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I SPEAK TO THOSE
WHO ARE IN SLAVERY

Cyrus Bustill

 The Bustill family records have been remarkably well preserved, and a sketch of the family history was published by Anna Bustill Smith in the Journal of Negro History in 1925 (638-49). Cyrus Bustill was born in slavery in Burlington, New Jersey, on February 2, 1732. Bustill learned bread making from his third slaveholder, Quaker Thomas Prior (Pryor) and was greatly influenced by Quaker teachings. He "early became convinced of the rectitude of Friends' (Quakers') principles and conformed to their mode of garb and speech," according to Smith (639). Freed from slavery in 1769, Bustill soon established his own bakery. During the American Revolution, Bustill supplied bread to the Continental Army and was later recognized by Washington for his contributions to the war effort.

Despite the conciliatory tone of the address here reprinted, Cyrus Bustill was a committed abolitionist and refused to marry in his early adult life because "he would not perpetuate a race of slaves." He eventually married Elizabeth Morey and moved to Philadelphia, where he again established a successful bakery and was also engaged in the building construction business. In 1796 he became the first African American school-teacher in the city. He was an active member of the Free African Society, founded on April 12, 1787, a mutual aid group that Dorothy Porter has identified as the first organized African American society. Bustill died in 1806.

On September 18, 1787, Bustill addressed a group of slaves in Philadelphia. The manuscript of the speech is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and was published in the William and Mary Quarterly for January 1972. It is reprinted here with permission of the William and Mary Quarterly.

The speech is representative of the viewpoint of many in the free black community of Philadelphia of the time. While making clear his opposition to slavery, Bustill insisted that slaves must take no action to liberate themselves. In due time, he argued, God, in his mercy, would liberate all the slaves. African American preachers, particularly those ministering to slaves, had to walk a rhetorical tightrope by speaking defiantly enough to engage their listeners yet not so as to alarm slaveholders or the authorities.

The notes are reprinted as they appeared in the William and Mary Quarterly, where they were furnished by Melvin H. Buxbaum, who discovered the speech. References to scriptural passages indicated by superscript letters were added by another hand and are appended here as they

appear on the manuscript ("I" and "V" are omitted on the manuscript). Other editorial changes presumably made by the same person have not been retained.

MY BROTHERIN and Fellow men, as Love to one Another Seemes to have been the way to all happyness, formerly in the Early Ages of the world, when our Lord was on the Earth So it Seemes to Remain in this our Day. I am thinking it will Remain So to the End of time. Our Lord and master, Seemes to Confirm it when he [en]joyns on his People to this affact, when he was about to Leave the world in So Solum and Prassing a maner Saying^a a new Comandment I Give unto you, that ye Love one another as I have Loved you, that ye also Love one another by this Shall men know that you are my Disciples; and he further injoyns it with a veraily I Say unto you Love one another, now we find theirs a Repeitasien [Repetition] of the wards and yet he Does not Leave it here neither, but he Still Carrys it on further, as if to make it more binding and by wards Like thess, by this Shall all men know that ye are my Disciples or Followers. If ye Love one another, now here [is] a mark of Distinksion a Ojutt Differant mark from that which the kings and Great men of the Earth Put on their Soldiers and officers, and the Reason is, because theirs are marks of Blood, of war, Contension and Such Like, but my Bretherin his are not So, for we find his are marks of Peace and Love, kindness, Respect, Regard, Gratatued, forbearonce, Long Suffurance, mod- orasion And Gentelness, Soboriety and meetness, and Such Like, theses are the uniforms that his Soldiers are [Clad] with for they are All Clad upon by him, and they are Pretty much in a Livery too, it may be Scen to Whose Rignent they beLong, and he gives them all their accuterements from the head to the foot, meals [males] and females, but they are Ginerly volenteers, for it Seem theirs but few Presst men, now a Days he is Grand Capt. a very Grand Ginoral, And Comands the hearts of his People and the very thoughts of those that are Lead by him, he is [a] Prince too, the Prince of Peace and king of kings. Then how is it that So few of us, Dare Enter the Roles and apear in his Sarvice? is it because we [are] Cowards, no, but because [we] are trators, to him, and to ourselves to. I Reather think, [illegible] then my Fel- low men Resolve to Doe Better for the fewter, Since theirs no Better Coman- der nor no kinder master, Let us endeavour to Serve him with Loyalty and faithfulness or other wise we Shall not be accounted worthy, he Disers no Person to go further then he Leads the way, then my Bretherin Let us [Pay] Due, Respect to his Precepts, for [no] Soldier may Disobey orders, then Let us take heed that we Do not trencggress [transgress] the Lawes of his Disci- plin, for it will be very Disagreable to him and will not be Consistent with his Love and justice which Run Parallel and theirfour my Bretherin Let me injoyn this once more that we Pay a Particular Regard to his Lawes. Whin I think of the wonderful Love of the Great Marter, of the univerice, and his

^aJohn XIII. 34. 35.

unbounded Condisending and unspeakable Regard, toward the Children of men, I am the more Erantstly moved in that Love, to entourt [intreat] my Fellow men that they may Learn to Love and fear him and by Steady Complince to his will they may Learn to know by Exsperience that^b God is no Respector [of] Persons, but in Every Natison, he, that fearth him and workth Righteousness, is Excepted with him, and now my Fellow men here is encouragment for us in Perticular to keep that in our favour which he hath So Boundtyfully bestowed on us (I Speak to thoss Who are in Slavery) because I was Born So and Remaind untill I was almost 37 years of age, when it Pleased him out of his Great Marcey and his Still abounding Goodness, Towards me, to Plock me out of the hands of unseasonable men, and that at a time when I Little Exspected it, I Shall here Relate the maner in which he Delivered [me] from that Estate in which I was Born, then understand I Came into the world belonging [to] the Estate of Samuel Bustill of the City of Burlington, but he Dying when I was Young I was Sold to John Allen of the Same City who had a Son of the Same Name who, Resided at Trenton, with his familey, the father had often told me, that I should never Serve any man, after his Death, but that I Should be free, my mistress was willing and tryed all the ways that Lay in her Power to have [it] So, but Son Resolved to thought [thwart] all her Disigns, the which he affactuly Did, the father Diing in the Yeer 1752 the Son Binding, the Mother to a Subsistance which was Partly to Com of my Earnings She [Could] very ill afford it, but Did try more then once, but She Ding about the [year] 1756, the Son Sold me in 1762 to Thomas Pryor junr. for the sum of one Hundred pounds Down, befour they agree, my friend having Ofered 80 Pounds for 4 yeers Service of me, but Refowsed [Refused] Saying Slavery, was his Determinasion, my friend then Payd Down the money, and I became a Sarvent to one of those friendly People Called Quakers, of happy Memorry to Such as we are, I Servcid him Seven Yeers According to the agreement he made with me and at the End, of which he Gave me, aful Discharge. I Could not forbaer, to mension this [in] Gratitude to that People, and to my master, and his familey, who was as insteriments [instruments], in the Divin hand to help me and that People who are still endeavouring to bring us to the fear and knowledge, of that being who, made the world, and [all] that it Contains, whom to know is Life Eternal. My Bretherin Let us edeavour to Learn to^c fear the Lord it is the begining of wisdom and will to us [be] a Good understanding, if we will but Depart from Evill, you being in bondage in Particular, I would that [ye] take heed that afend not with your toungue, be ye wiss [wise] as Serpants and harmless as Doves, that he may take with you, when you are wrong'd. Other ways, you Cannot Exspect him to side with you nor to Soport your Cause, no not at any time or Place, I would my Bretherin that ye be faithful to your masters, at all times and on all ocasions, too, for this is Praise worthy, be honst and true to their intrust.

^bActs X. 34. 35.

^cProverbs IX. 10.

Suppose they Do not See it the Great Master will See it and give Cradit for it too, and therefore I would that ye Doe their business [with] Chairfulness^d, not with Eye Sarvice, but willingly and with Singleness of heart as unto God, and not unto men, knowing this also, that Sarvent which know his masters will, and PrePared not himself, neither [nor did] According to his will Shall be beat with many Strips, but on the other hand they that Continues faithful to the End, Shall be Rewarded, my Bretherin the encouragments to well doing are many. Remember, if the Son make you free, you Shall be free indeed; for myselfe I can safely say, I fand no satisfacsion, Like unto that which arise from that of well Doing, tis Like [an] anchor in a Storm, on which all may Depend and Safly Reily, and firmly Trust and is Surly [illegible] let the winds blow as they will, and it was Said by one formerly,^e if our heart Condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knowth all things. If our heart Condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God, and he Seeing into the very inermost Recess of the heart, there Can be no Secarits [secrets] hid from him, or Escape his notice; besides, their is that unering Guide that is Placest in the hearts of Every individual of us, that is Come to the Years of Discrasion and that to Profat with all, now if we do not Profat, the fault is our own, for^f Light is Come into the world and men Loved Darkness Rather then Light because their Deeds were Evill, now Let us, endeavour to make our Calling, and Election Sure, by a Steady Adherence to his holy Law writin in our hearts, for they are Sure Giude to them and to Every of [them] that are made willing to be Giuded by him, whose Right it tis to Rule, in the hearts of the Children of men, now this is a Great Steap on [the] way, only to be Lead by him, it tis undoutedly his Right to Rule and Riegn in our hearts, but alis [alas] my Bretherin^g we would not have this man to Raigh over us, theifore it [was] Said^h away with him, now I would that we Could understand this, my Fellow men it tis not our will, but his will that is to be Done, and therfore we ought not to Consult, ourselves on these maters, but Refear all to him who is all our Stranth, if we Could only Trust to him, I believe would [be] more So and would Do more, and Better for us, if [we] Could Remember to keep his enstructisons in veiw and Practice we Should Come much higher the Mark and Patrein [Pattern] he hath Set and So Lovingly enjoyn'd on us, when he Saidⁱ Thou Shalt Love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, And with All [thy] Soul, and with all [thy] Mind. This is [the] first and Great Comandment, and the Second is Like unto it Thou Love thy Naighbour as thyself, On thess tow [these two] Comandments hang all the Law and the Prophats, now my Bretherin this is a Great and fondemental Rule, whereby we may Square our Acctions at All times and in All the Saverall

^dEphesians VI. 6. 7.

