

Address by Brother J. H. Knauss

Tablet Service Ogden Lodge No. 719

B. P. O. E.

Tuesday, October 9th, 1917

IN MEMORIAM

Thomas Wilkins Jones

Born, September 12th, 1834—Died, August 10th, 1917.

Upon the altar of every Elks' Lodge there lies the open Bible, known as the Book of Books and the Book of Law. It is written therein that it is appointed unto men once to die, and although as reasonable and reasoning beings and from observation and experience we know this to be true, we never are expecting, or expecting, we never are quite prepared for the Grim Reaper to enter our homes, or the homes of those dear to us and take a loved one away, but we do know that there is a law of compensation which, by degrees, gives us the strength and fortitude to bear the grief and sorrow caused by the severing of ties which have bound one to the other.

As in the case of this dear brother, whose name is to be inscribed upon the roll of our honored dead, through the several months of failing health we became convinced that his earthly pilgrimage was fast drawing to a close, and therefore we were somewhat prepared for the shock when the word came on Friday, August 10th, that like a tired child he had quietly passed into that sleep that knows no waking on this earth.

Again were we drawn more closely together by this mysterious event which is called Death, and with clasped hands and looking into each others' faces we were conscious of that mutual sympathy which is born of a common sorrow.

It is entirely appropriate that this service should be held in this lodge room, where he, whose memory is so dear, was wont to mingle with us in the spirit of true fraternity, for here it was that he loved to be and participate in the exemplification of our four cardinal principles, Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. He keenly appreciated these teachings, and although he knew that esteem, friendship and love could be found in the world outside, he also knew and held sacred as a priceless possession that within these walls we gave and received the tokens of an eternal friendship. So I repeat that it is most fitting that this service should be held here, for who dare assert as a fact that Brother Jones is not with us at this moment, not as a memory, but as a real presence?

About 20 years ago the Hon. Thomas B. Reed spoke these words: "No time has ever been, and no time can ever be, when the closing of life will cease to be a great event. What it means to him who has passed away only revelation or fancy can depict. What, however, it is to him it will also be to all of us. We tread

the path with no consciousness of companionship, and yet we know that all the countless generations of the myriad years of the past and of all the years of the future are our sure companions. To us, then, who survive, there comes a certain tenderness of heart which has never come before. The rival is a rival no longer—the hopes and ambitions have fallen by the wayside. In like manner ours will surely fall. If we have been foes our greatest longing in the first revulsion of feeling is to call oblivion down on the fierce fights of the past, our first desire is to atone for the selfish greed of power or money or place which led to the long and bitter contentions and the cruel enmities now ended forever. The funeral oration, however, has not yet passed away, nor will it ever pass away until the last man has taken his place in the innumerable caravan. Families and friends love to treasure up words spoken of their dead companions and to hold for truths forever, the outbursts of kindly enthusiasm which death has ushered in.” So we have the warrant of that eminent man for the kindly testimonies that are spoken in praise of the dead. I wish that every member of this lodge was present here tonight, for I feel very sure that the majority of our local membership knew the true worth of our brother and they would heartily acquiesce in this humble tribute.

On the first day of my advent in Ogden on November 1st, 1882, I was introduced to Brother Jones by a mutual friend, a former resident of this city. I had been living in the far west for years, and I liked the warm, generous companionship and whole-heartedness of men like Brother Jones, who were willing to deny themselves the luxuries and indulgences of older and more settled communities and devote their disciplined lives and labors to the building up of new commonwealths on such firm and solid foundations as would make certain the comfort, safety and prosperity of those who should come after them. Through all the years which have since intervened, we were intimate and confidential friends and until the past few months there were few days that I did not see and converse with him.

To me he laid bare his inmost soul. He often spoke of the early days of trials and hardships; the hard biting days of want; the griefs, sorrows and tribulations, but through them all he was animated by an inflexible determination to overcome all difficulties. We may well believe that he maintained his high calling through all the vicissitudes of the pioneering years, in which he was an important factor.

Prior to the institution of this lodge on July 9th, 1901, the principles and purposes of the Order were explained to him and he was invited to be one of the 55 charter members. Although never before had he been a member of a fraternal organization or secret society, he was glad to be connected with a body of men who were bound together by a sacred and binding obligation that would cause them to be, and remain, true to each other. For many years prior thereto there had been sharp division in political, as well as religious, sentiment in Utah, and there prevailed such suspicion and distrust from one to the other that the people generally had become embittered, and it was refreshing to Brother Jones to be identified with men who could and would meet on the common ground of mutual confidence.

