

THE GREAT LIGHT IN FREE MASONRY

After the Great Reformation of religion in the 15th century, our Ancient brethren adopted the Holy Bible as the foundation of their moral science, and opened it upon their altars as their counsel and guide. It is called "The Great Light," as from it proceeds spiritual and moral light. The grand truths contained in the book make of it a rule and guide of faith, and the precepts laid down in it form a standard of morality unequalled by any other code.

Masons regard it as of Divine origin; a revelation from the Great Architect of the universe, made through the inspiration of the minds of those who wrote its pages. Its story of the creation of the world is the only written account of the beginning of things we have, and scientific research confirms the story. Lord Kelvin, one of the most honored names in the scientific world, said: "Physical science has nothing to say against the order of creation as given in Genesis."

One of the greatest thinkers of the 19th century is admitted to be Professor James D. Dana of Yale University, who said: "One reason why I believe the Bible to be the Word of God is because of the wonderful accord of the order of creation given in Genesis with that worked out by the best scientific investigation."

Both the virtues and faults of the characters mentioned in the Bible are told in the language or dialect peculiar to the time in which the manuscripts were written. There are many seeming difficulties and, from our standpoint, impossible incidents, related. These, in many cases, are only metaphors or figures of speech, hard to understand, yet the old book has stood a thousand years of rigid examination and severest criticism and is more than ever regarded as the foundation of the moral structure of advanced civilization.

Queen Victoria, when asked the cause of Britain's great success and stability, placing her hand on the Bible, replied, "It is here."

Professor Huxley, one of the world's scientists, reputed to be an agnostic, when chairman of the London County Council, said: "The Bible is the only moral textbook we have and should be in every school or institution of learning."

Some object to the book, claiming that there are obscene passages in it, not fit to be read before a mixed audience. These are like the woman who said to Dr. Johnson, author of the first English dictionary, "I procured a copy of your book and I find many objectionable words in it." "Indeed, Madam," he replied, "were you looking for them?" Medical men and female nurses study together biology, pro-creation, care of the body, and sexual studies. There is an old saying taken from the Bible, "To the pure all things are pure."

The Bible is a collection of sixty-six books coming to us from ancient times, translated from time to time by the world's greatest scholars. As literature it is the finest to be found; its poetry unsurpassed by Homer, Shakespeare or Longfellow. The book has been the inspiration of the great painters and musicians. Statesmen and legislators have found in it an inexhaustible fund of information. Its wisdom and beauty have been a mine of priceless treasure to the literary world. Good government and righteous laws are based on its precepts.

The book is historical, biographical, prophetic, full of allegory and symbolism; contains the Model Prayer and the Shepherd's Psalm, the two most beautiful pieces of literature in the whole scope of human speech.

This book is not only the Great Light in Free Masonry, but the Spiritual Light of millions of the human family who are not Free Masons. It has been the light and comfort of the aged, the sick and suffering, the wounded and dying on many a battlefield, the companion of the storm-tossed sailor, the lonely trapper in his cabin, the widowed mother and orphan child.

It has been the guiding star of hundreds of millions who have loved its truths, and turned its well-worn pages to find the way to eternal life.

The light from this book illuminated European civilization, its flame lit the torch of the Great Reformation,

whose cleansing fires burned the rubbish of the dark and middle ages, giving people the freedom to worship God under their own vine and fig tree, free from the despotism of man-made authority over the Divine approach.

From this freedom many were persecuted, separated from family and friends, imprisoned, their property confiscated, subjected to all kinds of cruelty and thousands were burned at the stake.

Notwithstanding the Inquisitions, the fires of Smithfield, and the Massacre of Bartholemew, the persecution of de Montfort, the slaughter of the Huguenots, the light was not extinguished. These only added fuel to the cleansing fires of liberty.

The light shining from the book has enabled man with the blessing of Almighty God to refit the world to a great extent. Though troublesome times come at intervals, the light is still shining and will continue to shine until the Universal Prayer is answered, "Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come."

In one of the largest Masonic jurisdictions in the world they have a lecture on the Bible which I will recite here:

" However men may differ in creed or theology, all good men agree that within the covers of this Holy Book are found the principles of morality which lay the foundations of a righteous life.

" Free Masonry therefore opens this book upon its altars, with the command to each of its votaries to diligently study therein, to learn the way to ever- lasting life.

" Adopting no particular creed, forbidding sectarian discussion within the Lodge, encouraging each brother to be steadfast in the faith of his acceptance, Free Masonry takes all good men by the hand and, leading them to its altars, points to the open book thereon and urges upon each that he faithfully direct his steps through life by the light he there shall find and as he there shall find it.

" If, from our sacred altars, the atheist, the infidel or the libertine should ever wrest this book of sacred and immutable law, and thus remove or even obscure this Greatest Light in Free Masonry -- that light which has been for centuries the rule and guide of Free Masons - then could we no longer claim the rank and title of Free and Accepted Masons.

" But so long as that sacred light shines upon our altars, so long as it illuminates the pathway of the Craftsmen by the Golden Rays of Truth, so long, and no longer, can Free Masonry live and shed its beneficent influence upon mankind.

"Guard then that book of sacred and immutable law as you would your very life. Defend it as you would the flag of your country; live according to its divine teaching, with the assurance of a blessed mortality."

By: Leonard Morris P.G.M.; G.R.P.E.I.;
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