

ECCLESIASTICAL MINISTRY AND FREEMASONRY

No Conflict

M.W.Rev. Bro. Frederick Walcott

Freemasonry has for several decades been under attack from the profane and uninitiated. Without having the facts of what the institution stands for, there are many who have cast aspersions on the good name of the Order. Unfortunately, there have been cases in which, persons who came to the order for wrong reasons left, having realized that what they were seeking was not what the Order offered. Notwithstanding, Free masonry has continued a steady path of growth over the years.

Freemasonry, having been institutionalized in the year 1717 by the Grand Lodge of England, is known to be as old as man himself. The year 1717 was the time when it was known to have taken institutional and structured form; but the basic tenets of Freemasonry as we understand it, lie at the very heart of the foundation upon which every known Godly and moral civilization has been founded.

Freemasonry is not a religion, yet it embraces men from the noblest and most devout of religions the world over. In fact, first among the prerequisites in becoming a mason is the acknowledgement and belief in the Ever True and Living God. No one can knowingly become a mason before expressing such faith.

Our noble institution is built upon the Summary of the law as promulgated by Christ himself. We practice in our hearts and lives love of God and love of our neighbour. Hence a genuine concern for the poor and less fortunate in society occupy the attention of the institution and its members; we see the poor and destitute as deserving not only God's attention but ours.

One of the aims and objectives in Masonry is to make better a 'good man'. It does not yet claim to be able to perfect 'a bad man.' Hence, the order keeps focus on men of good character in order that the goal of the Order even though not yet attained many in time reach the mark when even the profane can acknowledge that Freemasonry focusses in the right way i.e. God's way.

Many of the important lessons of life which our Lord taught were by way of symbols. He always used many of the common and well known things of life in reinforcing much of what he said. In speaking to his disciples he would eg. say to them, "you are the salt of the earth." In another place he said to them, "you are the light of the world; let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Similarly, Freemasonry uses many of the common things of life in teachings its adherents with regard to the more nobler things of life, e.g. the plumb and level and the square, tools used by operative masons in producing a satisfactory and perfect finish are likewise symbols, which are of extreme importance to Freemasons, why? because when applied symbolically we are reminded that our building i.e. the bodies which our God has given us are his temples which we need to perfect by the standards known to good masons.

With such vision not only for the good of ourselves but for the good of others, how can there not be common ground with Freemasonry and the Ecclesiastical Ministry? After all, for those of us who belong to the Church, we know full well what we are called to be and to do. We know that we, like Freemasons are called to practice by word and deed the summary of the law as given to us by Christ himself.

It cannot be denied that Christ himself, perfect as he was, level out his own life steeped in those principles which masons teach; for he taught love of God and love of our neighbours and most of all he taught it by example. Priests, who are his representative, in the Church are called to follow our Lord's example. If Christ's own life reflected the noble ideals taught in Masonry without conflict or variance, then those of us who are of the Ecclesiastical Ministry can claim equal pride as followers of him, whose own life reflected those same Masonic ideals as well as the pride of leading to enlightenment those who are yet to discover the agreed beauties, both of the Church and of our noble order.

Not being a religion itself, Freemasonry therefore, encourages each of its members to be faithful and true to the faith of his acceptance, whether that faith be Muslim, Jewish, or Christian, so long as he believes in the existence of the One ever living and True God, Freemasonry takes all good men by the hand and leads them to its altar, points to the open book (the holy writ) and urges upon each to study therein and learn the way to everlasting life. There is no conflict here, in the Ecclesiastical freedom of the Masonic Minister, hence, there is no Ecclesiastical conflict here with me as a Mason.

By M.W.Rev. Bro. Frederick Walcott; Published in
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Submitted by D. Roy Murray
King Solomon Lodge, No. 58, GRS