^e1st John. III. 20. 21.

^fJohn III. 19.

^gLuke XIX. 14.

^hActs XXI. 36.

ⁱMatthew XXII. 37. 38. 39. 40.

Stations of life the which it has Pleased him, to Place us only Let's Remember to keep this in our veiw, as the Pole Star whereby we may Steer, in the Darkest Night. Prehaps Some may Say they Cannot Read, but my friends this needs no humain Learning, to Read our own hearts, tis Given from above, and Cannot be taken away, but by our own wickedness, theirs but few needs be a Loss I must Repeat it agin, Love the Lord thy God with all [thy] heart, and with all [thy] Soul, and thy Naighbour as thyself for in this is Contained the Grand Scope of All Religion, thairs Nothing Done, without Charity towards God and our Naighbours, Lets Remember Charity begins at home, we must Examine ourselves, theirfore, and endeavour to get in order here as much as Possable, and I am Persuaed Shall find the Advantage of it, and by this Practice we Shall be Come wise unto Salvacion. If we Could only Observe to Put in Practice this Duty, it [will] make us wise here, and happy here after, now my Bretherin Let us One and All resolve newness of Life, in All holy Conversasion Soberiety and Godly fear, Redeeming the time, because of the Evill of the Day; and here Let [me] Caution you, my Bretheirin, Against that Crying Sin of Drunkinness that is So much in Fashion, that Abominable Practice of Rum-Drinking to Excess, and So hurtful to men of our Colour yea, and women too are too fond of it. Remember that kind invitation Given by our Lord and master and the vast encouragment, held up to them, as it were, for them that [were] Gro[w]n old in ill Practices, how he Received them that Came in at the^k Eleventh hour of the Day, how he, Gave them waggens Equil with them that [had] Born the Burden and the heat of Day this, me thinks might, encourage men to Put away that Sin that Doth Esily beset them, I Raily belive therirs more Damage Done by that one Liquiour then by all the Rest Put together, that we have in the Country.

My Fellow men I would wish us, to Remember no [Drunkard] Can enter the kingdom no nor unClean Person, therefore Let us endeavour to walk worthy, and avoid that Sin which Doth Esasily besoten us, Surly in vain is the net Sprad in the Sight of the Bird, but aliss [alas] we Seem to go into this Net willingly and with our Eyes opon, and at all time of the Day, And in the face of the Sun, as if in defienc to Every thing that is [good] and Reasonable. I think it one of the Adversary's most aluring Baits where with he tempts many to their own Ruin, I believe I have Seen more then one, who have Shortind their Days by this Dradful Practice, I am not a young man, I am in the 56 Yeer of my age, and have had time to Reflect on things Passt, I have Seen Numbers Laid in Graves, I belive at a time when Som of them little Exspected, and it may be as Little Prepared, I know not how Soon it may be my turn, I would therfore that we work while its Called to Day, for the [night] Cometh wherin no man Can work, and where Shall we Look or which way Shall [we] turn ourselves but unto the Lord that made us, and

^k Matthew XX. 6 to 14.

^l John IX. 4.

will most asuredly help us, if we walk in his Pathes, which [he] hath Set before us, theirfore we may Depend upon the Lord as a Sure Guide in all times of need, he will be[friend] us to [the] last Degree of friendship, he will be a^m Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my Paths therfore we may Trust him, with Confidence, none of them that Trust in him Shall be Desolat,ⁿ he that Trusteth in the Lord, marcey Shall Compass him about, this is encouragement for us to Passaveer [persevere] in well Doing, if we Could but Confide in himⁿ he hath not Dealt with us after our Sins, nor Rewarded us, According to our iniquitys, for as the Heavens is high above the Earth, So Great is his marcey toward them that fear him, as far as the East is from the west, So far hath he Removed our Transgrasions from us, Like as [a] father Pititith his Childrin So the Lord Pititith them, that fear him for he knoweth our fram[e], he Remembereth we are but Dust my friends he hath Given us, All that we Can Reasonably Expect, or Even Disire, by way of encouragement, but if he had only once Speak the word it would have been Soficent, for us to Rely and Trust to, for all that we have, or Can hope to have, well then my friends, Sceing the Great kindness of the heavenly father, toward them that Love and fear him, and keep his Comandments, Let us keep our hearts, with all the Dilegence that in us Lays, Always looking op unto that unering Guide which is Given to Every of us, to Profat with all, [illegible] Shall a man Profat if he Should Gain the whole world and Loose his Soul,^p where Can be his Profat, well my Fellow men, Let us, endeavour to walk worthy of the vocation where with we are Calld, and endeavour to love the Lord our God with hearts, and with all our Soul and our Naighbour as ourselves, and then we sh[a]ll be on the way to happyness Depend on it, and we may with his halp Continue, then Let us endeavour, by a Frugil Steady indosty [illegible] to Procure an honest Living for ourselves And famileys with all Soberiety, for this is Comendable to All, keep a Particular Grad [Guard] Against All, bad Compainy, keeping, knowing^q Evill Comunicasion Corupps Good maners, theirfore Let us conduct ourselves as men, who Are to Give An account, for the deeds Done in the Body, Let us Strive to Enter in at the Stright Gate for, maney are Called but few Chosen and yet God is no Respector of Persons, for in Every Nasion kindred and Toungue, they that Love honour and Obay him is Excepted [Accepted] of him all this not for [any] thing that [they] have Done, or Can do for him no, but out of his Great Love and unbonded kindness and Regard toward the Chidren of men, now the thoughts of this Great Love and Condisending Marcey, me thinks aught to Constrain men to endeavour, to walk in his Precepts, And the more Espesaly when we See him So engaged and on our behalf to Deliver from the bond of Slavery, both,

^m Psalm CIX. 105.

ⁿ Psalm XXXII. 10.

^o Psalm CIII. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14.

^p Mark VIII. 36.

^q 1st Corinthians XV. 33.

in [this] world and [that] which is to Come And [not] Only encouraging us, by the Saaft [Soft] Admonision, of his holy Spirit, at many times And in many Places, but is Calling an us aloud, in and thro the voice of his People, who Seem to Spear [Spare] no Pains to bring us to the true, and Saving knowlege of the Living God, we may See if we take but a Little notice Look which we will, we may see Something that tends to Call on us, if we would but endeavour to understand it So, how Ever their is no wont [of] teachings, tis very Plain and Clair to me, And to be Disobaydent when we are Calld upon by them, is a Dangerus Setouasion [Situation], thin how mach more So, to Ridicul and Laugh them to Scorn,^f who so Dispiseth the Ward, Shall be Destroyed, but he that feareth the Comandment Shall be Rewarded, and much more might be Said, but I Rather Persuade men, I would not wish to apear as an accuser, but Rather I Say, Persuade men to Pertake of his marcey and Goodness and to Passaver [persevere] in the Practice of well Doing it tis said^g are not Five Sparrawes Sold for tow farthings and not one of them is forgotten before God, And here tis to be noticest they did not Pass unRegarded by him, for he in his wonted Goodness was Pleasd to make a very Grasius Speach and ful of love to men, and Speakes in this maner^t are not tow Sparraws Sold for a farthing Ye are of more [value] then many Sparraws then Since he was Grasiusly Pleased to value men more then many Sparraws Let us Strive to be As inosent as one of them, this [is] my Diser [desire?] that we may be harmliss and atentive to his Grasius invitason and be hold him Calling on us,^u

Come unto me all ye that Labour and are havy Laden and I will Give you Rest, take my Yoke upon you and Learn of me for I am meek And Lowly in heart, And ye Shall find Rest unto your Souls, for my yoke is Easey and my Burden is Light, now [to] me [illegible] this is a most Gloriyus invitason and very Extinsive, for All are Calld upon to Pertake of his Goodness And marcey, then my Brethren who Can Refaus to the Grasius and many fold ofars [manifold offers] of So Loving a father who Can but be willing, to Comply with his marceyful invitasons,^w behold I Stand at the Door and [knock], if Any man hear my voice And opon the door, I will Come in to him And Sup with him And he with me, then here we are invited to Sup with the king of kings, O the Stupendeous Love and Condescending marcey, of the heavenly father toward the Chirldren of men, having Droped a few hints Respecting the Love of our heavenly father if it be kindly Receivd I Shall think myself amply Reward,■

—Cyrus Bustill

^f Proverbs XIII. 13.

^g Luke XII. 6.

^t Matthew X. 29. 31.

^u Matthew XI. 28. 29. 30.

^w Revelation III. 20.

2

YOU STAND ON THE LEVEL WITH THE GREATEST KINGS ON EARTH

John Marrant



*The extraordinary, if brief, life of John Marrant, perhaps the first ordained black minister to preach in the United States, began in New York on June 15, 1755. Following the death of his father four years later, Marrant and his mother moved first to St. Augustine and then settled in Georgia. Marrant learned to read and write before he left school at age eleven. He also became an accomplished musician and performed locally on the violin and French horn. His musical proficiency brought him a steady income but also led him to a life of intemperance that he would later repent. He recounts in his 1785 autobiography, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings With John Marrant, A Black* (London: Gilbert and Plummer): "I was now in my thirteenth year, devoted to pleasure and drinking in iniquity like water, a slave to every vice suited to my nature and years" (7).*

According to his autobiography, when Marrant was passing by a crowded meetinghouse where the famous British itinerant George Whitefield was preaching, he was struck "speechless and senseless" to the ground. Later, Whitefield came to him and said, "JESUS CHRIST HAS GOT THEE AT LAST." Marrant remained steadfast in his conversion, despite the disapproval of his family. He contemplated and rejected suicide, then ran away to the wilderness. After spending a few days near starvation, Marrant met and befriended an Indian hunter. When they visited a large Cherokee settlement, however, Marrant was taken prisoner and sentenced to torture and death. According to his own account, his spoken prayers, first in English and then in the Cherokee language, so moved his appointed executioner that he was brought before the king of the Cherokees, whom he subsequently converted. Marrant and the Cherokee king visited the nearby Catawar and Housaw Nations in what proved to be far less successful missionary efforts. Finally, Marrant felt the "invincible desire of returning home" (19). Dressed in animal skins and Indian headdress, he emerged from the woods into the settlements and rejoined his family, who had presumed him dead.

