

# LIGHT

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"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

Light (day) and darkness (night) are both created by God. Both were created for the good of men. They are both very important. But Jesus here does not speak in terms of the light of day which everybody knows of; rather he is speaking on the moral and spiritual implications of this light.

From time imemorial men deviated from the light of God because, according to the Gospel written by John, although "light came into the world, men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil" (John 3:19). God gave commandments. These commandments are to guide the conduct and behaviour of men. It can be discerned from Jesus that we were aware of this light — the commandments. They disobeyed. According to Isaiah, "All have gone astray... turned everyone his way." This was a manifestation of real disobedience in men. They disobeyed because they wanted to be free. But this freedom did not give them peace of mind and peace of life. Their freedom led them to waywardness and sin. It is for this reason that God sent His only begotten Son to redeem men from their misdirected freedom. Jesus was sent by the Father to redirect men from waywardness and licentious life

to the path of righteousness and to the light that leads to the throne of His Father. Jesus, himself, made this statement: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). But many of those who heard him, particularly the Pharisees (there are still many Pharisees today) did not believe because they said to Jesus, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true." These Pharisees have actually seen the many wonderful things Jesus did, still they questioned his testimony of himself. These are the people to whom Jesus made the statement, "They have eyes but cannot see." These are the people who are enjoying the light of God, the privileges and opportunities of life but refuse to appreciate, simply because they are self-conceited and egoists.

Those who have been lighted from the teaching of Jesus and with earnestness and sincerity followed this light became the beaconlight of democratic civilization. They are responsible for the eradication of fanaticism, wrong conception of righteousness, mistaken notion of God, self-righteousness and many hindrances to free social and religious intercourse of men. These men and women became tools for the educational, social, economic and spiritual progress in the world. Today they are scattered as missionaries in all

parts of the world.

Because the Bible is the Great Light in Masonry, a Mason is expected to exude the light of morality, righteousness and all the noble tenets of Masonry. One does not get into the fraternity simply to be associated with some prominent people in the community or linked with big people in the country by being in the same boat with them. One does not enter the fraternity just to become proficient in the ritual. All these things are good. But a Mason is expected to become a better man. This Masonic statement presupposes that before entering the fraternity, he was good, but after he got into it, he has to make a great change in his moral and spiritual conduct. When this is done, then and only then, can one claim to be a tool for good.

The Psalmist made a great sworn statement when he said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments" (Ps. 119:105-106). This sworn statement is similar to the obligation taken by one when he is raised to the Sublime degree. Has one who is raised to the Sublime degree tried to make a re-study of the meaning of the obligations he well recited? It is only by this time of re-study of the contents of the obligations that one can absorb its meaning to himself. One who does this and lives its contents is likely to become a better man and consequently a light to his household, his associates and friends. The proficiency one made when he was raised, is no doubt very good, but it does not indicate or guaranty the real Masonic behaviour and life. It is one thing to recite the ritual very

well, it is another thing to live by what one recites well. The days are gone of the dictum by the elders, "Follow my counsel and not my doings." The counsel of the Son is, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls." What Jesus taught in words, he did in his daily life. His meekness and humility that the people saw were the light that changed the deceitful life of Zaccheus, the criminal conduct of Saul, the sinful moral conduct of the Samaritan woman whom He met at the well of Jacob, to mention only few. These and many others were witnesses to the great light they received from the Master Teacher.

In like manner, Masons, who are known as students and followers of the Holy Scriptures, should reflect in their life, in their associations good moral behaviour, and righteous life. They should be always guided by the Square and Compass visibly tucked at the outside front wall of their lodge which symbolizes the high and noble virtues of the fraternity. A Mason is expected to reflect all that are in this symbol all the time and anywhere, whether alone or with many people, outside or inside the fraternity.

There is an inborn tendency of men to love only those within the family circle and their kins, their friends, and those from whom they are indebted of materials things. Jesus said, "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" (Mat. 5: 46). In the old days, love was made very narrow because people were taught that way. They were taught to love only their neigh-

Turn to page 421

bor; they were also taught to hate their enemy. But the love Jesus taught and practiced is "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). This is a very hard teaching because people have been used to "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and secondly, this is a new teaching and people are not open to new teachings. Thirdly, people say, (even among Christians who may be Masons) they are still human, so they have to retaliate. When Jesus was persecuted and was subjected to many humiliations, instead of retaliating, he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Previous to his persecutions, he taught us to pray, "Forgive us our sins (debts), as we forgive those who have committed sins against us."

It is the hard things and the new ones, particularly this new teaching of Jesus concerning love that makes this world of ours better. One whose love has no bounds, no limitations, and complies with this new teaching becomes the child of God. As a child he inherits His blessings — His Kingdom of peace and love and the security of eternal life.

Jesus challenges us to make use of the light we received from the Father. Any good thing that we acquire if we do not make use of it will deteriorate. The light of the Scriptures is imparted to us for good — to make men love each other, to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God in the world. We are challenged to make use of this opportunity here and now while we have all the facilities, the materials and all the times we need because time will come when we shall be no more.

was walking alone *incognito* and dressed only in the rough garb of a mariner was confronted by him with the rank he (governor-general) held, as distinctions of rank were sharp in those days. When the gallant but humble governor-general replied that he was neither a simple *alferez*, a *capitan*, a *commandante*, a *general* or a *maestro de campo*, the said Spaniard was quick on his feet and throwing away his cigar, saluted and exclaimed, "Pardon me, you must be his Excellency, himself". Salcedo, standing erect and unimpressed, said "Sir, you possess none of our Castilian courtesy and God Almighty and the king together cannot make you a gentleman, Good day". Such words are full of sense as they came from the wrinkles of age and what one learned in youth endures like the engraving upon a rock.

And may I add — Be your true self, not the self you think you are for *the leaves must fall* like the house of cards notwithstanding the good life — spacious, opulent and unhurried. But such should not be a source of contempt and neither of hatred for the descendants of that haughty Spaniard unwittingly directed the course of religious history, as an ancient Spanish historian, Amador de los Rios, said "ten tribes of Israel who settled at Toledo built the most beautiful synagogue, the Great Aljame that had been theirs since the Temple of Solomon" — a dazzling climax reached by Spain's royal splendor of the age long before our evangelization by her early conquistadores who, centuries later, in our state of darkness brought us "the first light" — "la primera luz" in Freemasonry.