

Oration

Amalgamation Ceremony

Darlington and Steadfast Lodges

14th September 2022

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for the brethren to dwell together in unity!

I don't suppose that I have to remind any of you that is the first verse of psalm 133.

And this verse tells us much about what we hope that this evening's ceremony will achieve for the two Lodges whose amalgamation we promulgate and celebrate this evening.

The verse is taken from one of the psalms of Ascent, Psalms traditionally sung by the people of Israel as they walked in pilgrimage to the seat of God's Dwelling in Jerusalem. The psalmist draws our attention to something that is truly good and pleasant, unity amongst God's people and he tells us that it is good because it reflects God's heart and his purpose amongst his people.

When I first received the protocols for this evening's ceremony I was much taken with the hymn that those who had written and redacted the ceremony had chosen for us to sing together.

Bind us together Lord,
Bind us together with cords that cannot be broken.

I, in one of my other personas , often come across this hymn at the solemnisation of weddings. The bride, the groom, and indeed both of the families that are united in the marriage hope and pray that the ceremony is a commitment to a lifelong union based on love and trust.

I wonder if similar thoughts went through the minds of those writing the protocols for this evening's ceremony, that what we do together this evening gives hope of a union of lodges which will go forward into the future, strengthened by the bonds of unity and fellowship

Because brethren, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity to reflect God's heart and his purpose amongst his people.

Brethren of the Darlington and Steadfast Lodges of Mark Master Masons.

You have had the strength to recognise that both of your mother Lodges had perhaps run their courses, but not wishing to lose their rich legacy of brotherly love, relief and truth to which they had stood witness throughout the years of their existence, you have had the strength of purpose to recognise that there was a future, a bright future to be had in amalgamating your two Lodges to produce a single Lodge which can go forward in the strength of unity.

Together you build a new Lodge, a structure not made with human hands but with you, brethren as the living stones set on the firm foundation of the Great Overseer of the Universe you can form a structure fit for God's habitation.

So may the Great Overseer of the Universe bless you in your labour this evening and unite you all with cords that cannot be broken.

For how good and pleasant it is for the brethren to dwell together in unity.