*At the outbreak of the American Revolution, Marrant was pressed into service as a musician aboard the British sloop *Scorpion*. He remained in the British service for nearly seven years and participated in the Battle of Charleston. After he was seriously wounded and hospitalized, Marrant was discharged from the navy. Working for a cotton merchant in London, Marrant felt the call to preach "for the salvation of my*

countrymen." With the support of the abolitionist Countess of Huntingdon, he was ordained by Calvinist Methodists in 1785 and began preaching in Bristol and Bath. He accepted an invitation from his brother to preach in Nova Scotia, where many African Americans who had supported the British had settled. In August 1785 he sailed to Nova Scotia, where he preached for four years to whites and Indians as well as to black settlers. In 1789, Marrant moved to New England. His sermons were at first disrupted by armed mobs, but he persisted and preached in communities throughout Massachusetts. He befriended Prince Hall, a respected leader of Boston's African American community and grand master of Boston's African Lodge of the Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons, the first black masonic lodge in the United States. Marrant accepted Hall's invitation to serve as chaplain of the lodge.

On June 24, 1789, Marrant delivered an eloquent sermon to the members of the lodge. His sermon proclaims the greatness of Africa and Africans and rejects the notion that slavery is a sign of racial inferiority: "For if we search history, we shall not find a nation on earth but has at some period or other of their existence been in slavery, from the Jews down to the English nation." Marrant's indictment of white prejudice in Massachusetts occurred against the backdrop of the previous year's ruling by the Commonwealth's General Court that required black residents to produce a certificate of citizenship from any previous state in which they had resided. Those who could not produce such a certificate were threatened with jail, whipping, and deportation.* Here Marrant uses black Masonic membership as a basis from which to argue for black entitlement to civil rights and social justice. Six months after delivering this sermon, Marrant sailed back to England, where he died in 1791 at the age of thirty-five.

The text of the speech was published as a pamphlet. Copies survive in the collections of the American Antiquarian Society and the Schomburg Research Center.

ROMANS XII., 10. "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another."

In this chapter, from whence my text is taken, we find the Apostle Paul laboring with the Romans to press on them the great duties of Brotherly Love.

By an entire submission and conformity to the will of God, whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust—That being all members of the body of Christ with the Church, we ought to apply the gifts we have received to the advan-

*Sidney Kaplan and Emma Nogrody Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*, rev. ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989).

tage of our brethren, those of us especially who are called to any office in the church, by discharging it with zeal and integrity and benevolence, which is the most important duty, and comprehends all the rest, and particularly the following—which the apostle here sets down—which are to love one another sincerely, to be ready to all good offices—to sympathize in the good or evil that befalls our brethren, to comfort and assist those that are in affliction, and to live together in a spirit of humility, peace and unity. Benevolence does yet further oblige Christians to love and bless those who hate them and injure them, to endeavor to have peace with all men, to abstain from revenge, and to render them good for evil; these are the most essential duties of the religion we profess; and we deserve the name of Christians no further than we sincerely practise them to the glory of God and the good of our own souls and bodies, and the good of all mankind.

But first, my brethren, let us learn to pray to God through our Lord Jesus Christ for understanding, that we may know ourselves; for without this we can never be fit for the society of man; we must learn to guide ourselves before we can guide others, and when we have done this we shall understand the apostle, Romans xii. 16. "Be not wise in your own conceits," for when we get wise in ourselves we are then too wise for God, and consequently not fit for the society of man—I mean the Christian part of mankind. Let all my brethren Masons consider what they are called to—May God grant you an humble heart to fear God and love His commandments; then and only then you will in sincerity love your brethren: And you will be enabled, as in the words of my text, to be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love in honor preferring one another. Therefore, with the Apostle Paul, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service—let love be without dissimulation, abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. These and many other duties are required of us as Christians, every one of which are like so many links of a chain, which when joined together make one complete member of Christ; this we profess to believe as Christians and as Masons.—I shall stop here with the introduction, which brings me to the points I shall endeavor to prove.—

First, the ancency of Masonry, that being done, will endeavor to prove all other titles we have a just right as Masons to claim—namely, honorable, free and accepted: To do this I must have recourse to the creation of this our world—After the Grand Architect of the Universe had framed the heavens for beauty and delight for the beings he was then about to make, he then called the earth to appear out of darkness, saying, let there be light, and it was so; He also set the sun, moon and stars in the firmament of heaven, for the delight of His creatures—He then created the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, then the beasts of the earth after their various kinds, and God blessed them.

Thus all things were in their order prepared for the most excellent accomplished piece of the visible creation, Man.—The forming this most excellent creature Man, was the close of the creation, so it was peculiar to Him to have a solemn consultation and decree about His making, and God said,

let us make Man.—Seneca says, that man is not a work huddled over in haste, and done without fore-thinking and great consideration, for man is the greatest and most stupendous work of God.—Man hath not only a body in common with all inferior animals, but into his body was infused a soul of a far more noble nature and make—a rational principle to act according to the designs of His creation; that is, to contemplate the works of God, to admire His perfections, to worship Him, to live as becomes one who received his excellent being from Him, to converse with his fellow creatures that are of his own order, to maintain mutual love and society, and to serve God in consort. Man is a wonderful creature, and not undevedly [*sic*] said to be a little world, a world within himself, and containing whatever is found in the Creator.—In him is the spiritual and immaterial nature of God, the reasonableness of Angels, the sensitive power of brutes, the vegetative life of plants, and the virtue of all the elements he holds converse with in both worlds.—Thus man is crowned with glory and honor, he is the most remarkable workmanship of God. And is man such a noble creature and made to converse with his fellow men that are of his own order, to maintain mutual love and society, and to serve God in consort with each other?—then what can these God-provoking wretches think, who despise their fellow men, as tho' they were not of the same species with themselves, and would if in their power deprive them of the blessings and comforts of this life, which God in His bountiful goodness hath freely given to all His creatures to improve and enjoy? Surely such monsters never came out of the hand of God in such a forlorn condition.—Which brings me to consider the fall of man; and the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it, and freely to eat of every tree of the garden; here was His delightful employ and bountiful wages, and but one tree out of all that vast number he was forbidden to eat of. Concerning this garden, there have been different opinions about it by the learned, where it was, but the most of them agree that it was about the center of the earth, and that the four rivers parted or divided the four quarters of the world. The first was Pison, that was it which compasseth the land of Havilah; this river Pison is called by some Phasis, or Phasi Tigris, it runs (they say) by that Havilah whither the Amalekites fled, see 1 Sam. xv. 7, and divides it from the country of Susianna, and at last falls into the Persian Gulf, saith Galtruchius and others; but from the opinions of Christian writers, who hold that Havilah is India, and Pison the river Ganges. This was first asserted by Josephus, and from him Eustubius, Jerom, and most of the fathers received it, and not without good reason; for Moses here adds as a mark to know the place by, that there is gold, and the gold of that land is good; now it is confessed by all, that India is the most noted for gold, and of the best sort. It is added again, a note whereby to discover that place, that there is bedellium and the onyx stone—and India is famous for precious stones and pearls.—The name of the second river is Gihon, the same is it which compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia (or Cush as it is in the original) there is reason to believe that this Gihon is the river of Nile, as the forenamed Josephus and most of the ancient writers of the church hold, and

by the help of the river Nile, Paradise did as it were border upon Egypt, which is the principal part of the African Ethiopia, which the ancient writers hold is meant there: The name of the third river is Hiddekel, that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria, ver. 14. That it was a river belonging to Babylon is clear from Dan. x. 4; this is concluded to be the river Tygris, which divides Mesopotamia from Assyria, and goeth along with Euphrates, this being the great middle channel that ran through Edom or Babylon, and may be thought to take its name from its fructifying quality. These are the four grand landmarks which the all-wise and gracious God pleased to draw as the bounds and habitation of all nations which he was about to settle in this world; if so, what nation or people dare, without highly displeasing and provoking that God to pour down His judgments upon them.—I say, dare to despise or tyrannize over their lives or liberties, or encroach on their lands, or to enslave their bodies? God hath and ever will visit such a nation or people as this.—Envy and pride are the leading lines to all the miseries that mankind have suffered from the beginning of the world to this present day. What was it but these that turned the devil out of heaven into a hell of misery, but envy and pride?—Was it not the same spirit that moved him to tempt our first parents to sin against so holy and just a God, who had but just (if I may use the expression) turned his back from crowning Adam with honor and glory?—But envy at his prosperity hath taken the crown of glory from his head, and hath made us, his posterity, miserable.—What was it but this that made Cain murder his brother, whence is it but from these that our modern Cains call us Africans the sons of Cain? (We admit it if you please) and we will find from him and his sons Masonry began, after the fall of his father. Altho, Adam, when placed in the garden, God would not suffer him to be idle and unemployed in that happy state of innocence, but set him to dress and to keep that choice piece of earth; here he was to employ his mind as well as exercise his body; here he was to contemplate and study God's works; here he was to enjoy God, himself and the whole world, to submit himself wholly to his divine conduct, to conform all his actions to the will of his Maker; but by his sudden fall he lost that good will that he owed to his God, and for some time lost the study of God's works; but no doubt he afterwards taught his sons the art of Masonry; for how else could Cain after so much trouble and perplexity have time to study the art of building a city, as he did on the east of Eden, Gen. iv. 17, and without doubt he taught his sons the art, ver. 20, 21.

