

Masonry, A Successful Experimental Science

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*Most Worshipful Grand Master,
Members of the Grand Lodge,
Brethren, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

As I rise on this momentous occasion, I feel the heavy and grave responsibilities, which my brethren bestowed upon me in electing me to occupy the Oriental Chair and act as Master of the Lodge for this Masonic year. I say heavy and grave because I know my own limitations and I may not prove equal to the task I am expected to solve and do. However, I am accepting this exalted position with all humility, ever-believing and hoping that my brethren will give their wholehearted support and cooperation. With your unstinted cooperation, we shall succeed. Brethren, I thank you for the honor and confidence you reposed on me and I promise to do the best within my power to guide the affairs of our Lodge.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with your indulgence, allow me to speak to you tonight on the subject, "MASONRY, A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE."

Many years ago, when I passed Taft Avenue in Manila, I was attracted by the frontage of the Scottish Rite Temple on which are these words: "FREEMASONRY BUILDS ITS TEMPLES IN THE HEARTS OF MEN AND AMONG NATIONS". I doubted if there builders who work for free, without pay. When I came

to Camarines Norte, I saw in front of this building these words: "CAMARINES NORTE LODGE NO. 107". I thought this was a public housing project for the homeless. You will see how silly I was. For that experience I am now to tell you my viewpoint about Masonry. Certainly, nobody would be silly as I was, but I believe Freemasonry is still very much misunderstood.

Let us begin with some general beliefs: Freemasonry is known to be a secret society.

I say Freemasonry is not a secret society. Not so since 1717 when the First Grand Lodge of England was organized. Masonry was a secret society for thousands of years before 1717, but since the First Grand Lodge of England was organized, Freemasonry has come out in the open. Its publicity eminent, its membership known, its tenets widely spread, its doors open to all who knock at it. No, Freemasonry is not a secret society, although, we meet with our doors closed. And we do so only for our own privacy. You also meet somebody behind closed doors don't you? And we don't say you are a secret man.

Some believe that Masonry is a religion. This is not true. In one point you can easily distinguish it by the fact that no religion, not one particular religion, will know its members to maintain membership in another religion. But Masonry, for being not a religion,

encourages its members to uphold their memberships in their own church. Protestants remain Protestants after becoming Masons; Catholics remain Catholics; Buddhists remain Buddhists, etc. It is indeed, very true that the Masonic Fraternity requires that all members must believe in the Divine Almighty. But whether you call your god, God, Jehovah, Shin or Allah is your freedom. Masonry believes that the way of worshipping God should be left to the dictates of one's conscience. Thus we don't force our members to get out of one church and enter another and besides, Masonry has no organized Church of its own where we can force one to get in. It is very clear that Masonry is not a religion.

Generally, people here believe that Masonry is anti-Catholic. Neither is this true. Masonry has a recorded history of over six hundred years although it is believed to have existed before the birth of Christianity. In the medieval days before the reformation, the Christian world was dominantly Catholic. During those days, printing was not yet a known art and the Holy Bible, hand-copied, was in the hands of a few. Christianity, to be more specific, Catholicism, was propagated and manifested by Masons, who illustrated it through symbols and arts, hewed and carved on churches and cathedrals. Thanks to the ingenuity and true virtue of ancient Masonry, Christianity or Catholicism has spread through the centuries and to the most remote places. Masonic history informs us that at that time, Masonry was under Catholic influence and it is impossible that the Fraternity could be anti-Catholic. Let us speak not of the too remote. Look at our members, the ma-

majority of us are Catholics. If this Fraternity is against their own religion, there is no reason for them to stay in Masonry. They are intelligent people, could they be foolish enough to forfeit their fidelity to their own God and religion in exchange with this association. You then can take my word that Masonry is not anti-Catholic neither is it against any other religion.

Another popular belief is that Masonry is a Godless society. This I don't have to explain, for you have seen with your own eyes that we worship God the way you do with reverence.

What is then Masonry? I say Masonry is an experimental science, which generates from a hypothesis, works by a principle and seeks for a solution or, in other words, searches for the light.

Masonry was generated from the hypothesis that men, inspite of their differences, can live together in peace, work by the principle that there is one GOD, the Father of all men and that men are brothers, the children of God and are to love, aid and assist each other and seek for the solution of how men can live in peace and harmony.

From the holy writings we learn that we are all children of God by creation and consequently, we believe that we are descendants of the same forefather. Hence, the human specie is but one big family.

