."

Now we trust that the fact of the presentation of the warrant to you, as well as the documents just read, fully demonstrate that this our warrant was regularly granted by the Grand Lodge of England to Prince Hall and his associates and successors for all time. The only question to be considered is this: After receiving this warrant, did they meet and organize themselves into a Lodge? and if so, where did the Lodge assemble for their first meeting? We find recorded in the Lodge books that they met at the "Golden Fleece," Water Street, Boston; but after a few years they removed to Kilby Street, then to Congress Street, where they continued to meet for years. Not only are these facts contained in our Lodge books, but the founders of our Lodge, Prince Hall and his associates, were not willing that they, alone, should know it, and proclaimed it to the world. And as proof of the fact I would refer you to the "Massachusetts Register," from 1793 up to about 1826, when arose the trouble from the supposed kidnapping of the renegade Morgan, formerly of Virginia, for violating his obligations as a Mason. My brethren, there is one fact of which we may be proud; and that is, while the white men who have been made Masons have openly betrayed their trust, both on this and the continent of Europe, and committed open perjury, and blasted

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their souls before God and man by publishing all they had sworn not to reveal of the unwritten mysteries of Masonry,—that is, as much as they dared to make known,—it yet remains for a colored Mason to be guilty of that perfidy. God be thanked for it! To my mind it affords no little satisfaction to know, that while we have had to bear persecution, especially heaped upon us in consequence of the color of our skin, we claim that it is the badge of honor to us as colored Masons that never has been disgraced.

On the other hand, let us mention some of the pretended expositions of Freemasonry that have emanated from white member of the Order: "The Dissector," by Prichard; "Jachin and Boaz," by Goodall; "The Master Key," by Brown; "Freemasonry Stripped Naked," by Warren; the spurious "Lectures" of Finch; and a multitude of others with mystical titles, such as "Hiram," "Shibboleth," "The Adept," "The Three Knocks," "The Veil Withdrawn," &c., not to mention the more recent attempts of Carlisle and Claret, and we might further add the works of Morgan, Alleyn, Bernard, and Richardson.

After reading the names of these several books, we feel our hearts glow with an honest pride that none of them emanated from colored men.

In this place permit me to say one word in regard to a peculiar impression which has been resting heavily upon my mind, in consequence of the numbers flocking to the doors of white Lodges and their being too readily admitted without a true regard to character,—that we are upon the eve of the emanation of some new act of infamy from the old source. May God so command it that this will prove to be a false prophecy.

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Time, the great regulator of events, is producing her revolutions in Masonry as in all things else; so that in the lapse of a few years we find not only Freemasonry in Massachusetts, but we find it springing up in Rhode Island, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and in other parts of the country. But, sad to relate, dissensions crept in among these several Lodges. This fact was keenly felt throughout the country; and each was inquiring of the other how harmony and concord could again be restored. In this state of affairs no Lodge in the United States felt the necessity more than did ours. By a vote of our Lodge a convention was called to meet at Boston. The facts, however, have been so well stated by another, namely, Brother Joshua Woodland, that I will give you his statement instead of my own. Hey says: "Wherefore in the year 1847, Brother John T. Hilton, R. W. Grand Master of the Mother Grand Lodge of the city of Boston, State of Massachusetts, seeing the clandestine manner in which some of the Lodges were working, proposed to the Grand Lodge that the several Grand Lodges of color in the United States be summoned to assemble in general grand convention on the ensuing St. John's Day, the 24th of June, and then and there form a grand bond of union under a national head. The object of this call for the establishment of a National Grand Lodge was to cement in one harmonious whole all the discordant elements; so that no rivalry or jealousy could possibly exist."

This convention did assemble and formed the M. W. N. Grand Lodge for the United States of North America; and to-day she claims and exercises Masonic authority over these United States; thereby preserving unity and harmony among the craft generally. So that we, the colored Masons on this

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Thus safely housed within its walls, we, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, claim to be governed by a sincere desire to spread abroad light and knowledge. It is therefore a pride to us to know that we form a part of this national Masonic compact, all working together in peace, love and unity. And we feel assured that the blessings promised to the true and faithful will at last crown our united efforts. Then shall we all join in anthems of praise to the God of mercy that we did receive the old warrant 459, and that its blessings should thus be secured to a down-trodden and oppressed people, elevating them, and enlightening their hitherto beclouded path, hastening the day when man to man shall brother be, and none shall stand between him and his God.

Thus you see that the trouble has been *slavery and prejudice against color*. And I now say that slavery having been abolished, and the Church being freed from its blighting influence (there being no longer any slaves to buy and sell as there have been in the past), we may have hope for our Masonic brethren. As Masons, they have never been guilty of the wrongs which the Church has committed. Churches in their associate capacity have bought and sold their own members; but never yet has a Lodge of Freemasons bought or sold a member; never yet has a Mason so treated a brother. It is in view of these facts that I say we have ground for hope.

“A Mason puts on white apparel which bespeaks purity.”
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My brethren, the reasons that prompted me to say what I have upon this subject are, that in old Massachusetts, to-day, the schools, the churches, the ballot-box, the jury-box, the courts of justice are all open to us: and the graveyards are also open to receive our remains after death.