But to return, bad as Cain was, yet God took not from him his faculty of studying architecture, arts and sciences—his sons also were endowed with the same spirit, and in some convenient place no doubt they met and communed with each other for instruction. It seems that the all-wise God put this into the hearts of Cain's family thus to employ themselves, to divert their minds from musing on their father's murder and the woeful curse God had pronounced on him, as we don't find any more of Cain's complaints after this.

Similar to this we have in the 6 Gen., 12 & 13, that God saw that all

men had corrupted their way, and that their hearts were only evil continually; and 14, 15, 16 verses, the great Architect of the universe gives Noah a complete plan of the ark and sets him to work, and his sons as assistants, like deputy and two grand wardens. One thing is well known, our enemies themselves being judges, that in whatsoever nation or kingdom in the whole world where Masonry abounds most, there hath been and still are the most peaceable subjects, cheerfully conforming to the laws of that country in which they reside, always willing to submit to their magistrates and rulers, and where Masonry most abounds, arts and sciences, whether mechanical or liberal, all of them have a mighty tendency to the delight and benefit of mankind; therefore we need not question but the all-wise God by putting this into our hearts intended, as another end of our creation, that we should not only live happily ourselves, but be likewise mutually assisting to each other. Again, it is not only good and beneficial in a time of peace, in a nation or kingdom, but in a time of war, for that brotherly love that cements us together by the bonds of friendship, no wars or tumults can separate; for in the heat of war if a brother sees another in distress he will relieve him some way or other, and kindly receive him as a brother, preferring him before all others, according to the Apostle's exhortation in my text, as also a similar instance you have 1 Kings, x, from 31st to 38th verse, where you find Benhadad in great distress, having lost a numerous army in two battles, after his great boasting, and he himself forced to hide himself in a chamber, and sends a message to Ahab, king of Israel, to request only his life as a captive; but behold the brotherly love of a Mason! no sooner was the message delivered, but he cries out in a rapture—is he alive—he is my brother! Every Mason knows that they were both of the craft, and also the messengers. Thus far may suffice for the ancency of this grand art; as for the honor of it—it is a society which God himself has been pleased to honor ever since he breathed into Adam the breath of life, and hath from generation to generation inspired men with wisdom, and planned out and given directions how they should build, and with what materials. And first, Noah in building the ark wherein he was saved, while God in his justice was pleased to destroy the unbelieving world of mankind. The first thing Noah did upon his landing was to build an altar to offer sacrifice to that great God which had delivered him out of so great a deluge; God accepted the sacrifice and blessed him, and as they journey from the east towards the west, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and dwelt there, and his sons.

Nimrod the son of Cush, the son of Ham, first founded the Babylonian monarchy, and kept possession of the plains, and founded the first great empire at Babylon, and became grand master of all Masons, he built many splendid cities in Shinar, and under him flourished those learned mathematicians, whose successors were styled in the book of Daniel, Magi, or wise men, for their superior knowledge. The migration from Shinar commenced fifty-three years after they began to build the tower, and one hundred and fifty-four years after the flood, and they went off at various times and traveled east, west, north and south, with their mighty skill, and found the use

of it in settling their colonies; and from Shinar the arts were carried to distant parts of the earth, notwithstanding the confusion of languages, which gave rise to Masons faculty and universal practice of conversing without speaking, and of knowing each other by signs and tokens; they settled the dispersion in case any of them should meet in distant parts of the world who had been before in Shinar. Thus the earth was again planted and replenished with Masons the second son of Ham carried into Egypt; there he built the city of Heliopolis—Thebes with an hundred gates—they built also the statue of Sphynx, whose head was 120 feet round, being reckoned the first or earliest of the seven wonders of arts. Shem, the second son of Noah, remained at Ur of the Chaldes in Shinar, with his father and his great-grandson Heber, where they lived in private and died in peace: But Shem's offspring traveled into the south and east of Asia, and their offspring propagated the science and the art as far as China and Japan.

While Noah, Shem and Heber diverted themselves at Ur in mathematical studies, teaching Peleg, the father of Rehu, of Sereg, Nachor, and Terah, father of Abram, a learned race of mathematicians and geometricians; thus Abram, born two years after the death of Noah, had learned well the science and the art before the God of glory called him to travel from Ur of the Chaldes, but a famine soon forced him down to Egypt; the descendants of Abram sojourned in Egypt, as shepherds still lived in tents, practiced very little of the art of architecture till about eighty years before their Exodus, when by the overruling hand of providence they were trained up to the building with stone and brick, in order to make them expert Masons before they possessed the promised land; after Abram left Charran 430 years, Moses marched out of Egypt at the head of 600,000 Hebrews, males, for whose sakes God divided the Red Sea to let them pass through Arabia to Canaan. God was pleased to inspire their grand master Moses, and Joshua his deputy, with wisdom of heart; so the next year they raised the curious tabernacle or tent; God having called Moses up into the mount and gave him an exact pattern of it, and charges him to make it exactly to that pattern, and withal gave him the two tables of stone; these he broke at the foot of the mount; God gave him orders to hew two more himself, and after the likeness of the former. God did not only inspire Moses with wisdom to undertake the oversight of the great work, but he also inspired Bezaleel with knowledge to do all manner of cunning workmanship for it.—Having entered upon the Jewish dispensation, I must beg leave still to take a little notice of the Gentile nations, for we have but these two nations now to speak upon, namely, the Gentiles and the Jews, till I come to the Christian era.

The Cananites, Phenicians and Sidonians, were very expert in the sacred architecture of stone, who being a people of a happy genius and frame of mind, made many great discoveries and improvements of the sciences, as well as in point of learning. The glass of Sidon, the purple of Tyre, and the exceeding fine linen they wove, were the product of their own country and their own invention; and for their extraordinary skill in working of metals, in hewing of timber and stone; in a word, for their perfect knowledge of what

was solid in architecture, it need but be remembered that they had in erecting and decorating of the temple at Jerusalem, than which nothing can more redound to their honor, or give a clearer idea of what this one building must have been.—Their fame was such for their just taste, design, and ingenious inventions, that whatever was elegant, great or pleasing, was distinguished by way of excellence with the epithet of Sidonian.—The famous temple of Jupiter Hammon, in Libian Africa, was erected, that stood till demolished by the first Christians in those parts; but I must pass over many other cities and temples built by the Gentiles.

God having inspired Solomon with wisdom and understanding, he as grand master and undertaker, under God the great architect, sends to Hiram, king of Tyre, and after acquainting him of his purpose of building a house unto the name of the Lord his God, he sends to him for some of his people to go with some of his to Mount Lebanon, to cut down and hew cedar trees, as his servants understood it better than his own, and moreover he requested him to send him a man that was cunning, to work in gold and silver, and in brass, iron, purple, crimson and in blue, and that had skill to engrave with the cunning men, and he sent him Hiram, his name-sake; this Hiram, God was pleased to inspire with wisdom and understanding to undertake, and strength to go through the most curious piece of workmanship that was ever done on earth.—Thus Solomon as grand master, and Hiram as his deputy, carried on and finished that great work of the temple of the living God, the inside work of which, in many instances as well as the tabernacle, resembles men's bodies; but this is better explained in a well-filled lodge; but this much I may venture to say, that our blessed Saviour compared His sacred body to a temple, when he said, John ii, 19: Destroy this temple and I will raise it up again in three days; and the Apostle, 1 Peter, i, 14, says that shortly he should put off this tabernacle. I could show also that one grand end and design of Masonry is to build up the temple that Adam destroyed in Paradise—but I forbear. Thus hath God honored the Craft, or Masons, by inspiring men with wisdom to carry on his stupendous works.

It is worthy our notice to consider the number of Masons employed in the work of the Temple: Exclusive of the two Grand Masters, there were 300 princes, or rulers, 3300 overseers of the work, 80,000 stone squarers, setters, layers or builders, being able and ingenious Crafts, and 30,000 appointed to work in Lebanon, 10,000 of which every month, under Adoniram, who was the Grand Warden; all the free Masons employed in the work of the Temple was 119,600, besides 70,000 men who carried burdens, who were not numbered among Masons; these were partitioned into certain Lodges, although they were of different nations and different colors, yet were they in perfect harmony among themselves, and strongly cemented in brotherly love and friendship, till the glorious Temple of Jehovah was finished, and the capestone was celebrated with great joy—Having finished all that Solomon had to do, they departed unto their several homes, and carried with them the high taste of architecture to the different parts of the world, and built many other temples and cities in the Gentile nations, under the direction of many

wise and learned and royal Grand Masters, as Nebuchadnezzar over Babylon—Cyrus over the Medes and Persians—Alexander over the Macedonians—Julius Caesar over Rome, and a great number more I might mention of crowned heads of the Gentile nations who were of the Craft, but this may suffice.—I must just mention Herod the Great, before I come to the state of Masonry from the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ.—This Herod was the greatest builder of his day, the patron and Grand Master of many Lodges; he, being in the full enjoyment of peace and plenty, formed a design of new building the Temple of Jerusalem. The Temple built by the Jews after the captivity was greatly decayed, being 500 years standing, he proposed to the people that he would not take it down till he had all the materials ready for the new, and accordingly he did so, then he took down the old one and built a new one.—Josephus describes this Temple as a most admirable and magnificent fabric of marble, and the finest building upon earth.—Tiberius, having attained the imperial throne, became an encourager of the fraternity.

Which brings me to consider their freedom, and that will appear not only from their being free when accepted, but they have a free intercourse with all Lodges over the whole terrestrial [*sic*] globe; wherever arts flourish a man hath a free right (having a recommendation) to visit his brethren, and they are bound to accept him; these are the laudable bonds that unite Free Masons together in one indissoluble fraternity—thus in every nation he finds a friend, and in every climate he may find a house—this it is to be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.

