

DO WE TAKE THE EASTERN STAR TOO SERIOUSLY?

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A WORTHY GRAND MATRON OF THE GRAND CHAPTER OF A CERTAIN STATE WAS DUE TO PAY HER OFFICIAL VISIT TO MY SUBORDINATE CHAPTER. A MEMBER OF ANOTHER CHAPTER URGED ME TO ATTEND AN ATTRACTIVE SOCIAL FUNCTION THAT SHE HAD ARRANGED FOR THE SAME EVENING. I TOLD HER I COULD NOT DO SO BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT MY DUTY TO ATTEND MY CHAPTER THAT EVENING. SHE SAID, "I'M AFRAID THAT YOU TAKE YOUR EASTERN STAR TOO SERIOUSLY." I DID NOT HAVE TIME TO REPLY PROPERLY, BUT I HAVE SINCE GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO THE QUESTION. DO I, OR DOES ANYONE, TAKE THE EASTERN STAR TOO SERIOUSLY?

ON ALL SIDES OF US WE SEE PEOPLE WHO ARE UNDOUBTEDLY TAKING THEMSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY AND THE THINGS IN WHICH THEY HAPPEN TO BE INTERESTED FOR THE TIME BEING. THERE ARE MANY ACTIVITIES AND MOVEMENTS THAT ARE OF LITTLE OR NO IMPORTANCE. THEY ARE SHORT-LIVED AND WITHIN A FEW YEARS WILL HAVE PRACTICALLY BEEN FORGOTTEN BY NEARLY EVERYONE. THEY MAY FILL OUR LEISURE MOMENTS AND ENTERTAIN US FAIRLY WELL, BUT ABOUT THE BEST OF THEM IS THAT THEY DO NO HARM. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS INDISPUTABLE THAT THERE ARE LINES OF HUMAN ENDEAVOR THAT ARE OF TREMENDOUS SIGNIFICANCE AND OF ALMOST IMMEASURABLE IMPORTANCE. THEIR SUCCESS MEANS PEACE, CONTENTMENT AND HAPPINESS FOR THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.

NOW. I URGE YOU TO ASK YOURSELF FRANKLY TO WHICH CLASS OF EASTERN STARS DO YOU BELONG. IS IT A COMPARATIVELY UNIMPORTANT THING THAT HAS MEANT AND MEANS LITTLE TO US? IS IT MERELY A FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION IN WHICH SISTERS AND BROTHERS MEET AROUND THE FESTIVE BOARD IN A FORCED AND ARTIFICIAL GOOD FELLOWSHIP? DOES ITS RITUAL CONSIST ONLY OF RIGMAROLES THAT ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY? DOES IT MERELY SATISFY A SECRET CRAVING FOR HIGH SOUNDING TITLES AND ENABLE US TO BROADEN OUR CIRCLE OF ACQUAINTANCES WITH RESULTING BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL PROFIT? NO! A THOUSAND TIMES NO!

THE ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR IS A GREATER AND GRANDER, MORE IMPORTANT MOVEMENT THAN MOST OF THE WEARERS OF THE EMBLEM

OF THE EASTERN STAR REALIZE. IT HAS CONSISTENTLY, CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND ZEALOUSLY TAUGHT THE PRACTICE OF NOBLE, UPLIFTING, HEROIC VIRTUES. BY PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE, IT HAS ENCOURAGED ITS MEMBERS IN WELL-DOING. WHEN TEMPTATION HAS PROVEN TOO STRONG TO BE RESISTED, IT HAS STRETCHED FORTH A HELPING HAND, SUCCORED THE DISTRESSED, RELIEVED THE WIDOWS AND FATHERLESS, AND, IN COUNTLESS WAYS, HAS BRIGHTENED LIFE'S PATHWAY FOR MEMBERS OF THE ORDER.

ITS TEACHINGS ARE AN EPITOME OF MORAL, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS TRUTHS. IT COMBATS INJUSTICE AND TYRANNY OVER MIND AND BODY AND ITS EFFORTS HAVE BEEN CROWNED WITH A MARVELOUS DEGREE OF SUCCESS.

WHOSE FAULT IS IT IF OUR OBLIGATION RESTS SO LIGHTLY UPON SOME EASTERN STAR MEMBERS THAT THEY ARE NOTHING MORE THAN EMBLEM WEARERS? ARE THE GENERAL GRAND CHAPTER, GRAND CHAPTER AND SUBORDINATE CHAPTER TO BLAME? YOU KNOW THAT THE FAULT IS NOT THEIRS. GENERALLY SPEAKING, THEY DO THE WORK ALLOTTED TO THEM VERY WELL. WHOSE FAULT THEN? ARE THE CONTENTS OF THE RITUAL, RED BOOK AND BLUE BOOK TO BLAME? IS IT THE EASTERN STARS WHO DO NOT IMPART THEIR KNOWLEDGE OR WHO WRITE UNSKILLFULLY AND UNINTERESTINGLY? QUITE THE CONTRARY.