Thus it would seem as if the people of Massachusetts were determined to keep step with the advancing civilization of this enlightened Christian age. They and their institutions are marching on and upwards, leaving nothing in the past to look back upon with sadness and shame. But the *Masons* of Massachusetts, the white Masons I mean, have not yet caught the spirit of the age; they are still exclusive, intolerant, and proscriptive. How long, oh ye servitors of caste! how long shall this be? We await your answer with hopeful hearts.

Then again of you, oh Christian, we ask, why should you question us? Perhaps you will say, "we have no objection to societies as such, but you Masons will not unfold your mysteries to the world." To this, I say, that our laws, rules, and regulations are spread out before us and all mankind; so that he who will may read; and having read, what do you find? Your answer must be, that all the principles upon which we build are drawn from the Holy Bible; that is, in fact, the foundation upon which we rest. This being true, can there be any better principles? or where can you find a more solid foundation upon which to build? Yes: it is upon this rock we stand, with "self-approving conscience," awaiting the summons of the Grand Master to

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call us from the Lodge of persecution and trials to the Grand Lodge above, where you and I—if true to the principles laid down in the Holy Bible, which you claim as your guide, and we as our great light—will at last arrive.

Still, the Christian inquirer may not be satisfied with the above answer, and may say that none are admitted into the kingdom of heaven but such as suffer persecution for righteousness' sake. This assertion would imply a forgetfulness, that in the persecutions and sufferings of the early Christians, our brothers, as a fraternity, bore a part. As an evidence of this, we will call their attention to our two Ancient Grand Masters, St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Did they not suffer for righteousness sake? And when the Christians made their pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre in the days of the Crusaders, did not Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey Aldemar and their associates as a Masonic body suffer martyrdom and death in defence of the Christian religion, and were not their widows made destitute by the ravages of infidel wars? History is abundant and conclusive on this point. Let me quote:—

“The Turks assembled a great force and drove the whole of the Christians out of Palestine. The last fortress of which they retained possession, that of St. John D’Acre, was long and bravely defended by the Knights Templars. The Turks at length compelled three hundred Knights, being all that remained of the garrison, to take refuge in a strong tower, to which also the women fled for safety. The Turks immediately commenced undermining it, which they in a short time so effectually accomplished, that the Knights saw that in case they any longer resisted they must all inevitably perish. They therefore capitulated, stipulating, among other things, that the honor of the

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women should not be violated. Upon this, the tower being opened, the Turks marched in; but, in total breach of the terms of capitulation, they immediately began to offer violence to the women. The enraged Knights instantly drew their swords, hewed in pieces all the Turks who had entered, shut the gates against those who remained without, and resigned themselves to inevitable death, which they soon met, the undermined tower falling upon their heads."

We now call your attention to the sufferings of Masons of a later date.

Who that has read history, and particularly English history, does not recollect that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth she commanded her officers of justice to suppress the Masonic bodies within her realm, without cause of complaint or reasons given. Did she succeed? She did not. Did the king suppress the prayer of Daniel? Nay, not he! for God never allowed his purposes to be defeated through the feeble hand of man.

But although this persecution failed, we are not yet triumphant. As them, the Romish Church, the Holy Mother Church, soon after commenced her reign of persecution, which continued from the year 1735, passing through the various countries of her power, in consequence of a bull issued by is Holiness the Pope. These persecutions were the most severe in the German States (Holland in particular), France, and Spain.

"In Spain, as late as 1829, was hanged Lieutenant Galvez; and another companion and brother in the bonds of the mystic tie was doomed to the galleys for life,—a more dreadful fate than death itself."

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Were we to review the various persecutions through which our brethren then passed, you would not sit patiently and hear the narrative. I therefore content myself by saying that their "flesh was lacerated; the rack was used; their bones were broken on the wheel and the guillotine;" and all the paraphernalia of torture known and used in the days of the Inquisition were brought into request.

If, then, you claim that fidelity to principle, and the love of God and man, made manifest in your long-suffering, patience, perseverance, and endurance, entitle you to the kingdom of heaven, in what does your claim differ from ours? I am fully persuaded that you can set up no claim upon any of the principles above stated, that is not equalled by ours. Then let us in the future agree to work together for the promotion of the principles which should characterize all lovers of truth and justice; that mankind may rejoice that Christianity and Freemasonry have united for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God upon earth, and that they may in the future bloom and blossom as the rose.

I may say, in passing, that it is not alone the men of low estate, who have found it necessary thus to associate and unite in this bond of union. Saying nothing of Solomon, St. John the Baptist, or St. John the Evangelist, or the kings and potentates of the earth, I shall allude simply to the great and wise men whose lives and histories are common to us all. Of these the following are the most prominent: Benjamin Franklin, the establisher of Freemasonry in Pennsylvania, and president of the first emancipation society in that State; Washington, known as the "father of his country," who was not willing to die until he had emancipated those he held in bondage; the Marquis Lafayette, his brother and coman-

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ion in arms, who, inspired by the spirit of humanity, cast in his lot with struggling America after her promulgation of the Declaration of Independence, and forsook her not until her righteous cause was triumphant; and who on his second visit said at Salem, Mass., that had he known, when he drew his sword for American liberty, he was fighting for a land of slaves, he would never have engaged in the cause. This was in keeping with his earlier life, as history proves; and, lastly, Wilberforce, the English emancipator. These were leading Masons; and such power had Wilberforce over the Grand Lodge of England, that he was enabled to cause it to commit itself by open acts of legislation, and sustain by its funds the policy he then advocated, being that of universal emancipation. Thus we find that the bond which so closely unites us will not only lead to the restoration of confidence and union, but to wisdom, strength, and beauty.

