Did You Know This About Freemasonry?

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Freemasonry has done far more for me than I can ever do for Freemasonry. My debt is humbly and gratefully acknowledged. I have learned that her lessons, tenets and fundamental principles impressively and inspiringly emphasize that faith in Deity and the practice of truth, morality, charity and brotherly love are essential to the well-being of one's life and also to society in its far reaching complex organizations.

Freemasonry has afforded me the opportunity to have precious friendships. She has required of me only that which is required and expected of every member - to walk uprightly, to do good, and to obey the divine law. As we all know, she never requires a member to violate his duty to God, his country or himself.

Having said this, it behooves me to mention another great and forceful promoter and supporter of morality, integrity and neighborly love - the Church of Jesus of Nazareth. In my opinion, the Church of God, by whatever name or sign it is known, and Freemasonry are the two strongest organized forces in the United States today, and possibly in the world, for keeping our country and civilization right side up morally. Both have a profound faith in, and deep concern for, truth, morality, charity and the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God.

I know of no reason for conflict between these two organizations. I have given my wholehearted support to them for the past 40 years and am resolved to continue this support as long as I may live.

Over the years I have heard various statements about Freemasonry. By far, the statements have been complimentary, highly commending the Craft for its moral influence in promotion of truth, honor and good citizenship. It is difficult to understand why any intelligent person would oppose Freemasonry if he were familiar with its fundamental tenets.

The criticisms leveled against Freemasonry invariably originate with the uninformed and occasionally with jealous individuals. Frequently, it appears, the criticisms come from

persons who desire to monopolize or control their groups. It is pitiful to hear criticism from the ostrich type. He sees a single mistake which he does not like or understand, made by a Mason or in some area of Masonry - and then buries his head in the sands of ignorance and proceeds to criticize the entire Order. Unfortunately such persons do not desire to become informed.

Nevertheless Freemasonry is big and strong and wise enough to suffer opposition. It is also big enough and wise enough to continue to practice brotherly love. It must be kept in mind that Masonry looks with disapproval upon argumentative refutations in her behalf. However, Freemasons have the right, if they so choose, to make certain declarations about the tenets and purposes of Freemasonry - but always within the bounds of that fundamental principle of Order, TRUTH!

The statements made in opposition to Freemasonry are often amusing. For example: (1) Freemasonry is atheistic; (2) It is a church; (3) It is anti-Christian; (4) It is a secret society; (5) It teaches that heaven is obtained by good works and not by faith; (6) It has no right to have an altar and a Holy Bible in the lodge room because only the church has that right; (7) It denies Christ because it allows members in other lands, whose religious faiths are other than Christian, to place their "Volume of Sacred Law" on the altar; (8) Freemasons have a divided loyalty which prevents true loyalty to their country and to their church.

In answer to these criticisms, believing it to be within the rules and practices of the fraternity, and with the hope that it will be helpful, I venture to state what I have learned to be true from my reading and personal participation and fellowship within the brotherhood.

FAITH IN GOD

As every Master Mason knows, no atheist can join a Masonic lodge. In American lodges, and probably in other countries too, a man's faith in Deity increases as he advances in Masonic knowledge. As he seeks more light in Masonry his attention is directed to various scriptures. Thus the candidate has opportunity to become informed and to have a personal and well grounded faith in Deity.

BOOK OF THE LAW

It is well to remember that the origin of Freemasonry as a symbolic lodge was in England, and that it was oriented under the influence of the established Church of England. In Scotland it was established under the influence of the

Presbyterian Church. However, in order to extend the benefits of Freemasonry as a universal brotherhood to all mankind, it was deemed good and wise to grant to people of other religious faiths the right to place their Book of Sacred Law on the altars in their lodges. It was believed that through the bonds of truth, charity, morality and brotherly love they would be led eventually into a fuller and more complete knowledge of God.

NOT A CHURCH OR RELIGION

It must be remembered that Masonry is not a religion, but it is religious. Primarily, it is a brotherhood built on morality, truth and charity. These virtues, as well as the use of Holy Bible and altars, cannot be monopolized by lodge, church, club or government. It is fundamental in Masonry that each man be afforded his personal right as a free man to worship the Supreme Being of the universe, using the name which he has been taught to use for Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience and in the light he has received it.

Although I am zealous for the Order, I keep in mind the fact that Freemasonry is not a church. It does not seek to usurp the ecclesiastical functions of the Church. Each Master Mason is encouraged to be reverent and obedient to the laws of God and to respect the religious convictions of his brethren.

Freemasonry is not a secret society, but it has a secret. In fact, Masonry is well known. Masonic temples and halls, the time of meetings and the names of the principal officers are listed in newspapers. Membership in Masonic lodges is proudly admitted. Masonic charities and hospitals are favorably known among non-Masons.

Every Mason knows that his obligation to the fraternity does not interfere with the duty he owes his country, his family or his God. Masonry encourages each member to put forth his best endeavor intelligently, loyally and devotedly for the welfare of his country, his family and the church of his choice.

NOT ANTI-CHRISTIAN

The attention of the misinformed, who think or say that the faith and practice of Freemasonry is anti-Christian, is directed to the words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of St. Mark 9:38 "Whoever is not against us is for us." Free and Accepted Masons are taught to do the will of God, and in a spirit of brotherly love to give assistance to worthy, needy people. It can be said that if Freemasonry is anti-Christian, the Old Testament is also anti-Christian.

Freemasonry is founded upon the sublime principle of faith in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Masonry deplores and strongly opposes bigotry, selfishness, cheating, conceit, wicked ambition, falsehood and the slanderous tongue, religious snobbery, misrepresentation and degradation of character.

BE A LIVING EXAMPLE

Freemasons recognize the fact that all men are subject to error and that all Masons do not achieve the same moral and spiritual stature. However, every true Master Mason strives to so live that his life will reflect his faith in thoughts, words and deeds. This is in accord with the word of the apostle James: "Faith without words is dead." It is also in harmony with the words of Jesus in his sermon on the mount: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven."

We cannot combat opposition by argument, but we can overcome unjust criticism by living a moral and upright life, by practicing brotherly love and making it real, and by bearing enthusiastic witness to the benefits and work of the Order. Do not sell the lodge short. We have good news. Many await our witness.