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# TO LIGHT!



## Bringing Masonic Education To Light

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### Loyalty to Government

In this election year, where we find so much of the news preoccupied with politics, we Masons, like all other citizens, find ourselves contemplating our government and the actions of its leaders. Additionally there are occasions where we read news reports that assert that Masons use their positions of influence to infiltrate and uproot governments and their workings. When we reflect on these two thoughts, we all must agree that yes, Masons are and have always been active participants in the political process of the governments of the particular country in which they live. Should Masons actively participate in government and should the public worry about subversive activity among Masons?

It is a common understanding and a very definite custom in Masonic Lodges that religion and politics are not to be discussed within the confines of a tiled Lodge room. So as a Lodge, the Lodge itself cannot be involved in politics. But what guidance does our ritual give to the individual Mason? In the late 1700's, the Prestonian Lectures tell the Entered Apprentice the following:

"In the State, you are to be a quiet and peaceable subject, true to your sovereign, and just to your country; you are not to countenance disloyalty or rebellion, but patiently submit to legal authority, and conform with cheerfulness to the government under which you live, yielding obedience to the laws which afford your protection, but never forgetting the attachment you owe to the place of your nativity or the allegiance due to the sovereign or protectors of that spot."

The charge recited in American Lodges is in the same spirit and varies slightly:

"In the state, your are to be a quiet and peaceful subject, true to your government, and just to your country; you are not to countenance disloyalty or rebellion, but patiently submit to legal authority, and conform with cheerfulness to the government of the country in which you live."

The charge given in French Lodges is different than the preceding two but the concept is the same:

“Obedience to the laws and submission to the authorities are among the most imperious duties of the Mason, and he is forbidden at all times from engaging in plots and conspiracies.”

So the ritual tells us we must be obedient to our country and conform to all its laws and ordinances and not to incite rebellion. Most Mason will agree that the ritual and what it teaches is a guide to universally accepted moral lesson that have stood the test of time and they should be honored, cherished and followed. But what happens when a Mason who wishes to honor those moral teachings and be obedient to his country, sees his government drifting into a sea of immorality contrary to his conscience. He becomes involved in the political process and by doing so ensures that his government is on a moral path that he as a Mason can support and in doing so he also fulfills his Masonic obligation to himself and his Lodge. In this subtle way decency and morality is infused into our world for the benefit of mankind.

Look around your Lodge room. How many of your Lodge members actively participate in a community committee or office. When we read the biographies of famous Masons or take a look at the Masonic leaders of our country, state and local communities, we see that Masons are, have been and always will be passionate leaders in the struggle for honest, decent, admirable and moral government. And, if every Mason remembers those truths and moral lessons he has learned from this honorable Fraternity the public has nothing ever to fear from an individual Masons involvement in this great process of self-government.

By Max Miller