



LODGE VEGAS # 32

The Two Paths

MASONRY, the Church--in fact all religions --teach that each one of us has the choice of two Paths in life. One is long, tedious, tortuous and beset with all manner of dangers and temptations--but finally leads to Peace and Rest--an eternity of Happiness. The other --a broad highway, easy to travel--with delightful groves and a plentitude of sunshine, music and flowers --everything to delight the eye and charm the senses-- gently, almost imperceptibly, but none the less surely, leads downward to despair and death.

All men that have lived have chosen--yea, traveled--one or the other of these Roads. There is no avoidance of it. Either we must struggle as long as life lasts, to keep on that Path which leads to Light and Life Eternal--or give up the fight--yield to the many temptations that beset us--branch off upon a pleasanter Path leading to the Downward Road--exchanging our God-promised reward for a few short hours of indulgence in whatever debasing Passion or Desire may appeal most strongly to our brutal instincts.

In the Dhammapada, the authorship of what is ascribed to Buddha himself, and pronounced to be one of the most practical ethical hand-books of Buddhism, we read

"The virtuous man is happy in this World, and he is happy in the next; he is happy in both. He is happy when he thinks of the good he has done; he is still more happy when going on the GOOD PATH."

"Earnestness is the Path of Immortality. (Nirvana.) Thoughtlessness is the Path of Death. Those who are in earnest do not die, those who are thoughtless are as if dead already."

"Fools follow after Vanity. The Wise man keeps Earnestness as his best Jewel."

"The Disciple will find out the plainly shown Path of Virtue as a clever man finds the right flower."

These verses are about 2600 years old, and yet the truths therein contained have never been more completely or more concisely stated. Analyze them as you will, and the more thought you expend upon them, the more thoroughly will you understand and appreciate their breadth and scope.

No thinking man can gainsay that True Earnestness leads to the Upward Path. "The Path of Immortality." It is beset with numerous dangers. Innumerable temptations and obstacles obstruct our passage.

Our Lodge lessons have taught us we have need of the three Theological Virtues--Faith, Hope and Charity--together with the four Cardinal ones--Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance and Justice; but without the foundation of Earnestness how could Success crown our efforts ?

Truly Earnestness is man's "Best Jewel."

And, just as this is true of Earnestness, so is it also true that Thoughtlessness, if not eliminated from our character, will ultimately lead us on the Downward Course--even unto the Shades of Death.

How shall we find this Path of Virtue ?

Reflect upon the teachings of the Lodge from the First degree to the last one you have taken, and you will find the answer.

But neither Faith, Hope, Charity, Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance nor Justice will avail unless they are backed up with Sincerity-- with Determination--call it what you will-- Earnestness is the word that best suits all phases of the case--and this message of Buddha, which has come down to us through 26 centuries, cannot be controverted.

About six hundred years after this message was given to the World, there was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the CHRIST. He said to the sinful Woman: "Go thy way--thy sins are forgiven thee"--her faith had made her whole.

But think you that Earnestness had no part in the healing? This poor woman had thrown every particle of Earnestness of which she was capable into her appeal--and the Christ saw--and approved.

It was the Earnestness of her Faith which wrought the cure.

Volumes might be written upon this subject, but more cannot be said than that which Buddha has so tersely expressed:

"Earnestness is the Path of Immortality. Thoughtlessness is the Path of Death.

Dear Brother, ponder over this seriously. Choose the RIGHT PATH. BE EARNEST and PEACE and REST will attend thy efforts.

- Source: The Builder February 1915
Prepare By, Br. Florian for the benefit of the Craft, OCT, 2013