

75.1.7 Freemasonry is a WAY of LIFE

Freemasonry is not, as many believe, a secret society nor is it a friendly society for mutual insurance against illness or distress. It is true that Masonry has secret modes of recognition which every Mason is sworn to preserve inviolate, but its teachings contain nothing that is secret or suspect.

Many and various are the objectives that its opponents have attributed to Freemasonry, some worthy, some political, some even traitorous.

The fact is that, "Freemasonry is an organised society of men symbolically applying the principles of operative masonry and architecture to the science and art of character-building. Its purpose is to make men, to build character, and to unite men in the bonds of brotherly love and mutual friendship." It has no ulterior aims of any sort.

DEFINITION:

Actually, as an American Grand Master has stated — "It is a life to be lived, not a formality to be perfunctorily observed; a life to be lived and not a set of empty creeds to which lip-service only is given. It is a life grounded in religion, organised in morality, mellowed by good fellowship, humanised in charity, and dedicated to service."

The teachings of Freemasonry are all based on a code of ethics and moral behaviour which have been pronounced by the sages of every country and every land as those alone which will lead to that universal peace, happiness, welfare, and brotherhood which all desire but seem incapable of bringing to fruition. Uninformed and bigoted men have proclaimed Freemasonry as an enemy of both Church and State, yet Masonry bars from discussion all matter of political or religious import and demands of its members loyalty to the laws of the state where they live and abstinence from all plots and intrigues whatever their nature or purpose.

It is true that every Masonic ceremony opens and closes with prayer and no ceremony may be conducted save with the Bible, Koran or other sacred volume lying open in the lodge; yet Masonry is neither a religion

nor a substitute for such, for while religion tends to divide men into many sects, castes, and denominations the purpose of Freemasonry is to unite men in the common bond of brotherhood whatever their political or religious views and affiliations, so long as they profess a belief in the Great Architect of the Universe and are willing to preserve inviolate the "secrets" already referred to.

No atheist and therefore no Nazi or Communist is accepted as a member of a Masonic lodge, this being reserved for such as have given reasons for believing that they will not only appreciate but practise the Masonic tenets taught in the lodge.

It is well to remember that as a corporate organisation Freemasonry holds no membership drives, does no electioneering, signs no petitions, does no lobbying, and expresses no corporate opinion on any matter whatsoever. It does not teach men what to think but only how to think. Its purpose is to exalt the dignity of man. It teaches the importance of deciding and interpreting every question in the light of what is morally right, but beyond that it does not go.

The speculative Freemasonry of today is a direct descendant of the operative Freemasonry responsible for the erection from the 13th to the 18th century of the cathedrals, churches, and castles, many of which still adorn the British landscape.

With the decline of this building period many learned men were admitted as "accepted Freemasons" and they were mainly responsible for the switch from building cathedrals to building character. The tools and equipment of the builder now become symbols of moral values, the square symbolising integrity and square dealing, the plumb-rule uprightness of life and actions, and so on.

Freemasonry today has no other objective than the happiness and well-being of its members, the welfare and moral uplift of society, and all that these entail. Every year Freemasons of every Constitution annually spend many thousands of pounds in affording assistance or providing homes for the widow, the orphan, and others in distress.

FIRST LODGE:

The first Masonic Grand Lodge was formed in London in 1717 and from this and similar bodies in Scotland and Ireland, all other Masonic Grand Lodges have been derived. Membership has grown during the past two and a half centuries from a few hundred to between 5,000,000 and 6,000,000.

Grand Lodges were formed in almost every country in the globe, but in all Communist countries these have been suppressed. Freemasonry is opposed by dictators of all kinds. Yet Freemasonry today has no other objective than that of improving human character, human relations, and human wellbeing.

A spurious form of Freemasonry, practised by certain European lodges and not recognised by the genuine Freemasons, did engage in political intrigue which led to their suppression. Individual Masons, too, have been guilty of many crimes including murder, but Masonry itself "has never brought a tear to any eye, never slandered any man or woman, never encouraged law-breaking, never sheltered a criminal, never persecuted anyone for his religious beliefs, never drawn the sword against any enemy, never forced anyone to believe its principles, never bred hatred or ill will among men, never joined a political party, never attempted to control a ballot box, never taught anyone to profane its Masters name; in fact has never committed a crime."

MONUMENT:

Says one Masonic writer, "The speculative temple of Freemasonry, grounded on the eternal precepts of truth, contrived in the wisdom of the great and good supported in the strength of a firm faith, adorned by the beauty of a noble purpose, cemented by the bonds of brotherly love, exists as a last monument to its founders."

Freemasonry is strongest in English-speaking countries and claims as members men in every walk of life from kings and princes to the humble peasantry. The Constitution of the United States was devised by Masons and was based on Masonic principles.

To its ranks belong many of the world's greatest benefactors in the realms of medicine, music, literature, the Army and Navy, the judiciary, the professions, and of industry.

One of the teachings of Freemasonry is ever-increasing service to one's fellow men; justice in all one's dealings, and the practice of benevolence in all its many forms. A good Mason is always a good citizen.

So greatly does Freemasonry appeal to men who set a high value on morality that even 20 years ago it was recorded that the Grand Lodge of England alone claimed as members, "two kings, an ex-king, four Indian rulers, 6 dukes, two marquises, 15 earls, nine viscounts, 25 barons, 158 baronets and knights. The Church was represented by 24 bishops, three arch-deacons, 25 canons, and 86 other dignitaries; the Army by 244 and the navy by 18 officers; the legal profession by nine judges and 26 K.C.'s; the medical profession by 105. Included in these were the Lord Mayor of London, seven ex-Lord Mayors, and 13 members of Parliament.

SUMMING UP:

These are the facts which everyone is entitled to know. Not everyone attending a Church is a Christian, and not every member of a lodge is a true practising Freemason. It has been said the Freemasonry is no longer on trial but every Freemason is. Freemasonry cannot be judged by the wrongful acts of the individual masons. If every Freemason genuinely sought to live the Masonic way of life, the world would be a happier place. The various religious sects are divided by dogma and difference in the form of ceremonial. Freemasonry lacks dogma, its tenets being summed up in a belief in the "Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the moral law, the golden rule, and the hope of a future life."

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