

Masonic Funeral Service

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

N. Wheatley & Sons Ltd., Station Street, Birmingham, 5.

At the conclusion of the Religious Service the following shall be read :—

The CHAPLAIN reads as follows :—

Brethren, the melancholy event which has caused us to assemble on the present occasion cannot have failed to impress itself on the mind of everyone present. The loss of a friend and brother, especially of one whose loss we now deplore, conveys a powerful appeal to our hearts, reminding us as it does of the uncertainty of life and of the vanity of earthly hopes and designs.

Amid the pleasures, the cares, and the various avocations of life, we are too apt to forget that upon US also the common lot of all mankind must one day fall, and that Death's dread summons may surprise us even in the meridian of our lives, and in the full spring-tide of enjoyment and success.

The ceremonial observances which we practice during the obsequies of a departed Brother are intended to remind us of "our own inevitable destiny," and to warn us that we also should be likewise ready, for we know not the day nor the hour when in the case of each of us "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

Then, brethren, let us lay these things seriously to heart ; let us strive in all things to act up to our Masonic profession, to live in accordance with the high moral precept, inculcated in our Ceremonies, and to practically illustrate in our lives and our actions the ancient tenets and established customs of the Order. Thus, in humble dependence, upon the mercy of the Most High, we may hope, when this transitory life with all its cares and sorrows shall have passed away, to rejoin this our departed friend and brother in the Grand Lodge above, where the world's Great Architect lives and reigns supreme.

CHANT (ornes)—So mote it be.

CHAPLAIN—May we be true and faithful, and may we live in fraternal affection one towards another, and die in peace with all mankind.

RESPONSE (to be sung)—So mote it be.

CHAPLAIN—May we practice that which is wise and good, and always act in accordance with our Masonic profession.

RESPONSE (to be sung)—So mote it be.

CHAPLAIN—May the Great Architect of the Universe bless us and direct us in all that we undertake and do in His Holy Name.

RESPONSE (to be sung)—So mote it be.

CHAPLAIN—Glory be to God on high ! on earth peace ! good will towards men !

RESPONSE (to be sung)—So mote it be, now, henceforth, and for evermore.

(The Chaplain then concludes the ceremony at the grave in the following words) :—

CHAPLAIN—From time immemorial it has been the custom among the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, at the request of a brother on his death-bed, to accompany his corpse to the place of interment, and there to deposit his remains with the usual formalities of the Order. In conformity with this usage, and at the special request of our deceased brother, whose loss we deeply deplore, we are here assembled as Freemasons, to consign his body to the earth, and, openly before the world, to offer up in his memory the last tribute of our fraternal affection, thereby demonstrating the sincerity of our esteem for our deceased brother, and our inviolable attachment to the principles of the Order.

The Great Creator having been pleased in His infinite wisdom to move our worthy brother from the cares and troubles of his transitory life, and thereby to weaken the ties by which we are united to the world, may WE who survive him, anticipating OUR own approaching end, be more strongly cemented in the bonds of union and friendship, and, during the short space which is allotted to us in our present existence, may we wisely and usefully employ our time in the interchange of kind and fraternal acts, and may we strive earnestly to promote the welfare and happiness of our fellow men.

Unto the grave we consign the body of our deceased friend and brother, there to remain until the general resurrection, in the fullest confidence that both body and soul will then arise to partake of the joys which have been prepared for the righteous from the beginning of the world. And may Almighty God, of His infinite goodness, at the last grand tribunal, extend His mercy towards him, and all of US, and crown our hope with everlasting bliss, in the realms of a boundless eternity ! This we beg, for the honour of His Name, to whom be glory, now and for ever.

CHANT (omnes) —So mote it be.

Now the evening shadows closing,
Worn from toil to peaceful rest ;
Mystic arts and rites reposing,
Sacred in each faithful breast.

God of light, whose love unceasing,
Doth to all Thy works extend ;
Crown our order with Thy blessing,
Build, sustain us to the end.

Humbly now we bow before Thee,
Grateful for Thy aid divine ;
Everlasting power and glory,
Mighty Architect be Thine.

So mote it be.