

THE PRINCIPLES OF ODD FELLOWSHIP
Address Delivered by S. M. Crouch, Special Deputy for
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INTRODUCTION

Ladies, Gentlemen, and Brothers of the Order. Fraternity is inherent in man. It having been implanted therein by the Creator in the beginning. The hermit has always been the exception and not the rule. Men have always found that there is a greater efficiency in unity of purpose than in single endeavor. The "Bundle of Sticks" is an example of this unity, united and bound together one may exert his utmost strength and not be able to break them, but separated each may be easily broken. The centers of population are in the cities because men realize that greater things are to be accomplished in social, financial, civic and spiritual affairs by an association together. In my own native state, Ohio, we have great fields of territory that produce natural gas and coal. These fields would never have been developed if it had depended upon single individual effort; but by the association of men and capital together this territory was developed and the people have received the benefit of it. The same thing has been true in the building of the railroads of our country, the great trunk lines that bind the North and South the East and the West; if it had not been for the association of men and capital these would never have been built. It is also true in the great manufacturing industries of the world, and, we might almost say that it is a universal rule that where any great thing has been accomplished by mankind that it has been brought about by the association of men together for that purpose.

To satisfy this inherent quality in man numerous fraternities have been organized, with different aims in view, but only those deserve recognition that have for their object the uplift and the betterment of humanity. Measured by this rule let us see if the Independent Order of Odd Fellows is worthy of a place in the front rank of the world's great fraternities.

It is American born, the first lodge being instituted in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, April 26, 1819, with a membership of five. It is not yet a century old, but note its tremendous growth. The last report of the Sovereign Grand Lodge at Chattanooga, Tenn., in 1916, gives the total number of persons belonging to the Order December 31, 1915, as 2,683,497. The total receipts for 1915, \$17,822,992.79. Total relief paid in 1915, \$5,975,208.09. Invested funds of the Order, \$66,773,961.56. Total relief since 1830, \$166,808,700.69. There are in existence fifty-five Odd Fellows Homes in which the orphan children of deceased brothers are fed, clothed and educated, and in which aged and indigent brothers, and brothers' widows are cared for. These homes have a property valuation of \$5,869,873.08, with 4,414 residents. The number of residents admitted and taken care of since the opening of these homes is given as 10,516.

But the true greatness of Odd Fellowship does not consist in the things I have just mentioned. True, these are great, these accomplishments, but there are greater things in our beloved order than financial and numerical strength. Let us consider what binds this great brotherhood together, and what are the basic principles of this great order, founded almost a century ago and whose influence today is world wide. It is a triple chain of three golden links firmly welded together that binds the hearts of the millions that compose its world wide membership, and these three links of gold are FRIENDSHIP, LOVE and TRUTH.

Friendship

There may have been just as great friendship in the olden time, and there may be just as true and loyal friendships today, but I think you will all agree with me that few have been made of record that has equaled the friendship of David and Jonathan. Jonathan was a Prince in Israel, the son of Saul, Israel's first king. David the son of Jesse was a shepherd lad who tended his father's flocks on the hills of "Old Judea," those same hills that centuries afterward echoed to the songs of the Angels as they sang to other shepherds, watching their flocks by night, concerning the birth of a Redeemer of the world.

The Philistines, the ancient enemies of Israel, had descended upon the land in one of their periodical raids. Saul the king hastily gathered his army together marched against them to repel the invasion. The two armies lay encamped on opposite sides of a ravine and each seemed afraid to start the battle.

While the two armies lay thus encamped there came one day from out of the camp of the Philistines a huge giant more than eight feet tall, clothed in armor and bearing a huge shield and sword, who standing in full view of the army of Israel dared them to send up a man against him and thus decided the battle in single combat. And although Saul the king offered his daughter in marriage, a great sum of money and freedom of the man's house in Israel, yet no man in all the army of Israel could be found to accept the challenge. Day after day this giant stood before the host of Israel and taunted and derided them, and day after day there was found none to accept his gage of battle.