In the discussion of questions of so much importance to ourselves and mankind generally, it would seem strange and useless to undertake to notice all that may be said in opposition to any cause having for its object the ameliorating the condition of mankind. Although it may seem out of place in me to attempt to notice any thing that a certain class of minds may think, yet I cannot refrain from referring to one particular class of individuals who are perpetually crying out: “Your [as]sociation would be a good one if you Masons were not so intolerant and uncharitable; for you will not tolerate those whose opinions differ from your own; and for this reason, if for no other, we think your society injurious, and against the best interest of the community.” To such persons I would say, your charge, if true, is a grievous

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one, and worthy of our serious consideration; for it is nothing less than simply saying that we are fighting against the progress of improvement and the advance of mankind. This being the charge you make, we now call your attention to our defence.

That there may be no mistake, we will commence by citing our religious faith, which is simply a belief in the existence of God as the Governor and Ruler of the Universe, and an acknowledgment of our duty to obey him in all things. As for our political faith; it is to obey those who are in rightful authority, and also to obey the laws of the country in which we live.

We have for years been looking out for examples that we might rid ourselves of the last vestige of intolerance; for if you will read any of the Masonic manuals or monitors, you will there learn that one of the first lessons a Mason is required to learn is to be "a good man and true." We have been looking at the associations of men under different names, as they have risen up and passed away, to see if we could find among them any examples of toleration and charity that surpassed our own, and which we might follow.

We have looked out upon the political world, and what have we seen? The intolerance of men has led to the destruction of empires; and so uncharitable have they been in their mad zeal that they have beheaded their rulers; and even women have not been spared. We have turned sickened from the sight; and are now looking to those who claim to be the representatives of Him whose mission on earth was to establish peace and good will to men. In our search in this direction we feel assured that we have found one—him whose birth we this day commemorate and whom we claim

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to be our patron Saint. This favored companion of our Lord and Master said, "Children, love one another." We have reason to believe that he regarded this as the greatest commandment of all; for St. Jerome, in giving an account of his last days, which were spent at Ephesus, as Bishop of the Church and Grand Master of our Order says, that "when the infirmities of age made him unable to address the Church in a systematic discourse, he always desired to be conveyed to the assembly, and as often as he came addressed them thus, 'Children love one another'; and being asked why he always repeated this exhortation, he answered, 'because it is the precept of the Lord, and if this is fulfilled it is enough.'"

And so it is. How happy would it have been for us and the world if those who have claimed above all others to be his followers, had imbibed his spirit and copied his example. But what lessons of charity and toleration have we learned from these teachers? have they by precept and example shown us how to carry into every-day life that charity which is kind and worketh no ill to one's neighbor? Let us look first, if you please, at some of the examples set us by the so-called holy mother Church; for as she was the first in historical precedent she should so stand in the order of naming. And now what do we learn from her in the way of charity and toleration? To answer this it only requires to put you in mind of the history of that church, from Gregory the Great, to the denial of extreme unction to a Masonic brother at Cambridgeport, Mass., until he had disavowed and ignored his obligations to the Masonic fraternity.

But you will expect me to do nothing more than simply to allude to some of the most prominent acts, as recorded in history, of the barbarities committed by the mother Church in those years of her power and glory. It was then that she

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attempted to exterminate from the face of the earth all those who dared to believe independently of her dictation; and history records her ideas of toleration and charity at that period. Now witness her barbarities during the Inquisition, and the dark and damning deeds by her performed; those of torturing to death some of the greatest and best men that our Heavenly Father had ever in his mercy given to bless the human race. We will instance the names of a few:—

Wickliff, John Huss of Bohemia, Jerome of Prague, and Cranmer of England. The last of these bloody sacrifices to popery was made at the close of the reign of Queen Mary, about the year 1568. The names of the victims were John Corneford, John Hurst, Christopher Bann, Alice Snoth, and Catherine Tinley. During the reign of "Bloody Queen Mary" two hundred and eighty-eight persons were burned alive for the crime of heresy. Later, in 1572, was the St. Bartholomew Massacre at Paris. The Duke of Alva in the Netherlands boasted that in six weeks he had caused eighteen thousand persons to be put to death for the crime of Protestantism. Who does not remember John Bradford, John Rogers, Nicholas Riley, and Hugh Latimer, whose names are placed in the record of immortality?

After such an exhibition, it would seem that the spirits of fiends themselves might be satiated. But were those holy fathers and their followers satisfied? No, not they; for we have it on record that Pope Innocent VIII. in 1484 first pronounced death without mercy upon all who should be convicted of witchcraft r dealing with satan. Soon followed other bulls of horror by Popes Alexander VII. and Leo X. So terrible was the effect of the united action of the popes and their followers upon their several countries,

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that the historian of the day describes it as pandemonium let loose. And why should he not have so described it? for in one country alone, namely, Germany, their victims reached the enormous number of one hundred thousand.

It would be useless to follow them any further; but I may simply state that they have not entirely abandoned their dictation to mankind in matters of belief to-day.