Which brings me to answer some objections which are raised against the Masons, and the first is the irregular lives of the professors of it.—It must be admitted there are some persons who, careless of their own reputation, will consequently disregard the most instructive lessons—Some, I am sorry to say, are sometimes to be found among us; many by yielding to vice and intemperance, frequently not only disgrace themselves, but reflect dishonor on Masonry in general; but let it be known that these apostates are unworthy of their trust, and that whatever name or designation they assume, they are in reality no Masons: But if the wicked lives of men were admitted as an argument against the religion which they profess, Christianity itself, with all its divine beauties, would be exposed to censure; but they say there can be no good in Masonry because we keep it a secret, and at the same time these very men themselves will not admit an apprentice into their craft whatever, without enjoining secrecy on him, before they receive him as an apprentice; and yet blame us for not revealing our's.—Solomon says, Prov. xi. 12, 13, He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour but a man of understanding holdeth his peace; a tale-bearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. Thus I think I have answered these objections. I shall conclude the whole by addressing the Brethren of the African Lodge.

Dear and beloved brethren, I don't know how I can address you better than in the words of Nehemiah (who had just received liberty from the king

Artaxerxes, letters and a commission, or charter, to return to Jerusalem) that thro' the good hand of our God upon us we are here this day to celebrate the festival of St. John—as members of that honorable society of free and accepted Masons—as by charter we have a right to do—remember your obligations you are under to the great God, and to the whole family of mankind in the world—do all that in you lies to relieve the needy, support the weak, mourn with your fellow men in distress, do good to all men as far as God shall give you ability, for they are all your brethren, and stand in need of your help more or less—for he that loves everybody need fear nobody: But you must remember you are under a double obligation to the brethren of the craft of all nations on the face of the earth, for there is no party spirit in Masonry; let them make parties, who will, and despise those they would make, if they could, a species below them, and as not make of the same clay with themselves; but if you study the holy book of God, you will there find that you stand on the level not only with them, but with the greatest kings on the earth, as Men and as Masons, and these truly great men are not ashamed of the meanest of their brethren. Ancient history will produce some of the Africans who were truly good, wise, and learned men, and as eloquent as any other nation whatever though at present many of them in slavery, which is not a just cause of our being despised; for if we search history, we shall not find a nation on earth but has at some period or other of their existence been in slavery, from the Jews down to the English nation, under many Emperors, Kings and Princes; for we find in the life of Gregory, about the year 580, a man famous for his charity, that on a time when many merchants were met to sell their commodities at Rome, it happened that he passing by saw many young boys with white bodies, fair faces, beautiful countenances and lovely hair, set forth for sale; he went to the merchant, their owner, and asked him from what country he brought them; he answered from Britain, where the inhabitants were generally so beautiful. Gregory (sighing,) said, alas! for grief, that such fair faces should be under the power of the prince of darkness, and that such bodies should have their souls void of the grace of God.

I shall endeavor to draw a few inferences on this discourse by way of application.—

My dear Brethren, let us pray to God for a benevolent heart, that we may be enabled to pass through the various stages of this life with reputation, and that great and infinite Jehovah, who overrules the grand fabric of nature, will enable us to look backward with pleasure, and forward with confidence—and in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, the well-grounded hope of meeting with that mercy from our Maker which we have ever been ready to show to others, will refresh us with the most solid comfort, and fill us with the most unspeakable joy.

And should not this learn us that new and glorious commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples, when he urges it to them in these words—Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.—Our Lord repeats and recommends this as the most indispensable duty

and necessary qualification of his disciples, saying, hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.—And we are expressly told by the Apostle, that charity, or universal love and friendship, is the end of the commandment.

Shall this noble and unparalleled example fail of its due influence upon us—shall it not animate our hearts with a like disposition of benevolence and mercy, shall it not raise our emulation and provoke our ambition—to go and do likewise.

Let us then beware of such a selfishness as pursues pleasure at the expense of our neighbor's happiness, and renders us indifferent to his peace and welfare; and such a self-love is the parent of disorder and the source of all those evils that divide the world and destroy the peace of mankind; whereas Christian charity—universal love and friendship—benevolent affections and social feelings, unite and knit men together, render them happy in themselves and useful to one another, and recommend them to the esteem of a gracious God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The few inferences that have been made on this head must be to you, my worthy brethren, of great comfort, that every one may see the propriety of a discourse on brotherly love before a society of free Masons—who knows their engagements as men and as Christians, have superadded the bonds of this ancient and honorable society—a society founded upon such friendly and comprehensive principles, that men of all nations and languages, or sects of religion, are and may be admitted and received as members, being recommended as persons of a virtuous character.

Religion and virtue, and the continuance and standing of this excellent society in the world—its proof of the wisdom of its plan—and the force of its principles and conduct has, on many occasions, been not a little remarkable—as well among persons of this, as among those of different countries, who go down to the sea and occupy their business in the great waters, they know how readily people of this institution can open a passage to the heart of a brother; and in the midst of war, like a universal language, is understood by men of all countries—and no wonder.—If the foundation has been thus laid in wisdom by the great God, then let us go on with united hearts and hands to build and improve upon this noble foundation—let love and sincere friendship in necessity instruct our ignorance, conceal our infirmities, reprove our errors, reclaim us from our faults—let us rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with those that weep—share with each other in our joys, and sympathize in our troubles.

And let the character of our enemies be to resent affronts—but our's to generously remit and forgive the greatest; their's to blacken the reputation and blast the credit of their brethren—but our's to be tender of their good name, and to cast a veil over all their failings; their's to blow the coals of contention and sow the seeds of strife among men—but our's to compose their differences and heal up their breaches.

In a word, let us join with the words of the Apostle John in the 19th chapter of Revelations, and after these things I heard a great voice of much

people in heaven, saying, Alleluia, salvation and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments—and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia; and a voice came out of the throne, saying, praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

To conclude the whole, let it be remembered; that all that is outward, whether opinions, rites or ceremonies, cannot be of importance in regard to eternal salvation, any further than they have a tendency to produce inward righteousness and goodness—pure, holy, spiritual and benevolent affections can only fit us for the kingdom of heaven; and therefore the cultivation of such must needs be the essence of Christ's religion—God of his infinite mercy grant that we may make this true use of it. Unhappily, too many Christians, so called, take their religion not from the declarations of Christ and his apostles, but from the writings of those they esteem learned.—But, I am to say, it is from the New-Testament only, not from any books whatsoever, however piously wrote, that we ought to seek what is the essence of Christ's religion; and it is from this fountain I have endeavored to give my hearers the idea of Christianity in its spiritual dress, free from any human mixtures—if we have done this wisely we may expect to enjoy our God in the world that is above—in which happy place, my dear brethren, we shall all, I hope, meet at that great day, when our Great Master shall sit at the head of the great and glorious Lodge in heaven—where we shall all meet to part no more for ever and ever—Amen.■

3

A CHARGE DELIVERED TO THE BRETHREN OF THE AFRICAN LODGE

Prince Hall



A leading organizer of Boston's eighteenth-century black community, Prince Hall (1735–1807) left an enduring institutional legacy. Little of his early life, however, can be recounted with certainty. Perhaps born in Barbados, he was enslaved by William Hall of Boston, a leather dresser, for twenty-one years and was finally manumitted in 1770.

On March 6, 1775, Hall and fourteen other free blacks were inducted

into the order of Free and Accepted Masons by British soldiers stationed near Boston. With the departure of the British less than two weeks later, Hall and the other black members were permitted to continue meeting and on July 3 formed the provisional African Lodge No. 1, the first black Masonic lodge in the United States. After the war (in which Hall is believed to have fought), Hall as grand master of the lodge petitioned for and received a permanent charter, authorized in April 1787. African lodges were soon formed in other cities and joined with Boston's lodge in the Prince Hall Solidarity. By 1977, Hall biographer Charles Wesley notes, there were more than fifty-five hundred lodges with over half a million members organized under the Prince Hall designation.

Hall and other African Americans saw in Masonry an institution with great political power in the early republic, a society for mutual aid and benefit, and a platform for appeals to social justice. Hall and three fellow Masons were among those African Americans who petitioned the Massachusetts state legislature in 1777 to abolish slavery. In 1787, in the midst of Shays's Rebellion and a new wave of discrimination against Boston's black residents, Hall and other African lodge members again petitioned the legislature but this time asked the state to support the voluntary return of black citizens to Africa, "where we shall live among our equals, and be more comfortable and happy, than we can be in our present situation." Hall's appeal constituted the "first major statement on the subject in Afro-American history," according to Kaplan and Kaplan (*The Black Presence*, 2007). When no action was taken on his back-to-Africa proposal, Hall renewed his efforts to combat slavery and racial discrimination in Massachusetts.

On June 25, 1792, Hall delivered the speech reprinted below at the Charlestown meeting hall of William Smith. In it he identifies the principles of Masonry and duties of membership in the lodge. Hall praises the principles of Masonry but also alludes to his anger and dismay at the continuing segregation of Masonic lodges and at the discriminatory attitudes and practices of white Masons toward the members of the African lodges. Near the end of his speech, Hall wonders aloud whether the medieval Masonic order was segregated even after the spread of Christianity to Africa: "whether, if they were all whites, they would refuse to accept them as their fellow Christians and brother Masons; or whether there were any so weak, or rather foolish, as to say, because they were blacks, they would make their lodge or army too common or too cheap?" The Prince Hall Grand Lodge did not gain full recognition from the English Grand Lodge until 1996.

Hall's speech was printed and sold at the Bible and Heart in Boston; it was reprinted in Dorothy Porter, ed., *Early Negro Writing, 1700–1837* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991). For additional biographical material on Hall, see Charles Wesley, *Prince Hall: Life and Legacy* (Washington, D.C.: United Supreme Council, 1977); and Sidney Kaplan and Emma Nogrady

Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 203–14.