One day David the shepherd lad came into camp bearing provisions, sent by Jesse his father, to his other two sons who were soldiers in Saul's army, and as David stood in the presence of his brothers he saw the Philistine giant stand before the army of Israel and taunt and deride them, and he also saw that of all the army none had the courage to go up against this giant. And David in his amazement said to his brothers: "What means this?" "Has Israel lost faith in God, that her army can listen to the taunts and derision of this uncircumcized Philistine and not accept his challenge?" "But the brothers of David did not receive his rebuke kindly and in effect told him that they did not see how that he a mere stripling could help the matter any and that the best thing that he could do, in their opinion, was to go back home to his father. But David didn't go home, but instead he went to Saul the king and asked his permission to go and fight the giant. And Saul, because there was nothing else to do, gave the desired permission. The king wanted to clothe David in the royal armor, but the shepherd lad would have none of it and taking his sling with which he had been wont to protect his father's flock and gathering a few smooth stones as he crossed the dry bed of the ravine and placing them in the wallet by his side he went forth in the strength of Israel's God to meet the giant. The giant mad with rage, because Israel had sent this stripling to meet him, advanced breathing threats and taunts of derision, but David undismayed, and answering his threats with defiance, ran to meet his foe, and as he ran he fitted a stone in the sling, which he threw with such force and precision that striking the giant in the forehead he was felled to the earth, and David mounting the prostrate body drew the giant's own sword from its scabbard with which he severed the head from the body and carried back the head and sword to Israel's camp as trophies of his victory. The Philistine host is dis-

may, pursued by the now exulting forces of Israel even to the gates of their cities, with great slaughter.

Jonathan the Prince stood by his father's side and when David after having vanquished the stalwart champion of the Philistines—accepting a challenge which the bravest in the army of Israel feared to answer—there was something in the demeanor and the achievement of the modest but brave youth that instantly won the affection of Jonathan, and the record says, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

Thus began that great and memorable friendship that has ever since throughout all the ages been the admiration of the civilized world wherever this story has been told. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. He was presumably heir to his father's throne; yet, when his father became jealous of David, as likely to supplant him in the throne and rob Jonathan of the kingly honor and power which he meant to leave to him, the son and heir suffers not a shadow to pass upon his friendship with David upon this account. He was persuaded that David would be the next king. "Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee;" and in the fulness of his affection and admiration, he was willing to have it so. Not often in this selfish world has friendship endured such a test as this. When Saul sought the life of David, Jonathan again and again, sometimes at the risk of his own life, warned and protected him. Their covenant of friendship was never broken and finally when in that disastrous battle with the Philistines Saul and Jonathan were both slain, we can almost weep with David as standing by the dead body of his friend his soul pours forth its lamentation. "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been to me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

Such is the story of this sublime friendship, the first of the golden links in this triple chain. Brethren, is it not worthy of our admiration and imitation?

Love

Let us next consider the second golden link in this eternal chain of fraternity, which is LOVE.

And again I am going to bring you a lesson from Holy Writ to impress upon your minds this great precept.

One day the Master was teaching in the synagogue when a certain lawyer stood up and asked him the question: "Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And the Master answering said, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" And the lawyer quoting from the Mosaic law answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." And the Master said unto him, "Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live." But the lawyer not satisfied in his own mind, or perhaps seeking to justify himself, asked the further question, "And who is my neighbor?" And the Master answered by giving to the world that greatest of all exemplifications of the principle of love, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

This in substance is the teaching of the parable. A certain man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho, said Jesus, and on the way he fell among robbers, who stripped and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And as the poor fellow lay in this helpless condition by the roadside there came a priest of the temple that way. Of course this Jew, for he was a Jew, fully expected that this priest of his own religion and nationality would hasten to his relief; but strange to say, and to the poor fellows great surprise, although appealed to again and again, this priest was too busy with his religion to help a fellow countryman in his need and he passed by on the other side without rendering any assistance. Likewise a Levite, one who swung the golden censer in the temple, came that way, and again this poor Jew appeals for aid to one of his own people. But the Levite is, like the priest, too busy with his own affairs to give heed to suffering humanity, and so he too passed by on the other side. Oh, my friends, how many of us today in this age in which I think sometimes we are speed mad, in the hurry and push, and in the striving to acquire wealth and fame, how many of us I say are like the priest and Levite and refuse to leave our own affairs long enough to reach out a helping hand to our brother in his need.