We have reason to be thankful for Protestantism; for to its great idea of private judgment we are indebted for the civil and religious liberty enjoyed by the people of this land; an idea, too, which is operating to a greater or less extent upon the nations yet trampled down in other lands, where Catholicism still has rule. Indeed, my brethren, there is still another reason why we should cling to the idea of Protestantism. It is this; that, as fast as one form in which it has organized itself becomes despotic, we have the same principle protesting against it. So that, in the preservation of religious freedom, this principle has led to the establishment of sixty different denominations in the United States, the land of Protestantism; as though the people were determined to keep in view that text of Scripture, "let no man judge you as to new moons and sabbaths." But there is history to show that there was a necessity for this very principle on this continent, for the preservation of the rights of civil and religious liberty; as may be seen by reference to the early history of the Puritans of New England. Witness their scourging and hanging the Quakers; their imprisonment, scourging, and expulsion of the Baptists for opinion's sake; and also the terrible death which Giles Corey suffered on Boston Common. "He was extended on his back and weights piled upon his breast until life was

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wholly gone; and when the tongue of the poor sufferer had, in the extremity of his dying agony, protruded from his mouth, a by-stander thrust it back with his cane."

But Protestantism arises and cries out against these wrongs, and is triumphant. She puts on her panoply of truth, and as though red-hot from her crucibles, she dashes it against these wrongs. How quickly they pass away and are among things of the past, to be forgotten, except for the lessons they evolve; and then she stands looking out and watching to see if any new enemy should appear, and, to her surprise, she finds one more terrible than the rest—a serpent twining around her very vitals, endeavoring, anaconda-like, to crush out her very life. The name of this serpent is American slavery. She engages him. The fight is terrible and long. The number of the slain the recording angel of God alone can tell: the infamy can count its years by centuries. In its ravages in Africa to obtain its victims,—and after obtaining them, in their transportation hither in those floating-hells, the slave-ships,—what horrors were experienced! In their transportation, the mother, infant, and maiden, all shared the same fate, and were hurried by the power of the dragon into watery graves; or, if spared to reach these shores, then their lives were slowly tortured in the cotton-fields, sugar-plantations, and the rice-swamps.

But our hero has triumphed over the enemy; and this upon the banks of the very river on which the accursed and vilest enemy of God and man was introduced: the James River of Virginia. Truly—

"God works in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

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Now what is this Protestantism that we have been speaking about? It is no less than the embodiment of the spirit of God, made manifest in the light which he has shed upon men groping in the darkness of error and wrong. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Yes: the spirit of this protesting may be seen in the act of the building of Noah's ark; for it was then a protest against the sins of the people. Again it may be seen in the act of Moses leading our Masonic brethren from Egyptian *bondage* to Canaan their land of *liberty*; which was the first effectual protest against slavery. And it may be further seen in Lot's protest against the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah; and also in the command of our blessed Saviour to his apostles, to shake off the dust under their feet for a testimony against whoever should not receive, nor hear them. Since the day on which that command was given, Protestantism has been making war, as by his direction, against error, crime, and wrong, in whatever form or organization they have attempted to show themselves; whether it be under the name of politics or religion. And this will continue until wrong shall cease, and man shall see God in his neighbor.

Then, from God's altar of light let us draw our lessons of charity, and with humility of heart learn not only to tolerate our fellow-man's failings, but to pray for "forgiveness for our own trespasses, as we forgive those (of our neighbor and enemy) that trespass against us."

Is there any difference between the spirit evinced in the action of the Romish Church, as promulgated by her Popes in what is known as the Pope's bulls issued from time to time, and that edict enacted and promulgated by the Grand Lodge of Illinois in 1851, already alluded to, and said by

Now what is this Protestantism that we have been speaking about? It is no less than the embodiment of the spirit of God, made manifest in the light which he has shed upon men groping in the darkness of error and wrong. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

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attempted to show themselves; whether it be under the name of politics or religion. And this will continue until wrong shall cease, and man shall see God in his neighbor.

Then, from God's altar of light let us draw our lessons of charity, and with humility of heart learn not only to tolerate our fellow-man's failings, but to pray for "forgiveness for our own trespasses, as we forgive those (of our neighbor and enemy) that trespass against us."

Is there any difference between the spirit evinced in the action of the Romish Church, as promulgated by her Popes in what is known as the Pope's bulls issued from time to time, and that edict enacted and promulgated by the Grand Lodge of Illinois in 1851, already alluded to, and said by

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Chase (in his Digest, page 211) to be the governing rule of American Lodges? If there be any difference let us see what it is.

The Popes in the first place forbade their followers entering Masonic Lodges; assigning as a reason therefor, that such associations are detrimental to the growth and progress of to the denial of extreme unction to a Masonic the Church; which I take simply to mean, that the light therein reflected causes them to fear that their dupes may have their eyes opened and therefore become free. For they know full well that light and slavery are incompatible; and therefore their security is in the mental darkness of their followers.*

Then it is the slavery of the mind they seek to secure. Now how is it with our brothers of Illinois? They say a negro or mulatto shall not be admitted to their Lodges under any circumstances whatever. And why? They had to maintain not only the policy of perpetual darkness to the minds of men, as in the case of the Popes, but also another policy, that of enslaving the bodies of four millions of America's children.