However, when we turn over our history, we find that our history was written in blood. Blood of rival tribesmen, blood of victims of tyrannical rulers, blood of victims of conspiracy for mercenary objectives, blood of those who fought for differences of opinions, blood of victims of religious

persecutions, blood of the Holy Crusades, and worst of all, blood of patriots against compatriots and blood of brothers against brothers.

Why? Why should our history be stained with blood? Why are fellow human beings who are brothers of the same Almighty Parent should be against each other? Why can we not labor together to build a better world? A world where individual opinion is respected, a world where religious viewpoint is left to the dictates of one's conscience, a world whose economic objective is for the betterment of all. A world where universal benevolence prevails, in short, a world of eternal and lasting peace.

This is a problem we seek to solve; this is a question we seek for an answer and this is the light we are searching for. It is from this point that Masonry came into existence. It is for this objective that Masons are laboring. Masonry is confronted with the problem of how man on this world can live together in peace. Masonry believes that human beings are blood brothers and are bound to love, aid and assist one another. It is this theme we contemplate and from this principle we go on an experiment, an experiment to prove the truth that men who were born of the same Almighty Parent, in spite of differences in political opinions, in religious beliefs, in social standing, and in financial position, can meet on the same level, work for a common goal and live in harmony.

As far as human efforts are concerned, we had exerted much on physical science and consequently neglected the spiritual and moral ones. Development in physical science has brought us from the atomic to hydro-

gen age and from sputnik to a foreseeable interplanetary travels and simultaneously placed us on the brink of whether to end the world civilization or to enjoy the abundant life of atomic age. However, when we look back to spiritual science, we find it to be far behind. We find that human morality is at its ebb, materialism prevails, juvenile delinquency rampant, exploitation of fellow beings popular, men are living in a state of insecurity and unrest. From whom could we expect a hand in this field, when public virtue is reversely exemplified by some government officials in graft and corruption and religious faith is adversely distorted by certain church hierarchies who abuse their influence and power? It seems hopeless. Freemasonry however, has devoted itself from time immemorial to the study of moral science, founds its basis on the noble science of Geometry, interprets symbolisms from implements of architecture, searches through logic, theology and other associated spiritual sciences; and developed today an extensive system, with members in every country and every clime offering themselves as laboratory materials and observers in a moral science which deals with how to make a man better, his home a happier home, and the world, a peaceful world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to inform you that Masonry as an experimental science has for thousands of years of repeating experiments in millions of laboratories of which this Lodge is one, has brought to you the good old news, the news that our experiment has proved successful and the answer to the possibility for fellow human beings to live

together in harmony can be a positive fact. In the due course of this experiment, we make the Lodge a little world; we are accepting into our membership men of any rank, race, sect or opinion to meet in the same Lodge. The door of Freemasonry is open to anybody who seeks admission regardless of his skin, color, racial origin, political affiliation, religious belief, social standing or professional distinction provided he comes with a sincerity to improve himself and to be serviceable to his fellow creature. Masonry has in our assemblies the king and the sweeper, the Mohammedan and the Catholic, the American as well as the Russian, the Caucasian and the Indian. The result is, I am happy to tell you,

that in all our gatherings, brotherly love prevails and all social virtues cement us in one common bond. Furthermore, we found that through constant reminding of our moral duties and social virtues, through pleasant association and good fellowship, through the influence of Sublime Intelligence and Sacred Guidance, man can become a better man.

Amidst this success, Masonry has not lessened its effort. Masonry is still going on with its experiments. I am, therefore, calling on you Ladies and Gentlemen, to join efforts with Masonry to further the experiment in search for further light. The light that will lead us to be a better world, the world of eternal and lasting peace.



Newly Installed 1960 officers of Hailo-Acacia Lodge No. 11, F. & A. M. with V. W. Bro. Pantaleon Pelayo, D.D.G.M., 14th District.

Standing, Left to Right: Tranquilina Baldevia, Tyler; Calixto B. Belicena, S.S.; Ricardo J. Jeruta, S.D.; Felix B. Regalado, Chaplain; Jose Yu Ang Kong, Marshal; Jose C. Publico, J.D.; Ramon Muñoz, J.S.; Felix G. Altura, Organist.

Sitting, Left to Right: Teofilo Marte, P.M., Orator; Sy Bon Tong, P.M., Treasurer; Alfredo P. Cathedral, S.W. Bro. Pantaleon Pelayo, D.D.G.M.; W Bro. Francisco Song Heng, Master; Gil F. Octaviano, J.W.; P. C. Leonidas, P.M., Secretary; Felix F. Garcia, Auditor.