A third man comes down the road, but when the poor stricken fellow by the roadside catches a glimpse of him all hope dies within his heart, for this third man is a hated Samaritan, an enemy of his people. The Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings with each other. They hated and despised each other, and usually made long detours around rather than pass through the territory of the other. The first impulse of this Samaritan was to leave the despised Jew by the roadside where he lay "But after all is he not my brother?" he reasoned, and there was that true spirit of love and fraternity within his heart that triumphed over national prejudice and difference of creed and that prompted him to extend a helping hand to his brother man in his time of need. And so the Samaritan bound up the poor sufferer's wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said, take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I when I come back again will pay thee." And the Master turning to the lawyer asked, "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" And the lawyer answered, "He that showed mercy on him." And the Master said to him, "Go and do thou likewise."

A neighborhood is not the creation of a surveyor's chain. It has no arbitrary boundaries, especially in this day of quick transportation and communication. Telegraph, telephone, wireless telegraphy, steam and electric railways, all tend to expansion, until today nations may be just as close neighbors as townships used to be. Who is my neighbor? If I lived on one of the fashionable boulevards of some beautiful southern city, with all of the luxuries of life at my command, and across the street lived another man in like condition as myself, and I invited him to dine with me, and he in like manner should invite me, then, in the common acceptance of the term we are neighbors. But this is merely social intercourse, not neighborhood. Let me give you a definition of neighborhood, such as I think the Master meant when He gave us the parable of the Good Samaritan. Listen, he is my neighbor who has need of me; and I am neighbor to him if I supply that need. My neighbor may live around the corner in the alley. He may have only the bare necessities of life. And if I take from my plenty and supply his needs in his time of distress, in the true spirit of fraternity and brotherhood, then am I his neighbor and he is mine.

Some few years ago a passenger train bound for the west rounding a curve ran into a rock that had rolled down the mountain side and lay upon the track. The

engine was thrown from the track and underneath the wreck was buried the engineer. The steam from a broken pipe literally cooked the flesh upon his bones, and his cries of agony was something awful to hear. Strong men quickly rescued him from the wreck and after laying him upon the bank by the roadside stood around listening to his moans of agony, but could think of nothing to help. Not so with a little woman who hurrying from the Pullman at the rear of the train and who kneeling at the side of the suffering man was quick to see his need and equally quick to act. She sent to the diner for oils and to the Pullman for linens and deftly and lovingly bound up the poor blistered body of the sufferer. Now my friends the social chasm between the rear Pullman and the engine cab of a trans-continental flyer is supposed to be as wide as the poles of the universe, and yet a woman's tender heart swung easily to the opposite side, and amidst the hiss of escaping steam and the groans of dying men, calmly answered the age old question, and found a neighbor in the seared and blackened victim of the wreck.

This is the conception which builds schools, founds hospitals and asylums for the unfortunate; supports the widow, and feeds, clothes and educates the orphan. And it is this conception which must organize among the nations a neighborhood whose limits shall encircle the earth; and make all humanity to feel the universal heartache, and its answering throb of pity; and bring all men in the brotherhood of love to realize their responsibility as the children of a common Father. Then will nation cease to lift up the sword against her neighbor nation; then shall the spear be turned into a pruning hook, and the sword into a ploughshare, and men will not go to war any more.

Truth

The last of the golden links in this triple chain of fraternity is the imperial virtue of truth.

