

REV. STEPHEN MERRITT.

Many readers of the Witness knew Re Stephen Merritt of whom this article speaks. He was a most remarkable servant of God. He was a man of big business. He was a big Christian—a man baptized with the Holy Ghost. He was for many years Bishop Taylor's agent in New York and had much to do with the outgoing missionaries to Bishop Taylor's African work. It was Stephen Merritt who made Sammy Morris famous. His write up of this wonderful black boy produced a book which has been read perhaps by millions and Taylor University has been blessed all through the year through this boy's memory. The following sketch of Stephen Merritt from an exchange will, we feel sure, be read with great interest:

Stephen Merritt, an honored servant of the Lord, who died January 29, 1917, in New York City, in the 84th year of his age, was a remarkable man in many respects.

He went to the top in the Masonic lodge, having taken 138 degrees. He renounced this in 1893. The editor of the Free Methodist tells as follows of Mr. Merritt's first public address after that renunciation.

It was at an antisecrecy meeting held under the auspices of the National Christian Association in New York City, Nov. 15th, 1893.

I realize today, more than ever, that God wants a peculiar people. I never felt freer in my life than today, though I never was much afraid of anybody.

In what we call our "Travellers' Club," among our mission tramps, I often have men give me the grip of a Mason out of their rags and dirt. Masonry did not save them from their wretched condition. The tendency of Masonry is downward, not heavenward. Men go into the lodge for help in business. Generally it costs more than they get out of it.

There is no Christianity in the Blue Lodge. I used to pray in the name of Jesus in their meetings. But the Jews said: No Jesus! Jews, deists, freethinkers fill the Lodges. Christ has no part or lot in them. They do not do as He commanded. Their own goodness is all that is required in the order. A Musselman is as good a Mason as anybody else. What this brother (J. P. Stoddard) tells you about Masonry I want to vouch for. I am astonished at his knowledge of the system. And he has it right. I can endorse his account of the lodge, and you must learn it of him. There is no true idea of Christianity, I say, in the lodge. Some writers make it appear that there is. They say much about Christ outside but not when inside.

I cannot serve two masters—God and Mammon. I cannot walk with the world and with God at the same time. "Come out from among them and be ye separate." We must leave everything to follow God—leave friends and loved ones to follow His command. We must do all this, Masons, or anti-Masons. If those who oppose the lodge do so from selfish motives, and not for Christ—why, they are just as bad as the men they condemn. Anti-Masons must trust the Holy Ghost.

When I tried to get into the lodge first, I was blackballed. But I tried again and was received, and became very enthusiastic in Masonry. I was made Master, and had the biggest lodge in New York, and

was the youngest Master. That was away back in war times. I made more Masons than any other Master in that day, and in the Grand Lodge was proud that I could cast seven votes—more than anyone else—our lodge was so strong. I used to be called their pastor in the lodge, because I was called on so often for some kind of religious service. But I found the tendency of the whole thing evil, and only evil, continually. So I protested and left, but still I paid dues and attended funerals. I was a very dull scholar.

One incident helped to open my eyes. I have always preached that there is no other name but Christ by which we can be saved. But again and again I found Masons dying without God and without hope. I was called to the bedside of one member of my lodge who was thought to be dying. He gave me the grip as I sat down by him. He said he was dying and was in great distress for his soul. I tried to have him look to Christ. But he reproached me, saying I had led him astray, had told him in the lodge, as Master, that a moral life was enough. He said: "You told me then that it was all right if I was an upright man, and obeyed the precepts of the lodge but I leaned on a broken reed; and now I am dying without God. I lay this to your charge, Worshipful Master. I leaned on you and now I am dying."

I groaned in agony and fell on my knees and cried to God to spare the man's life. My heart was almost broken. God heard, and spared the man's life, and he has since died a Christian. He was converted, and told me I must get out of the lodge; that I could not be consistent as a Christian and a Mason. But I did not see it. Ministers and other good men are in the lodge. They help to make it a delusion and a snare. The times of such ignorance God winked at, but now every man is commanded to repent of lodge folly.

About a month ago there was a precious meeting in the Tabernacle with our poor people. There came a great hush upon the congregation. The Holy Spirit was there in power. I felt subdued and close to God, and said: "I am Thine: I am altogether Thine, Lord." But the Holy Ghost said: "That wedge of gold!" I said: "All is Thine. There is nothing between me and Thee." He only said: "That wedge of gold!" Then I remembered under the floor of my tent, oh, I had hidden a wedge of gold! I had kept a beautiful jewel which was a present from the lodge and worth \$250 or more, made of gold, with a diamond suspending in it.

One summer I spent in the country and had the jewel with me. Had a beautiful watch also, the gift of a church, all inscribed. One night a gentleman called on me. He did not take time to wake me up; he came into my room and borrowed my clothes from a chair; and when I wanted them in a hurry to catch a train in the morning—alas! where were they? My friend had taken them into the basement and taken my gold watch and all the money! Then he unpinned the lodge jewel and folded the clothes nicely on a chair and put the jewel on top carefully! Don't you see what happens to you if you are a Mason? (Applause and laughter and a voice: "He didn't belong to the church, did he?")

wrote a letter to the Temple Lodge, N 203, and told them God had told me to sever all connection with Masonry forever. Then I enclosed the jewel and sent it. The members of the lodge came to talk with me. I was told it would ruin my business; that it would hurt me in a thousand ways. "Don't break off," they pleaded. They wanted me to keep the jewel. They said: "We don't know what to do with it." I told them I would not give it to the poor if they wanted to. It was a wedge of gold in my tent and I would have it there no longer. This was about a month ago. It was the last link that bound me to the world. Now I am free. In this convention I am standing for the first time a free man! For whom the Son makes free, is free indeed.—Christian Witness.

THE IMMUTABLE WORD.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away! As they have lived and wrought, so they will live and work. From teacher's chair and from pastor's pulpit; in the humblest hymn that ever mounted to the ear of God from beneath a cottage roof, and in the rich, melodious choir of the noblest cathedral, their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. Not here alone, but in a thousand silent and unsuspected forms will they unweariedly prosecute their holy office. Who doubts that times without number, particular portions of the Scripture find their way to the human soul as if embassies from on high, each with its own commission of comfort, of guidance, or of warning? What crisis, what trouble, what perplexity of life has failed or can fail to draw from this inexhaustible treasure-house its proper supply? What profession, what position is not daily and hourly enriched by these words which repetition never weakens, which carry with them now, as in days of their first utterance, the freshness of youth and immortality? When the solitary student opens all his heart to drink them in, they will reward his toil. And in forms yet more hidden and withdrawn, in the retirement of the chamber, in the stillness of the night season, upon the bed of sickness, and in the face of death, the Bible will be there, its sacred words here often winged with their general and special messages, to heal and to soothe, to uplift and uphold, to invigorate and stir, nay, more perhaps than this; amid the crowds of the court, or the forum, or the street, or the market-place, when every thought of every soul seems to be set upon the excitement of ambition, or of business, or of pleasure, there too, even there, the still small voice of the Holy Bible will be heard, and the soul, aided by some blessed word, may find wings like a dove, may flee away and be at rest."

GLADSTONE.

When we are severely tempted we ought to rejoice that we are travelling the road that Jesus Christ and the prophets went.

"Dress does not make the man, but it shows what the man is," said a secular paper, recently. We might add dress is not religion, but it indicates the kind of religion that we have.