DEarly and well beloved Brethren of the African Lodge, as through the goodness and mercy of God, we are once more met together, in order to celebrate the Festival of St. John the Baptist; it is requisite that we should on these public days, and when we appear in form, give some reason as a foundation for our so doing, but as this has been already done, in a discourse delivered in substance by our late Reverend Brother *John Marrant*, and now in print,

I shall at this time endeavour to raise part of the superstructure, for howsoever good the foundation may be, yet without this it will only prove a Babel. I shall therefore endeavour to shew the duty of a Mason; and the first thing is, that he believes in one Supreme Being, that he is the great Architect of this visible world, and that he governs all things here below by his almighty power, and his watchful eye is over all our works. Again we must be good subjects to the laws of the land in which we dwell, giving honour to our lawful Governors and Magistrates, giving honour to whom honour is due; and that we have no hand in any plots or conspiracies or rebellion, or side or assist in them: for when we consider the blood shed, the devastation of towns and cities that hath been done by them, what heart can be so hard as not to pity those our distress brethren, and keep at the greatest distance from them.* However just it may be on the side of the oppressor, yet it doth not in the least, or rather ought not, abate that love and fellow-feeling which we ought to have for our brother fellow men.

The next thing is love and benevolence to all the whole family of mankind, as God's make and creation, therefore we ought to love them all, for love or hatred is of the whole kind, for if I love a man for the sake of the image of God which is on him, I must love all, for he made all, and upholds all, and we are dependant upon him for all we do enjoy and expect to enjoy in this world and that which is to come.—Therefore he will help and assist all his fellow-men in distress, let them be of what colour or nation they may, yea even our very enemies, much more a brother Mason. I shall therefore give you a few instances of this from Holy Writ, and first, how did Abraham prevent the storm, or rebellion that was rising between Lot's servants and his? Saith Abraham to Lot, let there be no strife I pray thee between me and thee, for the land is before us, if you will go to the left, then I will go to the

*Hall may be referring here to Shays's Rebellion, which ignited western Massachusetts in 1786 and 1787. Revolutionary War veteran Captain Daniel Shays led a revolt of indebted farmers and others. Prince Hall offered the assistance of the African lodge in helping to quell the rebellion, but this offer was refused by Governor Bowdoin. See Sidney Kaplan and Emma Nogrady Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 258–59. Hall may instead be referring to recent slave uprisings in Louisiana and Virginia. See Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), 209–14.

right, and if you will go to the right, then I will go to the left. They divided and peace was restored. I will mention the compassion of a blackman to a Prophet of the Lord, Ebedmelech, when he heard that Jeremiah was cast into the dungeon, he made intercession for him to the King, and got liberty to take him out from the jaws of death. See Jer. xxxviii, 7-13.

Also the prophet Elisha after he had led the army of the Eramites blindfold into Samaria, when the King in a deriding manner said, my *Father* (not considering that he was as much their Father as his) shall I smite, or rather kill them out of the way, as not worthy to live on the same earth, or draw the same air with himself; so eager was he to shed his brethren's blood, that he repeats his blood-thirsty demand, but the Prophet after reproaching him therefore, answers him no, but set bread and water before them; or in other words, give them a feast and let them go home in peace. See 2 Kings vi, 22-23.

I shall just mention the good deeds of the Samaritan, though at that time they were looked upon as unworthy to eat, drink or trade with their fellow-men, at least by the Jews; see the pity and compassion he had on a poor distressed and half dead stranger, see Luke x. from 30 to 37. See that you endeavour to do so likewise.—But when we consider the amazing condescending love and pity our blessed Lord had on such poor worms as we are, as not only to call us his friends, but his brothers, we are lost and can go no further in holy writ for examples to excite us to the love of our fellow-men.—But I am aware of an objection that may arise (for some men will catch at any thing) that is that they were not all Masons; we allow it, and I say that they were not all Christians, and their benevolence to strangers ought to shame us both, that there is so little, so very little of it to be seen in these enlightened days.

Another thing which is the duty of a Mason is, that he pays a strict regard to the stated meetings of the Lodge, for masonry is of a progressive nature, and must be attended to if ever he intends to be a good Mason; for the man that thinks that because he hath been made a Mason, and is called so, and at the same time will wilfully neglect to attend his Lodge, he may be assured he will never make a good Mason, nor ought he to be looked upon as a good member of the craft. For if his example was followed, where would be the Lodge; and besides what a disgrace is it, when we are at our set meetings, to hear that one of our members is at a drinking house, or at a card table, or in some worse company, this brings disgrace on the Craft: Again there are some that attend the Lodge in such a manner that sometimes their absence would be better than their Company (I would not here be understood a brother in disguise, for such an one hath no business on a level floor) for if he hath been displeased abroad or at home, the least thing that is spoken that he thinks not right, or in the least offends him, he will raise his temper to such a height as to destroy the harmony of the whole Lodge; but we have a remedy and every officer ought to see it put in execution. Another thing a Mason ought to observe, is that he should lend his helping hand to a brother in distress, and relieve him; this we may do various ways—for we may some-

times help him to a cup of cold water, and it may be better to him than a cup of wine. Good advice may be sometimes better than feeding his body, helping him to some lawful employment, better than giving him money; so defending his case and standing by him when wrongfully accused, may be better than clothing him; better to save a brother's house when on fire, than to give him one. Thus much may suffice.

I shall now cite some of our fore-fathers, for our imitation: and the first shall be Tertullian, who defended the Christians against their heathen false accusations, whom they charged with treason against the empire and the Emperor, because of their silent meetings: he proved that to be false for this reason, for in their meetings, they were wont to pray for the prosperity of the Empire, of Rome, and him also; and they were accused of being enemies to mankind, how can that be, said he, when their office is to love and pray for all mankind. When they were charged with worshipping the Sun, because they looked towards the East when they prayed; he defended them against this slander also, and proved that they were slandered, slighted and ill-treated, not for any desert of theirs, but only out of hatred of them and their profession. This friend of the distressed was born in Carthage in Africa, and died Anno Christi 202.

Take another of the same city, Cyprian, for his fidelity to his profession was such, that he would rather suffer death than betray his trust and the truth of the gospel, or approve of the impious worship of the Gentiles: He was not only Bishop of Carthage, but of Spain and the east, west and northern churches, who died Anno Christi 259.

But I have not time to cite but one more (out of hundreds that I could count of our Fathers, who were not only examples to us, but to many of their nobles and learned); that is, Augustine, who had engraven on his table these words

*He that doth love an absent Friend to jeer,
May hence depart, no room is for him here.*

His saying was that sincere and upright Prayer pierceth heaven, and returns not empty. That it was a shelter to the soul. A sacrifice to God and a scourge to the Devil. There is nothing, said he, more abateth pride and sin than the frequent meditation on death; he cannot die ill, that lives well, and seldom doth he die well, that lives ill: Again, if men want wealth, it is not to be unjustly gotten, if they have it they ought by good works to lay it up in heaven: And again he that hath tasted the sweetness of divine love will not care for temporal sweetness. The reasonable soul made in the likeness of God may here find much distraction, but no full satisfaction; not to be without afflictions, but to overcome them, is blessedness. Love is as strong as death; as death kills the body, so love of eternal life kills worldly desires and affections. He called Ingratitude the Devil's sponge, wherewith he wipes out all the favours of the Almighty. His prayer was: Lord give first what thou

requirest, and then require of me what thou wilt. This good man died Anno Christi 430.

The next is Fulgentius, his speech was, why travel I in the world which can yield me no future, nor durable reward answerable to my pains? Thought it better to weep well, than to rejoice ill, yet if joy be our desire, how much more excellent is their joy, who have a good conscience before God, who dread nothing but sin, study to do nothing but to accomplish the precepts of Christ. Now therefore let me change my course, and as before I endeavoured amongst my noble friends to prove more noble, so now let my care and employment be among the humble and poor servants of Christ, and become more humble that I may help and instruct my poor and distressed brethren.

Thus, my brethren, I have quoted a few of your reverend fathers for your imitation, which I hope you will endeavour to follow, so far as your abilities will permit in your present situation and the disadvantages you labour under on account of your being deprived of the means of education in your younger days, as you see it is at this day with our children, for we see notwithstanding we are rated for that, and other Town charges, we are deprived of that blessing. But be not discouraged, have patience, and look forward to a better day; Hear what the great Architect of the universal world saith, *Aethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto me*. Hear also the strange but bold and confident language of *J. Husk*, who just before the executioner gave the last stroke, said, *I challenge you to meet me an hundred years hence*. But in the mean time let us lay by our recreations, and all superfluities, so that we may have that to educate our rising generation, which was spent in those follies. Make you this beginning, and who knows but God may raise up some friend or body of friends, as he did in *Philadelphia*, to open a School for the blacks here, as that friendly city has done there.

I shall now shew you what progress Masonry hath made since the siege and taking of Jerusalem in the year 70, by Titus Vespasian; after a long and bloody siege, a million of souls having been slain or had perished in the city, it was taken by storm and the city set on fire. There was an order of men called the order of St. John, who besides their other engagements, subscribed to another, by which they bound themselves to keep up the war against the Turks. These men defended the temple when on fire, in order to save it, so long, that Titus was amazed and went to see the reason of it; but when he came so near as to behold the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, he was amazed, and shed tears, and said, no wonder these men should so long to save it. He honored them with many honors, and large contributions were made to that order from many kingdoms; and were also knighted. They continued 88 years in Jerusalem, till that city was again retaken by the Turks, after which they resided 104 years in the Cyrean city of Ptolemy, till the remains of the Holy Conquest were lost. Whereupon they settled on the Island of Cyprus, where they continued 18 years, till they found an opportunity to take the Island Rhodes; being masters of that, they maintained it for 213 years, and from thence they were called knights of Rhodes, till in the year 1530 they took their residence in the Island of Malta, where they have continued to this day,

and are distinguished by the name of the knights of Malta. Their first Master was Villaret in the year 1099. Fulco Villaret in the year 1322, took the Island of Rhodes, and was after that distinguished by the title of Grand Master, which hath devolved to his Successors to this day.