What is truth? asked Pilate of Jesus of Nazareth, when this same Jesus stood before his judgment seat and boldly avowed that He had come to bear witness of the truth. And in answer to the statement of the Nazarene, Pilate scornfully asked, "What is truth?" And all down through the Ages since that time has rung this great fundamental question, What is truth? What is the truth concerning man today? Wherein lies his greatest power for good? What is man worth? Some one has said that a man's reputation is as men see him, but his character is what God knows him to be. Man sees the outward appearance, God reads the heart. Harold Bell Wright in his book "When A Man's A Man" deals with this subject of what a man is worth and wherein true worth lies. It has to do with the story of a young man, the son of a millionaire, who seemed to have no aim or object in life except to spend his father's money; and this young man fell in love with a beautiful young girl, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, and asked her to marry him, but greatly to his surprise she declined, and when pressed for her reason replied that she had been taught by her father that a man to be a man should have some object and aim in life and should be of some use to the world, and that she failed to see any indication in the life of this young man toward this standard of true manhood, and that was the reason for her refusal to marry him. In his disappointment and chagrin the young man went west, changed his name and sought employment on a ranch, and in the shadow of the mountains, with the great plains as far as the eye could see, under the starry firmament of God's own hand, in that country of the "Great West" where things seem to be cleansed of all dross and tinsel and sham, and things seem bigger than any where else in the world, there this young man learned wherein the true worth of man lay, that it was not in houses and lands, in bonds and stocks, but in character and usefulness and in the ability to serve God and his fellow man.

The world's standard concerning the worth of man today is in dollars and cents, and the world's standard is wrong. Shortly after the death of Harriman the great railroad magnate, two friends walking down the street were discussing his demise and one asked the other, how much did he leave? and his friend answered, he left it all: Now that is just the reason that the world's standard is wrong, because it makes the temporal things that we can't take with us when we leave this world the standard of man's worth. There is that within man that is greater than these, that which lives forever, that makes for the things that are eternal, and these are the things that are the more important, and these are the things wherein lie the true worth of man. Haven't you known of some old skinflint, who wasn't worth thirty cents to himself, his fellowman, or his God and yet he numbered his acres by the hundreds and his bank account by the thousands? I heard of one such once, who when a poor old cooper who had lost his limb, but who wanted to do something in order to keep out of the poor house, applied to him for a tree that belonged to the rich man and grew on a bank just above the cooper's humble home, offering to pay for it as soon as he could work it up. And do you think he got the tree? No he didn't, the old man was too stingy to let him have it. What was that man who owned all this worth? Listen, I'll tell you: A hundred souls like his could hold a justification inside of a mustard seed, and never hear of each other. That is what he is worth.

And again haven't you known one of God's noblemen in overalls, who maybe did not own the roof over his head, yet was rich in the love and respect of his fellowmen and the approval of his God? Why? because his hand was ever held out to help the other fellow who needed his help. As long as he had a dollar he was willing to divide it with the needy and helpless. What is such a one worth in comparison to other? Oh, there isn't any comparison.

Money isn't everything. Billy Sunday tells the following to illustrate this truth: Some years ago, before his conversion, while living in Chicago, Billy had a friend whose name was Jim. They were about the same age, had married about the same time, Jim had a little boy who was named Billy, after his friend Billy Sunday. Jim caught the gold fever and taking his wife and child went to Alaska to hunt for gold. Billy became converted and took up evangelistic work. Some few years afterwards Billy was holding a meeting in one of the coast towns, and a mutual friend of both these men, meeting Billy one day said to him, "Jim is coming home today, his ship is coming in now, let's go down to the wharf and meet him." And so they went down, and after the crowd had scattered out a little and they could reach Jim and his wife, they went to meet them and offer their congratulations. Billy clasped the hand of his old friend and said to him, "I'm glad to see you Jim, and I want to congratulate you, for I hear you struck it rich up in Alaska." Jim swelled up and said, "Yes I did Billy, and I've got money enough that I can just get anything I want." Billy didn't make any answer, but he noticed that the boy, his namesake, was not in sight. And so he said to Jim, "Jim where's little Billy?" and over Jim's face there came a cloud, and he seemed to forget all about his riches, and he said, "Oh Billy, that's the worst of it; little Billy couldn't stand the cold in Alaska, and so we left him there, buried under the

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