He believed in liberty of thought and freedom of expression, and anything that savored of oppression or force was met by his determined opposition and unsparing denunciation. I remember, about 15 years ago, that we met one evening by appointment, and I found him very much depressed and discouraged. He felt that he had incurred the ill will of some in authority because he would not submit to certain things, and recounting the many years of mutual friendship, unmarred by a single difference, he exacted a promise from me that on his death I would speak of him as I knew him.

In fulfillment of that promise I am trying to give you my estimate and appreciation of this splendid man.

I was strongly attached to him from our first meeting, for I realized that I had made the acquaintance of no ordinary or commonplace man. He had rigid ideas of right and wrong and fixed habits of morality and truth, and being a man of principle and conviction his was not a frivolous, changeable nature. His friendships were unswerving and unfaltering; ever true to his high ideals of integrity and honesty, he was steadfast, and with his friendship he gave unstintingly and in overflowing measure of his confidence and of his affection. His mind was singularly free from the warp of prejudice and there was ever present an overruling desire to be just to his fellow man. Indeed, it seemed as if his daily creed was said each morning in these words: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again."

Truly he scattered flowers along life's pathway; did good unto all men, and lightened other's burdens. In early life he learned that he had to solve life's problems for himself, and manfully and resolutely did he accomplish this task. Is it any wonder that in his heart he had the rapture of a high resolve?

Somewhere I have read that "the older we grow the more we realize that first friends are the best friends, for with the passing years we more keenly appreciate the old friend, the unwavering and unfaltering confidant." And so I feel of him. "Large was his bounty and his soul serene." And then, too, there was that winsomeness and gentleness of disposition, the love for truth and abhorrence of shams.

Knowing the nobility of his soul and his adherence to the things that were good and true, I loved him as a companion in the most affectionate sense of the word, and I loved him for all that he was and for all that he tried to be.

Since he commenced failing so rapidly, a year ago, and because of his advancing years, I felt that his life was fast ebbing. Such was my affection for him that I often wondered what sort of a world it would be without his genial presence. On the Sunday before he died, Brother Whalen and myself visited his home. He was very weak and he looked at me for some time with penetrating gaze as if struggling to know who I was. By degrees the tension relaxed and in his eyes was conscious recognition. When I said Good-Bye he grasped my hand with firm pressure and looking into his peaceful face I received his benediction: "The Lord be with you."

His absence leaves an aching void, and we do, and we shall miss him, but we still have the memory of his kindly presence and his loving deeds, and we know that he leaves an example that can never be effaced, and a life that will never be forgotten.

Let us be thankful that it was our privilege to know this good man and to be known by him.

All thinking persons rebel at the thought that all these years of our brother, filled as they were with ministrations to the weary and afflicted, shall be the final end and that annihilation shall be his portion.

Nineteen centuries ago a man lived in an obscure corner of Judea. He has been called the "Man of Sorrows," the "Lowly Nazarene," the "Man of Gallilee," and of whom it is recorded "Never man spake like this man." From his birth a new civilization came upon the earth and His life and teachings have been through all the ages and are today the one faith of millions of people. Rather than annihilation, let us believe in the words spoken to comfort His disciples by this Jesus of Nazareth: "Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

This hour ought to bring a lesson to us: May his example be so reflected in our lives that it may be said of us as it is truthfully said of him—that we are true Elks—that the name of Elk, as borne by each of us, is worthy of its true synonym, "One who loves his fellow man." Let us again consecrate ourselves to upright, helpful lives; let us remember that the faults of our brothers we write upon the sands—their virtues on the tablets of love and memory—and let every meeting be the golden hour of recollection—the mystic call of those who will come no more. And may a Supreme Ruler help us to be steadfast in our deliberations and labors, and lead us "beside the still waters of peace."

Are you loving enough? There is some one dear,
Some one you hold as the dearest of all
In the holiest shrine of your heart.
Are you making it known? Is the truth of it clear
To the one you love? If death's quick call
Should suddenly tear you apart,
Leaving no time for a long farewell,
Would you feel you had nothing to tell—
Nothing you wished you had said before
The closing of that dark door?

Are you loving enough? The swift years fly—
Oh, faster and faster they hurry away,
And each one carries its dead.
The good deed left for the by and by,
The word to be uttered another day,
May never be done or said.
Let the love-words sound in the listening ear,
Nor wait to speak it above a bier.
Oh, the time for telling your love is brief,
But long, long, long is the time of grief.
Are you loving enough?