

The Past is Right!

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According to the Holy Scriptures, Enoch was a man who did not see death and was not found. This man Enoch passed away without suffering death. Reason: His past was right; his moral and spiritual conduct here on earth were right.

Another man, Elijah of the same Old Testament period, "went up... into heaven." By what right and privilege did this man get to heaven? After reading the story of his life while here on earth, one finds that he lived an exemplary, clean, unspotted life. His past being right, the good Lord gave him his due reward.

A poor man, named Lazarus, during the New Testament period "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" when he passed away. What did this poor beggar do that he was carried to the bosom of God when he left the earth? Did he send gifts to God previous to his departure from the earth? Or, was Lazarus the compadre of one of the angels who brought him to the bosom of God? Or, was Lazarus related personally to the angels? No, none of these. He was nobody here, materially, while living. He just lived a simple ordinary life. Although poor, he lived a righteous life, maintained kind feelings and good-will towards his fellowmen, even those who ridiculed and derided him, he loved them. That kind of a past was right. At the final accounting of his life, God

was pleased to give the compensation due him.

The next man worth mentioning is Stephen, one of the seven deacons chosen by the early Christians to take care of the economic and financial affairs of the church and the first Christian martyr. It is said of Stephen that he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost", and his selection as one of the seven deacons was due to his honesty. This cardinal Christian virtue is much needed in the high echelon of our government today. There is much to learn from the early Christians. In their selection of men who led their organization, honesty and loyalty to Christ were their main considerations. It was not personal favor or relationships that influenced them to choose the men who were entrusted in handling the great affairs of the church. It is believed that even Masons have to take due notice from this election of the early Christian church. We cannot be complacent with our present procedure of electing and choosing the officers of the fraternity. While it is true that before election, lodges are reminded to give due observance to the constitutional rule of electing officers, we have to be vigilant against the forces of evil.

Stephen, according to the Scriptures, "did great wonders and mir-

acles among the people". The miracle he did was the conversion of sinners to righteous living. Besides being a financial steward of the early church, Stephen engaged in evangelistic work — the drawing of people to the fold of the Christian church. Because of his dynamic preaching and witnessing, there was an enormous multiplication of Christian converts in Jerusalem in spite of the stubborn opposition of the Libertines, the Cyrenians and the Alexandrians and those of Cilicia and Asia. His unabated zeal and courage in preaching and in witnessing for Christ led to his untimely death. It is said that when he passed away "he fell asleep". From this and from other Scripture records regarding him, we can conclude that "his past was right".

The last man, and many more can be cited belonging to this tribe, whose "past is right", and worth emulating, is an army officer of the Italian band, named Cornelius, a centurion. He was highly commended by Jesus himself because of his devotion to duty, his adherence to the high principle of moral and spiritual conduct, his charitableness in giving alms to people worth helping. Cornelius, no doubt, practiced and lived up the three high tenets of Masonry — Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Cornelius was a soldier of the first order. Unlike Hitler and his tribe, he was not arrogant. He did not think of conquering the whole world and put it as his subject. He had in his heart what Jesus Christ said, "for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul." Read-

ing the life story of Cornelius, one finds that his whole past was right.

The past life of a person, particularly his moral conduct, is very important. It is important when one enters Masonry. It is one of the bases for making appraisal of the moral and spiritual worth of an applicant for membership in this ancient fraternity. It is the basis for evaluating his loyalty. One who vacillates in his moral conduct cannot be loyal to high tenets of Masonry. Hence the fraternity is very careful in admitting applicants. Their pasts have to be carefully studied and evaluated.

There are seemingly good people who tried to enter the Fraternity but were rejected because their past moral behaviour were such that they did not merit their entrance or admission into the fellowship. It is important that one's past moral conduct must be beyond reproach if one desires admission into the Fraternity. This is different from Christianity. Christianity seeks the sinners, bring them to its fellowship. Masonry neither seeks nor invites people to become members into its fellowship. And only people whose "past is right" — good people applying of their own volition are admitted. These good people entering the Fraternity become better citizens of their country and God.

There was a mistaken idea that one can enter the fraternity if he has money. Contrary to this belief Masonry is not a Fraternity of the moneyed and wealthy classes, neither the intellectual nor the professional groups alone. It is not a Fraternity confined to one racial group or to

one country alone. It is not a Fraternity of peoples who have the same religious affiliation. It is a Fraternity of all peoples around the globe, without racial distinction (for there is only one race — the human race) and without regard to any land of abode, and without regard to economic and financial standing or religious affiliation. It is a Fraternity of peoples whose PAST IS RIGHT and who are determined to pursue RIGHTEOUSNESS, live an exemplary moral conduct. This is an important requirement that must be met — THE PAST RIGHT. It is in this particular that Masonry is aristocratic, but very democratic in its dealings with all men.

From this — THE PAST IS RIGHT, some good lessons are derived:

First, it is advantageous for one who lives a righteous life. This is shown by the Biblical characters cited above.

Second, there is always a reward for a life that is lived righteously here and now.

Third, that Masonry makes a good man a better citizen of his country and his God.

Fourth, that it is the will and pleasure of God that we obey His laws. Obeying His laws will make THE PAST RIGHT. When our PAST IS RIGHT at the time we pass to the great beyond, we shall hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."



The Big Fishermen

This is not about the Apostle Peter of the first century. But, in this twentieth century, Christ's admonition to Peter and his companions would still be good for the CAFA — to cast their nets on the other side of their boat. Not at the University of the Philippines. Perhaps now as in the case of the Apostles of old, the CAFA fishermen would find their nets full of fish, especially the pink and the red.

One cannot help being entertained thus far by the propositions and conclusions brought out by the fishing. Communists do not believe in God; Dr. Pascual does not believe in God; Therefore, Dr. Pascual is a communist. From the very testimony of Dr. Pascual himself, he is an agnostic; he cannot as yet affirm the existence of God; neither does he deny the existence of God; for he is still searching for proofs that would satisfy him.

So, Dr. Pascual doubts the existence of God. That is natural for people, thinking people especially. Many times in our lives, we who believe in God, have entertained doubts about His Existence. We recall that even Christ, the son of God, cried out: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Or, is Dr. Pascual being pilloried because he wrote many years ago, "Rizal Beyond the Grave", and proved Rizal's retraction a pious fraud? It is to the credit of Dr. Pascual that he has not forced his own doubts about God on any one, least of all his students and even members of his family. He allows them to have their own religious beliefs. In fact, he sends his children to religious

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