You are aware that in 1850 the infamous Fugitive-Slave Law was enacted; and, shameful to record, immediately after the Grand Lodge of Illinois committed itself to the maintenance of slavery. And, indeed, who will say that they had not received, in anticipation, a bull from actual slave-holders, in such words as the following; "In the opinion of your Committee this Grand Lodge should cease all correspondence with any Grand Lodge authorizing in any way Masonic intercourse with negroes?" * Again we ask you to tell us the difference;

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* "The Pope and Freemasonry." See Appendix.

* Report of the Committee of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana.

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if any there be is it not in favor of the Catholics? *They* enslaved the *mind*, leaving the *body free*; the Grand Lodge of Illinois has, by its course of action, committed itself to the policy of the enslavement of both *mind and body*.

"Just God!—and these are they
Who minister at thine altar, God of right,
Men who their hands with prayer and blessing lay
On Israel's ark of light!"

This naturally rings us back again to the consideration of the word *freeborn*.

For the better understanding of all whom it may concern, I here state distinctly and plainly that we as a Grand Lodge have solemnly enacted, as a part of our Constitutions, the word "*freeman*" in lieu of the word "*freeborn*," claiming it to be as much a landmark as the word "*freeborn*" because on page 144 of Anderson's "Book of Constitutions," and on the same line, appear both expressions "*freeborn or no bondman*"; and this is acknowledged to be a book of landmarks. It being true that these two propositions are found to be landmarks, we reject the most prescriptive and adopt the most liberal, believing it to be the rule upon which all good men act, and which we ourselves have followed. I should not have alluded to this matter again were it not that a certain author of a "Masonic Jurisprudence," namely, John W. Simons, on page 16 of said book, produces an argument in which he attempts to prove, that to remove the word "*freeborn*" is as much an innovation, or removing a landmark, as it would be to set aside the one requiring a belief in God; and he reads a considerable lecture to the Grand Lodge of England for having, as he charges her, removed a landmark; for in 1847 this Lodge altered its Constitution so as to read "*freeman*" in place of the word "*freeborn*";

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and I here quote from Rev. Dr. Olivers' "Institutes of Masonic Jurisprudence," in relation to this last-named fact.

"A *freeman*,—According to the customs and regulations of our ancient brethren, every candidate was formerly required to be 'a freeman, born of a freewoman.' This formula was originally considered to be an unchangeable landmark; but on the extinction of negro slavery by the British Parliament, the following arguments were used at a Grand Lodge, holden Sept. 1, 1847, in favor of its alteration. The Grand Master requested the brethren to consider the propriety of remodelling the form by which a candidate for initiation declares himself to be *freeborn*. 'There are,' he said, 'at the present moment, many men in Jamaica and other places who are free by the law of emancipation; and yet their mothers have been slaves, they cannot conscientiously sign such a declaration, knowing it to be untrue; and in the absence of that preliminary act, we cannot initiate them. I should be glad to see it altered, and therefore move that in future we substitute the words *free agent* for *freeborn*, and the declaration be thus revised.' After a friendly conversation, which lasted some time, it was unanimously resolved, that the phrase in future should be 'freeman,' and that the words 'free by birth' should be cancelled."

It is therefore this change which causes Mr. John W. Simons, of New York, to raise his voice in horror against the Grand Lodge of England. Now we put this question: Did he, or did he not, know of the existence of the words "or no bondman"? If he confesses to have had a knowledge of said clause, then I charge him with knowingly perverting the truth; and if he says he did not know of it, then I pronounce him incompetent to read lessons of instruction to the Grand Lodge of England; and I question his capability of giving wholesome and profitable instruction to the craft of the United

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What are these circumstances? Eighty-nine years ago this nation, through its representatives, declared to the world its political faith, that "all men are created free and equal, and are endowed with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." And Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Warren, Franklin, Lafayette, Kosciusko, and Washington commenced in their day to make this *idea* a living principle in the American system. Even while he was penning these lines the blood of America's children, both black and white, was being poured out like water upon the battle-fields, to make this immortal Declaration of human rights the real and everlasting foundation upon which this beautiful government of ours should rest. Now think of an *American Mason* solemnly declaring in one breath that we are to regard the whole human species as one family, and in the next making war upon an *aristocratic* Lodge,—if I may properly employ that term,—the Grand Lodge of England, for embodying into its system the democratic and American idea, that all men are born

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I can but feel that the time is not far distant, when so many as shall follow the counsel given by Mr. Simons will find themselves crying out, as they of old: "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death"?

What I have said on this point is in view of the fact that this is not the first time this provision has been altered; while that requiring a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being has never been altered or questioned; and for this reason: the one, requiring a belief in a Supreme Being, is in accordance with the advance of mankind in Christian civilization, aiding, elevating, and ennobling man; the other, conventional, to suit the prejudices and avarice of man, and must recede as man approaches his God.

In this connection please listen to the words of the Rev. George Oliver, D.D., of London, an enlightened Mason of our own times, known and honored throughout the length and breadth of our institution.

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"The strict inviolability of a landmark is somewhat problematical. There are certain obsolete particulars in Masonry which were formerly esteemed to be landmarks, but have undergone alterations in a greater or lesser degree. It follows, therefore, that if the old landmarks cannot by any possibility be removed, then we incur the unavoidable conclusion that these never had a claim to any such distinction. In all existing Constitutions, however, there is a prohibitory clause which pronounces the landmarks, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, to be unchangeable; but we shall find that in practice it has been occasionally violated, and therefore inapplicable to all the contingencies that may arise in practice.