Query, Whether at that day, when there was an African church, and perhaps the largest Christian church on earth, whether there was no African of that order; or whether, if they were all whites, they would refuse to accept them as their fellow Christians and brother Masons; or whether there were any so weak, or rather so foolish, as to say, because they were blacks, that would make their lodge or army too common or too cheap? Sure this was not our conduct in the late war; for then they marched shoulder to shoulder, brother soldier and brother soldier, to the field of battle; let who will answer; he that despises a black man for the sake of his colour, reproacheth his Maker, and he hath resented it, in the case of Aaron and Miriam. See for this Numbers xii.*

But to return: In the year 1787 (the year in which we received our charter) there were 489 lodges under charge of his late Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland; whose memory will always be esteemed by every good Mason.

And now, my African brethren, you see what a noble order you are members of. My charge to you is, that you make it your study to live up to the precepts of it, as you know that they are all good; and let it be known this day to the spectators that you have not been to a feast of Bacchus, but to a refreshment with Masons; and see to it that you behave as such, as well at home as abroad; always to keep in your minds the obligations you are under, both to God and your fellow men. And more so, you my dear brethren of Providence, who are at a distance from, and cannot attend the Lodge here but seldom; yet I hope you will endeavour to communicate to us by letters of your welfare; and remember your obligations to each other, and live in peace and love as brethren.—We thank you for your attendance with us this day, and wish you a safe return.

If thus, we by the grace of God, live up to this our Profession; we may cheerfully go the rounds of the compass of this life, having lived according to the plumb line of uprightness, the square of justice, the level of truth and sincerity. And when we are come to the end of time, we may then bid farewell to that delightful Sun and Moon, and the other planets, that move so beautifully round her in their orbits, and all things here below, and ascend to that new Jerusalem, where we shall not want these tapers, for God is the Light thereof; where the Wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

Then shall we hear and see and know,

All we desir'd and wish'd below,

*When Aaron and Miriam denounce Moses for having "married an Ethiopian woman," they are stricken with leprosy in God's wrath.

And every power find sweet employ,
 In that eternal world of joy.
 Our flesh shall slumber in the ground,
 Till the last trumpet's joyful sound,
 Then burst the chains with sweet surprize,
 And in our Saviour's image rise.■

4

PRAY GOD GIVE US THE STRENGTH TO BEAR UP UNDER ALL OUR TROUBLES

Prince Hall



On June 24, 1797, Prince Hall delivered a Masonic sermon to the African lodge at Menotomy (later West Cambridge), Massachusetts, in which he strongly denounced the African slave trade and the shameful abuse of people of color in Boston and expressed faith that God would soon end these and other evils. Boston society was thoroughly segregated in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Racial hostility and discrimination were rampant in every sphere of the city's economic and social life. Hall's 1797 address catalogs some of the daily insults and risks of physical assault to which African Americans in Boston were subjected "at such a degree that you may truly be said to carry your lives in your hands." As in his 1792 address, Hall draws upon the Bible for examples of interracial tolerance and respect and upon the Haitian Revolution as a beacon of hope.

Self-educated, Hall was particularly outraged by the complete denial of formal education to black residents, although he is careful to explain in this speech that unschooled blacks may be intelligent, wise, and knowledgeable. Blacks were taxed to support educational institutions whose services they were denied, he argued in his 1787 petition to the Massachusetts state legislature for educational funding. Hall's petition was denied. In 1796, the year before the speech that appears below, Hall had appealed to the selectmen of the city of Boston to establish a school for black children. The selectmen agreed in principle but said there was no building in which such a school might be held. In 1800, with funding from the city selectmen, Hall started the school in his own home, employing Harvard students as instructors. Hall died on December 4, 1807.

The text of the speech was published as a pamphlet and is reprinted in Dorothy Porter, ed., Early Negro Writing, 1760–1837 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 70–78. An alternate version, previously reprinted in Voice of Black America, appears in William Nell's Colored Patriots of the American Revolution (1855).

Beloved Brethren of the African Lodge, 'Tis now five years since I deliver'd a Charge to you on some parts and points of Masonry. As one branch or superstructure on the foundation; when I endeavoured to shew you the duty of a Mason to a Mason, and charity or love to all mankind, as the mark and image of the great God, and the Father of the human race.

I shall now attempt to shew you that it is our duty to sympathise with our fellow men under their troubles, the families of our brethren who are gone: we hope to the Grand Lodge above, here to return no more. But the cheerfulness that you have ever had to relieve them, and ease their burdens, under their forrows, will never be forgotten by them; and in this manner you will never be weary in doing good.

But my brethren, although we are to begin here, we must not end here; for only look around you and you will see and hear of numbers of our fellow men crying out with holy Job, Have pity on me, O my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me. And this is not to be confined to parties or colours; not to towns or states; not to a kingdom, but to the kingdoms of the whole earth, over whom Christ the king is head and grand master.

Among these numerous sons and daughters of distress, I shall begin with our friends and brethren; and first, let us see them dragg'd from their native country by the iron hand of tyranny and oppression, from their dear friends and connections, with weeping eyes and aching hearts, to a strange land and strange people, whose tender mercies are cruel; and there to bear the iron yoke of slavery & cruelty till death as a friend shall relieve them. And must not the unhappy condition of these our fellow men draw forth our hearty prayer and wishes for their deliverance from these merchants and traders, whose characters you have in the xviii chap. of the Revelations, 11, 12, & 13 verses, and who knows but these same sort of traders may in a short time, in the like manner, bewail the loss of the African traffick, to their shame and confusion: and if I mistake not, it now begins to dawn in some of the West-India islands;* which puts me in mind of a nation (that I have somewhere read of) called Ethiopians, that cannot change their skin: But God can and will change their conditions, and their hearts too; and let Boston and the world know, that He hath no respect of persons; and that that bulwark of envy, pride, scorn and contempt, which is so visible to be seen in some and felt, shall fall, to rise no more.

When we hear of the bloody wars which are now in the world, and thou-

*The slave insurrection on the French colony of Saint Domingue began in August 1791 and led to the establishment of the Republic of Haiti.

sands of our fellow men slain; fathers and mothers bewailing the loss of their sons; wives for the loss of their husbands; towns and cities burnt and destroyed; what must be the heart-felt sorrow and distress of these poor and unhappy people!* Though we cannot help them, the distance being so great, yet we may sympathize with them in their troubles, and mingle a tear of sorrow with them, and do as we are exhorted to—weep with those that weep.

Thus my brethren we see what a chequered world we live in. Sometimes happy in having our wives and children like olive branches about our tables; receiving the bounties of our great Benefactor. The next year, or month, or week we may be deprived of some of them, and we go mourning about the streets, so in societies; we are this day to celebrate this Feast of St. John's, and the next week we might be called upon to attend a funeral of some one here, as we have experienced since our last in this Lodge. So in the common affairs of life we sometimes enjoy health and prosperity; at another time sickness and adversity, crosses and disappointments.

So in states and kingdoms; sometimes in tranquility, then wars and tumults; rich today, and poor tomorrow; which shews that there is not an independent mortal on earth, but dependent one upon the other, from the king to the beggar.

The great law-giver, Moses, who instructed by this father-in-law, Jethro, an Ethiopian, how to regulate his courts of justice and what sort of men to choose for the different offices; hear now my words, said he, I will give you counsel, and God shall be with you; be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God, and thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shall shew the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do: moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, of hundreds and of tens.

So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he said. Exodus xviii. 22–24.

This is the first and grandest lecture that Moses ever received from the mouth of man; for Jethro understood geometry as well as laws, *that* a Mason may plainly see: so a little captive servant maid by whose advice Nomen, the great general of Syria's army, was healed of his leprosy; and by a servant his proud spirit was brought down: 2 Kings v. 3–14. The feelings of this little captive for this great man, her captor, was so great, that she forgot her state of captivity, and felt for the distress of her enemy. Would to God (said she to her mistress) my lord were with the prophets in Samaria, he should be healed of his leprosy: So after he went to the prophet, his proud host was so haughty that he not only disdain'd the prophet's direction, but derided the good old prophet; and had it not been for his servant he would have gone to his grave with a double leprosy, the outward and the inward, in the heart, which is the worst of leprosy; a black heart is worse than a white leprosy.

How unlike was this great general's behaviour to that of as grand a char-

*England and France had been at war since 1793.

acter, and as well beloved by his prince as he was; I mean Obadiah, to a like prophet. See for this 1st Kings xviii. from 7 to the 16th.

And as Obadiah was in the way, behold Elijah met him, and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art not thou, my Lord, Elijah, and he told him, Yea, go and tell thy Lord, behold Elijah is here: and so on to the 16th verse. Thus we see that great and good men have, and always will have, a respect for ministers and servants of God. Another instance of this is in Acts viii. 27 to 31, of the European Eunuch, a man of great authority, to Philip, the apostle: here is mutual love and friendship between them. This minister of Jesus Christ did not think himself too good to receive the hand, and ride in a chariot with a black man in the face of day; neither did this great monarch (for so he was) think it beneath him to take a poor servant of the Lord by the hand, and invite him into his carriage, though but with a staff, one coat, and no money in his pocket. So our Grand Master, Solomon, was not asham'd to take the Queen of Sheba by the hand, and lead her into his court, at the hour of high twelve, and there converse with her on points of masonry (for if ever there was a female mason in the world she was one) and other curious matters; and gratified her, by shewing her all his riches and curious pieces of architecture in the temple, and in his house: After some time staying with her, he loaded her with much rich presents: he gave her the right hand of affection and parted in love.

I hope that no one will dare openly (tho' in fact the behaviour of some implies as much) to say, as our Lord said on another occasion, Behold a greater than Solomon is here. But yet let them consider that our Grand Master Solomon did not divide the living child, whatever he might do with the dead one, neither did he pretend to make a law to forbid the parties from having free intercourse with one another without the fear of censure, or be turned out of the synagogue.

