

## TOLERATION AND SYMPATHY

**TOLERATION** – History records a bloody trail of persecution when men arrogate to themselves the right to punish others for contrary opinions. This type of bigotry is behind condemnations of Masonry. We feel that every person has a right to religious and political views of his or her own, and that no human being can validly say that he or she alone knows the truth. Whatever a person sincerely believes is to him or here truth, and he or she knows only education and enlightenment can conquer intolerance and fanaticism. Masonry, while religious, is not a religion, but within its precepts and professions there are contained the truths and the universal morality of all recognized creeds and religions. These include those our members must share – a belief in the one God, in an immortal soul, and in a moral and virtuous life.

An enlightened people cannot be enslaved and an ignorant people cannot be set free. We of the Scottish Rite are tolerant of all creeds and religions. We do not fasten any dogma upon our members, nor do we seek to purge any dogma that confounds science or confutes history. Myth and story be a phase of man's eternal search for God.

Yet we are not so soft as to confuse tolerance with license when it comes to our Masonic and national survival. Let there be no mistake. There are today vindictive and relentless foes of Freemasonry. They are motivated by ignorance, bigotry and intolerance, mental and spiritual slavery. Hence, they collide with Masonic concepts of constitutional freedoms, enlightened living and inherent rights of the people. The principle of freedom rejects the rule of the priesthood over those held in ignorance. Therefore, some of the priesthood are bitter foes of those who would enlighten and educate the citizenry of a nation through free, tax-supported public schools, a free press, freedom of thought and religion.

Freemasonry neither fears nor hates any sect or society, but stands on guard to protect humanity from intolerance, tyranny, fanaticism and ignorant brutality. But if we were to succumb to these blandishments of misguided, albeit well-meaning men or Brethren, we would fall into the abyss of oblivion. It would be Masonic suicide.

A distinguishing characteristic of every true Mason is the key word Sympathy. He should manifest this not only toward his Brethren, but also toward all mankind. For, he sees the human race as one great family to which God has connected and forged him with invisible links through a mighty network of circumstance. Especially upon entry into our Fraternity does he feel sympathy to serve his fellow man, cease any prior isolation, and welcome opportunities to put into practice unselfish duties of service he has assumed toward his Brethren in Masonry. He knows then how essential it is to be earnest, true, reliable and sincere; to protect the people against illegal impositions and to contend for their betterment; and how the safety of free government depends upon the integrity of the common people. A nation that claims greatness through tyranny over prostrate states, heavy and unjust taxation, and alliances more crafty than wholesome, is actually impoverished and tottering toward ruin.

Therefore, be strong, young men, be strong! Be not deceived by outward appearances, but look for the great realities, which are permanent and eternal. Serve your country and your God, I charge you, with the best talent and your best life. And be not lost in that glittering tinsel world, where all is make believe, and nothing is real. Go to it! And God bless you.

We seek to instill into the hearts of our members a love of knowledge and thereby inflame their souls with a passion for mental and spiritual growth. They then may devote themselves to a search for the truth that should dominate their lives. The marks of a true Scottish Rite Mason are not glib phrases, nor ready answers or shining jewelry, but an insatiable curiosity, a love of learning, and a desire to know and to find the radiant truth.