"To persist, then, in asserting that the landmark cannot be altered, with any array of positive facts against the hypothesis, is indefensible and absurd, because it places the society in a false position. It is well known, that whenever it has been found expedient to expunge a landmark, the means of accomplishment were never wanting. The letter of the law is stern, but the spirit is feeble. Practice is more than a match for it: it beats it on its own ground."

As Masons we are bound to obey the laws of the country in which we live; and, further, to have regard for the declared principles of government. Prompted by this spirit, General Warren, Grand Master of the Masons, lost his life on Bunker Hill.

And what were the then declared principles of the government? None less than those set forth in the Declaration of Independence.

Samuel Adams would not, after he had signed the Declaration of Independence, permit a slave until made free to enter his house. John Adams said, July 4, 1776: "Great is

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Lafayette in speaking of his views on America said: "It is mortifying to be told that in that very country a large portion of the people are slaves. It is a dark spot on the face of the nation. Such a state of things cannot always exist."

Luther Martin, in a speech before the Legislature of Maryland, said, "We had just assumed a place among independent nations, in consequence of our opposition to the attempts of Great Britain to *enslave us*; that this opposition was grounded upon the *preservation of those rights* to which God and Nature entitle *us*, not in *particular*, but in *common with ALL the rest of mankind*."

And Kosciusko, by his will, placed in the hands of Mr. Jefferson a sum exceeding twenty thousand dollars, to be laid out in the purchase and emancipation of young female slaves.

Jefferson says that "slavery is a piratical warfare, the opprobrium of *infidel* powers." And be it said to the credit of the nations of the Old World, that while these American patriots were engaged in working out this great truth, namely, the rights of human nature as by God ordained from the foundation of the world, that all men are by nature free and equal, they (the patriots of Europe) have lit up their fires; so that England, first in the van, recognized it, and restored to eight hundred thousand the rights she had previously withheld from them. The French released their grasp on the enslaved, Holland likewise, and the Christian Emperor of Russia restored to the slaves their birthrights. And the Declaration of American Independence is not only thus recognized by them and vindicated as a truth, but in this our

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But, my brethren, there is one particular expression made use of by Mr. John W. Simons, to which I invite your attention. It would seem as though he possessed a love, and I may say a reverence for the past. Hear what he says: "We can easily perceive that it would take but few such alterations [the British substitution of *freeman* for 'free-born'] of the landmarks to destroy the identity of the society, and sever the links that bind it to the long past." His love for the past may exceed ours, but we doubt it. Let us compare notes. If we understand him, his love of the past reaches back no further than to the time when slavery had, to some extent, become powerful in the organization of our society; but our love for the past dates back to

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the time when it was the first emancipation society, and, under God's direction, was made the deliverer of the Egyptians' bondmen, with Moses for the Grand Master of the Lodges then existing. And why should we not reverence those days, as Masons, when we have the symbols of that event perpetually before us whenever we enter a Lodge. In illustration of this allow me to quote Dr. Albert G. Mackey, author of "Masonic Jurisprudence," who says:—

"A Lodge is situated due east and west, because, when Moses crossed the Red Sea, being pursued by Pharaoh and his host, he erected on the other side, by divine command, a tabernacle, which he placed due east and west to receive the first rays of the rising sun and to commemorate that mighty east wind by which their miraculous deliverance was effected. This tabernacle was an exact pattern of King Solomon's Temple, of which every Lodge is a representative, and it is, or ought, therefore, to be placed due east and west."

Since the very form of our Lodge associates us with that event, why should we stop and go no further back than the year 926, when it would seem that the action of that year was the first attempt to sever it from the long past by an effort to introduce for the first time rules and regulations, the objects of which were to make it no longer a friend of the oppressed, but to associate it with the oppressors?

We would ask Mr. Simons if he is willing to go back thus far, that is, to the elementary lessons; and if so, we have no fault to find; but if he wishes to begin his reverence of the past with the beginning of slavery in the Order, we may expect him to cut his relations when slavery shall cease. While we, on the other hand, reverence the past for the blessings of civil and religious liberty which God has been

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We now stand, as it were, upon Mount Pisgah, viewing the future which is made bright by the history of the past, feeling assured that our Order will free itself from all incumbrances, or shadows even, of oppression and wrong.

This keeping back or hiding from sight the words "or no bondman" has been done in the interest of slavery, and is a suppression of the truth; it is, in fact, but following the evil example set long years ago by Ananias and Sapphira, the peculiarities of which are familiar to all of us who have enjoyed the benefits of the Sunday-school.