Now my brethren, as we see and experience that all things here are frail and changeable and nothing here to be depended upon: Let us seek those things which are above, which are sure, and stedfast, and unchangeable, and at the same time let us pray to Almighty God, while we remain in the tabernacle, that he would give us the grace of patience and strength to bear up under all our troubles, which at this day God knows we have our share. Patience I say, for were we not possess'd of a great measure of it you could not bear up under the daily insults you meet with in the streets of Boston; much more on public days of recreation, how are you shamefully abus'd, and that at such a degree that you may truly be said to carry your lives in your hands, and the arrows of death are flying about your heads; helpless old women have their clothes torn off their backs, even to the exposing of their nakedness; and by whom are these disgraceful and abusive actions committed, not by the men born and bred in Boston, for they are better bred; but by a mob or horde of shameless, low-lived, envious, spiteful persons, some of them not long since, servants in gentlemen's kitchens, scouring knives, tending horses, and driving chaise. 'Twas said by a gentleman who saw that filthy behaviour in the common, that in all the places he had been in, he never saw

so cruel behaviour in all his life, and that a slave in the West-Indies, on Sunday or holidays enjoys himself and friends without any molestation.* Not only this man, but many in town who hath seen their behaviour to you, and that without any provocation—twenty or thirty cowards fall upon one man—have wonder'd at the patience of the Blacks: 'tis not for want of courage in you, for they know that they dare not face you man for man, but in a mob, which we despise, and had rather suffer wrong than to do wrong, to the disturbance of the community and the disgrace of our reputation: for every good citizen doth honor to the laws of the State where he resides.

My brethren, let us not be cast down under these and many other abuses we at present labour under: for the darkest is before the break of day. My brethren, let us remember what a dark day it was with our African brethren six years ago, in the French West-Indies. Nothing but the snap of the whip was heard from morning to evening; hanging, broken on the wheel, burning, and all manner of tortures inflicted on those unhappy people for nothing else but to gratify their masters pride, wantonness, and cruelty: but blessed be God, the scene is changed; they now confess that God hath no respect of persons, and therefore receive them as their friends, and treat them as brothers. Thus doth Ethiopia begin to stretch forth her hand, from a sink of slavery to freedom and equality.

Although you are deprived of the means of education, yet you are not deprived of the means of meditation; by which I mean thinking, hearing and weighing matters, men, and things in your own mind, and making that judgment of them as you think reasonable to satisfy your minds and give an answer to those who may ask you a question. This nature hath furnished you with, without letter learning; and some have made great progress therein, some of those I have heard repeat psalms and hymns, and a great part of a sermon, only by hearing it read or preached and why not in other things in nature: how many of this class of our brethren that follow the seas can foretell a storm some days before it comes; whether it will be a heavy or light, a long or short one; foretell a hurricane, whether it will be destructive or moderate, without any other means than observation and consideration.

So in the observation of the heavenly bodies, this same class without a telescope or other apparatus have through a smoak'd glass observed the eclipse of the sun: One being ask'd what he saw through his smoaked glass, said, Saw, saw, de clipsey, or de clipseys. And what do you think of it?—Stop, dere be two. Right, and what do they look like?—Look like, why if I tell you, they look like two ships sailing one bigger than tother; so they sail by one another, and make no noise. As simple as the answers are they have a meaning, and shew that God can out of the mouth of babes and Africans shew

*For a description of racial intolerance in Boston, see John Daniels, *In Freedom's Birthplace: A Study of the Boston Negroes* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1914); and James Horton and Lois Horton, *Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggle in the Antebellum North* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979).

forth his glory; let us then love and adore him as the God who defends us and supports us and will support us under our pressures, let them be ever so heavy and pressing. Let us by the blessing of God, in whatsoever state we are, or may be in, to be content; for clouds and darkness are about him; but justice and truth is his habitation; who hath said, Vengeance is mine and I will repay it, therefore let us kiss the rod and be still, and see the works of the Lord.

Another thing I would warn you against, is the slavish fear of man, which bringest a snare, saith Solomon. This passion of fear, like pride and envy, hath slain its thousands.—What but this makes so many perjure themselves; for fear of offending them at home they are a little depending on for some trifles: A man that is under a panic for fear, is afraid to be alone; you cannot hear of a robbery or house broke open or set on fire, but he hath an accomplice with him, who must share the spoil with him; whereas if he was truly bold, and void of fear, he would keep the whole plunder to himself: so when either of them is detected and not the other, he may be call'd to oath to keep it secret, but through fear, (and that passion is so strong) he will not confess, til the fatal cord is put on his neck; then death will deliver him from the fear of man, and he will confess the truth when it will not be of any good to himself or the community: nor is this passion of fear only to be found in this class of men, but among the great.

What was the reason that our African kings and princes have plunged themselves and their peaceable kingdoms into bloody wars, to the destroying of towns and kingdoms, but the fear of the report of a great gun or the glittering of arms and swords, which struck these kings near the seaports with such a panic of fear, as not only to destroy the peace and happiness of their inland brethren, but plung'd millions of their fellow countrymen into slavery and cruel bondage.

So in other countries; see Felix trembling on his throne. How many Emperors and kings have left their kingdoms and best friends at the sight of a handful of men in arms: how many have we seen that have left their estates and their friends and ran over to the stronger side as they thought; all through the fear of men, who is but a worm, and hath no more power to hurt his fellow worm, without the permission of God, than a real worm.

Thus we see, my brethren, what a miserable condition it is to be under the slavish fear of men; it is of such a destructive nature to mankind, that the scriptures every where from Genesis to the Revelations warns us against it; and even our blessed Saviour himself forbids us from this slavish fear of man, in his sermon on the mount; and the only way to avoid it is to be in the fear of God: let a man consider the greatness of his power, as the maker and upholder of all things here below, and that in Him we live, and move, and have our being, the giver of the mercies we enjoy here from day to day, and that our lives are in his hands, and that he made the heavens, the sun, moon and stars to move in their various orders; let us thus view the greatness of God, and then turn our eyes on mortal man, a worm, a shade, a wafer, and see whether he is an object of fear or not; on the contrary, you will think

him in his best estate to be but vanity, feeble and a dependent mortal, and stands in need of your help, and cannot do without your assistance, in some way or other; and yet some of these poor mortals will try to make you believe they are Gods, but worship them not. My brethren, let us pay all due respect to all whom God hath put in places of honor over us: do justly and be faithful to them that hire you, and treat them with that respect they may deserve; but worship no man. Worship God, this much is your duty as christians and as masons.

We see then how becoming and necessary it is to have a fellow feeling for our distres'd brethren of the human race, in their troubles, both spiritual and temporal—How refreshing it is to a sick man, to see his sympathising friends around his bed, ready to administer all the relief in their power; although they can't relieve his bodily pain yet they may ease his mind by good instructions and cheer his heart by their company.

How doth it cheer up the heart of a man when his house is on fire, to see a number of friends coming to his relief; he is so transported that he almost forgets his loss and his danger, and fills him with love and gratitude; and their joys and sorrows are mutual.

So a man wreck'd at sea, how must it revive his drooping heart to see a ship bearing down for his relief.

How doth it rejoice the heart of a stranger in a strange land to see the people cheerful and pleasant and are ready to help him.

How did it, think you, cheer the heart of those our poor unhappy African brethren, to see a ship commissioned from God, and from a nation that without flattery faith, that all men are free and are brethren; I say to see them in an instant deliver such a number from their cruel bolts and galling chains, and to be fed like men and treated like brethren. Where is the man that has the least spark of humanity, that will not rejoice with them; and bless a righteous God who knows how and when to relieve the oppressed, as we see he did in the deliverance of the captives among the Algerines; how sudden were they delivered by the sympathising members of the Congress of the United States, who now enjoy the free air of peace and liberty, to their great joy and surprize, to them and their friends.* Here we see the hand of God in various ways bringing about his own glory for the good of mankind, by the mutual help of their fellow men; which ought to teach us in all our straits, be they what they may, to put our trust in Him, firmly believing that he is able and will deliver us and defend us against all our enemies; and that no weapon form'd against us shall prosper; only let us be steady and uniform in our walks, speech and behaviour; always doing to all men as we wish and desire they would do to us in the like cases and circumstances.

Live and act as Masons, that you may die as Masons; let those despisers see, altho' many of us cannot read, yet by our searches and researches into

*From 1786 to 1797, Congress signed a series of treaties with the Barbary states pledging annual payments of tribute in exchange for a halt to piracy and the release of Americans taken prisoner by Barbary pirates.

men and things, we have supplied that defect; and if they will let us we shall call ourselves a charter'd lodge of just and lawful Masons; be always ready to give an answer to those that ask you a question; give the right hand of affection and fellowship to whom it justly belongs; let their colour and complexion be what it will, let their nation be what it may, for they are your brethren, and it is your indispensable duty so to do; let them as Masons deny this, and we & the world know what to think of them be they ever so grand: for we know this was Solomon's creed, Solomon's creed did I say, it is the decree of the Almighty, and all Masons have learnt it: tis plain market language, and plain and true facts need no apologies.


I shall now conclude with an old poem which I found among some papers:

*Let blind admirers handsome faces praise,
And graceful features to great honor raise,
The glories of the red and white express,
I know no beauty but in holiness;
If God of beauty be the uncreate
Perfect idea, in this lower state,
The greatest beauties of an human mould
Who most resemble Him we justly hold;
Whom we resemble not in flesh and blood,
But being pure and holy, just and good:
May such a beauty fall but to my share,
For curious shape or face I'll never care.■*

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ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF COLOR

Abraham Johnstone

 In 1745, a broadside was issued entitled *The Declaration and Confession of Jeffrey, Negro, who was executed in Worcester, October 17, 1745, for the Murder of his Mistress Tabitha Sanford, at Mendon, the 12th of September. A notice of the broadside was published in the Boston Evening Post of October 28, 1745, but there does not appear to be in existence any copy of the sheet itself or the "Declaration and Confession."*

Early in 1797, Abraham Johnstone, a free African American who had