PERHAPS THOSE AMONG YOU WHO HAVE THOUGHT ON THESE PROBLEMS MAY SUGGEST THAT NO PERSONS ARE TO BLAME. IN OUR RITUAL, UNDER THE LANDMARKS OF THE ORDER, IT SAYS THIS: "A BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF A SUPREME BEING." ITS LESSONS ARE SCRIPTURAL, ITS TEACHINGS MORAL AND ITS PURPOSE BENEFICENT. ITS OBLIGATIONS ARE BASED UPON THE HONOR OF THOSE WHO OBTAIN ITS SECRETS AND ARE FRAMED UPON THE PRINCIPLE THAT WHATEVER BENEFITS ARE DUE MASONS, TO THE WIVES, DAUGHTERS, MOTHERS, WIDOWS AND SISTERS OF MASONS, RECIPROCAL DUTIES ARE DUE FROM THEM TO MASONS. THE OBLIGATION OF OUR ORDER, VOLUNTARILY ASSUMED, IS PERPETUAL FROM THE FORCE OF WHICH THERE IS NO RELEASE.

THERE IS A VAST AMOUNT OF WORK FOR EASTERN STARS TO DO NOW. BUT IS NOT A JOB FOR SLUGGARDS, SLACKERS AND THE INDIFFERENT, WHO DO NOT TAKE THE ORDER SERIOUSLY. THOSE WHO PUT NOTHING IN, GET NOTHING OUT.

WHO IS TO BLAME FOR THE INDIFFERENCE AND NEGLECT OF THE TEACHINGS THAT PERMEATE OUR CHAPTERS? EVERY EASTERN STAR WHO IS DOING LESS THAN THEY SHOULD DO IS TO BLAME. WE ARE TO

BLAME FOR NOT STUDYING AND THINKING MORE DEEPLY ON THE PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN FOR US, FOR NOT DOING OUR PART WILLINGLY WHEN CALLED UPON, FOR NOT VOLUNTEERING OUR SERVICES AND FINDING FOR OURSELVES SOMETHING TO DO AND ENCOURAGING OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN WIL-DOING, FOR NOT ATTENDING CHAPTER MORE FREQUENTLY, FOR NOT VISITING THE SICK, FOR NOT CONTRIBUTING MORE LIBERALLY TO EASE THE BURDEN OF DISTRESSED, WORTHY MEMBERS, FOR NOT BEING EASTERN STARS IN FACT AS WELL AS IN NAME.

CERTAINLY NO ONE ELSE IS RESPONSIBLE. OUR OMISSIONS ARE OUR OWN FAULTS, AND NO ONE ELSE'S. OUR DUTY IS PLAIN, THE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO US ARE MANIFOLD, THERE IS A JOB ENTIRELY SUITED TO THE ABILITY OF EVERY WAITING MEMBER, AND EVERY THOUGHTFUL SISTER OR BROTHER WILL ADMIT THE NEED.

PERHAPS, IT MAY MAKE VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE TO YOU OR TO ME WHETHER WE TAKE OUR EASTERN STAR WITH UTMOST SERIOUSNESS OR REGARD IT WITH INDIFFERENCE, BUT THERE CAN BE NO DISAGREEMENT WITH THIS STATEMENT. WE ALL HAVE OUR DUTY TO PERFORM. AND I AM POSITIVE IT WILL EITHER BLESS AND THANK US OR CURSE AND DESPISE US, DEPENDING UPON THE EXTENT TO WHICH EASTERN STARS EVERYWHERE ARE MADE TO REALIZE THE TREMENDOUS SERIOUSNESS OF THEIR DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

NO! I AM SURE THAT I DO NOT TAKE THE EASTERN STAR TOO SERIOUSLY, AND THAT NO EASTERN STAR CAN DO SO.

LET US LIVE UP TO OUR SPLENDID REPUTATION FOR ACHIEVEMENT NO MATTER HOW DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE YOU MAY BE. SINCERELY JOIN ME, I BEG OF YOU, IN THE PLEDGE TO ENDEAVOR, FROM THIS DAY, TO TAKE EASTERN STAR TEACHINGS MORE SERIOUSLY THAN IN THE PAST.