Why did our ancient brothers make the provision "or no bondman"? Because, should he ask admittance, they could not afford to close their doors against Aesop, the oldest Greek fabulist, whose lessons of instruction are guides to the human race this day, and who was born a slave and afterwards set free; nor against Epictetus the Greek stoic and slave, after became free; nor against Tertulian, who was bishop at Rome, and an African; nor against Spartacus a Roman slave, who raised himself to the position of a general among his fellow-slaves, and led them against, and gained three great victories over their Roman masters. No, they could not afford to do this. It seems, however, that our American brethren can afford to do it, at least they have done it, and by such action have excluded from their temples such men as the following: Rev. Alexander-Crummell, the head of the Church of England at Liberia; the Rev. Dr. Pennington, who received his degree of divinity in Germany; Alexander Dumas, the French writer of world-wide fame; the late Dr. McCune Smith; Chas. L. Reason, who has been honored with the professorship of an American college; Ira

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Aldridge, who was born in Africa, removed to America, afterward went to Europe, and is now considered one of the greatest tragedians of the age; the present acting Bishop Paine; Ex-President Roberts of Liberia; John S. Rock, who has been admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States; the Deputy Grand Master of this Lodge, Robert Morris, Esq.; John Jones of Chicago; George T. Downing, chairman of our present delegation to Congress; Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, to whom the Congress of the United States, by resolution, granted the use of their hall; Frederick Douglass, supported by the fame of the two continents; and to what length might not this list be extended, including men who have at the altar of God proved themselves to be most worthy and true. Others might be named who have proved themselves patriots, ready to dare and to die for their country's honor. There is one name to which I desire to call especial attention; and that is Benjamin Bannekar, the great American astronomer, who won the applause of President Jefferson by detecting and correcting the errors into which other astronomers had fallen.

What are the principles of Freemasonry that our white brethren avow, and how do they live up to them?

First, they profess to believe in the existence of a God; and say, by the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family: the high and low, the rich and poor, who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support, and protect each other. On this principle, Masonry unites men of every country, sect, and opinion, and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.

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Now let us compare their actions with these principles.

The Grand Lodge of Illinois, in the year 1851, "*Resolved*, that all subordinate Lodges under this jurisdiction be instructed to admit no negro or mulatto, as visitor or otherwise, under any circumstances whatever."

Is this regarding the whole human species as one family?

Another principle is to relieve the distressed. This is a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on Masons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection. To soothe the unhappy; to sympathize with them in their misfortunes; to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds, is the great aim we have in view. On this basis we form our friendships and establish our connections. This we call the second tenet of our profession, which every candidate pledges himself to support, maintain, and execute, before entering the Order; for he signs a declaration in which he professes "a desire for knowledge, and a sincere wish to be serviceable to his fellow-creatures"; and promises that he "will cheerfully conform to the ancient established usages and customs of the society."

But our white brethren, not satisfied with their violation of these fundamental principles of Masonry, wish no intercourse with certain brethren who are true, God-fearing, and conscientious Masons; to wit, "In the opinion of your Committee this Grand Lodge should cease all correspondence with any Grand Lodge authorizing, in any way Masonic, intercourse with negroes." *

And to what extent have they not allowed their prejudices to lead them? To the no less shameful position than that of imposing upon every Master Mason an obligation not to be

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present at the making of a negro a Mason. Of this fact I was informed by a Grand Master of one of the Southern States.

If the Grand Lodge of Illinois had adopted a resolve excluding from the brotherhood all who could not read or write, instead of the one in regard to blacks and mulattoes, then we should have thought it was legislating against ignorance; but, on the contrary, we find that it was color and color only that constituted the basis of action in this case; and if King Solomon, who is generally supposed to have shed lustre upon our Order in his day, was speaking of himself when he said, "I am black, I am black;" then, while the dwellers in Egyptian and congenial darkness are eligible to membership in Illinois, the illustrious monarch of Israel, if living to-day, would find the door of every Lodge in the State barred against him. Color, not intelligence; the hue of the skin, rather than the merit of the man, is the Hoosier test. For a proper judgement upon such a test, if the present age is not sufficiently enlightened, we can safely appeal to posterity. We can appeal to that "sober, second thought, which is seldom wrong and always efficient"; and which is as sure to come, as the sun is to shine, when once the wicked prejudices incited by "the sum of all villanies" shall have passed away.

Let us see if the above picture is overdrawn. Here let us read a lesson from our *present* teachers: "We are entirely averse to the principles of admitting or initiating persons of color who are made Masons in this country."—*King, of New York.*

A lesson from our *ancient* Grand Master St. John: "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

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Once again from our *ancient* Patron St. John: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and yet know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Modern teachers: "The colored race do not possess in this country the necessary qualifications to be made Masons."

Another lesson from the *Holy Scriptures*: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Having to some extent tried to discover how we stand, and what are the sins which have caused our white brothers to close the doors of their Lodges against us, what do we find? That they refuse to recognize a man for merit, as is seen in the rejection by them of such men as we have named—men who, we believe, have had their lips touched with coals of fire from the altar of God's truth for the healing of the nation; and have accepted men who have proved themselves to be the vilest of the vile. Thus, what God accepts they reject, and what God rejects they accept. Yes, gentlemen of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, there is another Grand Lodge, and at its doors we shall all knock for admittance. But the Supreme Grand Master of that Lodge has left some rules and designs to be worked out upon the trestle-board; one of which is this: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me"; or in other words: inasmuch as you by resolution have closed the doors of your Lodges against these my brethren, you have closed

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"High in the Heavens his Justice reigns;
Yet you invade the rights of God,
And send your bold decrees abroad
To bind the conscience in your chains."

Having spoken of present and past teachers, I feel that we are called upon to make our choice of which we will follow. Our hearts are filled with love to God and man; so that, notwithstanding all the abuse heaped upon us by our white brethren of the present day, we are willing to appear before the throne of God and attest our love for them. We shall follow the instruction given us by our patron and ancient Grand Master, St. John the Evangelist, and our blessed Saviour who taught us to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us. We ask, as we are willing to appear before the throne of God to attest our love for them, where, or in what region, and before what throne, will they appear to exhibit their hate for us?

In view of the facts as already stated we call upon our Masonic brethren throughout the world, and upon the people in general, to judge between us. To this tribunal we submit our case for adjudication.

Before closing, allow me to call your attention to the following document received from Hayti some time since; its language of fraternal and affectionate import speaks for itself:—

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"GRAND ORIENT OF HAYTI.

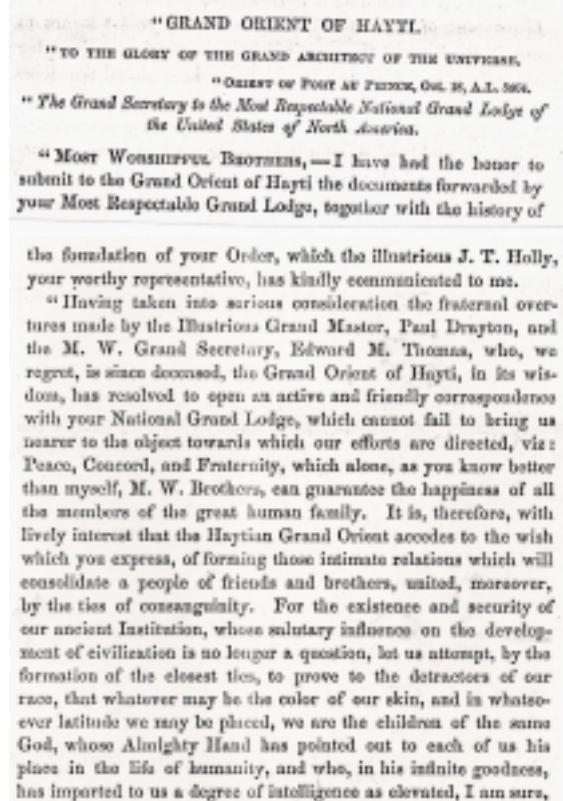
"TO THE GLORY OF THE GRAND ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE.

"ORIENT OF PORT AU PRINCE, Oct. 18, A. L. 5864.

"The Grand Secretary to the Most Respectable National Grand Lodge of the United States of North America.

"MOST WORSHIPFUL BROTHERS,—I have had the honor to submit to the Grand Orient of Hayti the documents forwarded by your Most Respectable Grand Lodge, together with the history of the foundation of your Order, which the illustrious J. T. Holly, your worthy representative, has kindly communicated to me.

"Having taken into serious consideration the fraternal overtures made by the Illustrious Grand Master, Paul Drayton, and the M. W. Grand Secretary, Edward M. Thomas, who, we regret, is since deceased, the Grand Orient of Hayti, in its wisdom, has resolved to open an active and friendly correspondence with your National Grand Lodge, which cannot fail to bring us nearer to the object towards which our efforts are directed, viz: Peace, Concord, and Fraternity, which alone, as you know better than myself, M. W. Brothers, can guarantee the happiness of all the members of the great human family. It is, therefore, with lively interest that the Haytian Grand Orient accedes to the wish which you express, of forming those intimate relations which will consolidate a people of friends and brothers, united, moreover, by the ties of consanguinity. For the existence and security of our ancient Institution, whose salutary influence on the development of civilization is no longer a question, let us attempt, by the formation of the closest ties, to prove to the detractors of our race, that whatever may be the color of our skin, and in whatsoever latitude we may be placed, we are the children of the same God, whose Almighty Hand has pointed out to each of us his place in the life of humanity, and who, in his infinite goodness, has imparted to us a degree of intelligence as elevated, I am sure,



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as that which he has been pleased to accord to our inconsistent antagonists. Let us, then, labor without cessation for our moral advancement and our intellectual emancipation, by rallying with all our hearts under the banner of fraternity.

"I esteem myself very happy, M. W. Brothers, in being the official organ of the members of our National Grand Orient, to testify to you all in general, and to each one in particular, the sincere and earnest expression of their most lively and ardent sympathies.

"It is with these sentiments that I beg you to accept, with some reports of our meetings, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.

"EUGENE BOURJOLLY (33°),

"Representative of the G. O. of France, and of many National Lodges." *

Now let us consider for a moment our true situation, our present condition, and our future hope. It may be that we have not weighed properly all the facts; but if we have, the conclusion can be but this: That if an angel from on high had been sent to establish a Lodge among us, such a Lodge would not have been recognized by a fraternity allied to slavery. Such a fraternity with education, wealth, position, supported by all the nations of the earth, could easily write us out of existence. As an evidence of this fact, when slavery needed the support of the Church, North, it was forthcoming without trouble. She found at Andover professors of divinity ready and willing to clothe her with Christian garments; and not only there, but at Dartmouth, and elsewhere, so that her conscience was made easy, after thus receiving the ordination of the Church; for it was by the writings of these divines of the North that the hitherto blinded eyes of the South were first opened to the doctrine

* For other manifestations of friendship from a high source, see Appendix

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