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Grand Chapter Libran  
5/11/11

WHAT IS PATRIOTISM ?

Our Patriotic Month is a busy one, and you have, no doubt, listened to much stirring music as well as to many inspiring addresses and noble tributes. You have clearly in mind two great patriots, Washington and Lincoln. Why were they so called? Both were born in the South, but under very different circumstances. Washington had comfort, luxury, and the best of education the country could afford. He could have lived an indolent, very selfish life, using his wealth and popularity for personal glory and profit. But he was a good citizen, and knew the conditions and problems of his country, and wanted above everything else to remedy and solve them. He was bitterly criticized and scorned by those who did not agree with him. So much so that at times he felt that he could not go on but resign. What was it that kept him in the bitter cold at Valley Forge? Was it money or desire for power. No, he could have gotten both these in a very easy way. His intense love for his country urged him to call together the best minds of his time and construct the Bill of Rights, and to lead them on until the Colonies were finally organized.

Was it what Lincoln did to cause us to call him patriotic, or was it the spirit that wrung from his heart the famous expression "This country cannot exist half slave and half free."?

Let me point out other famous Americans, - Jane Addams, whose heart was touched by the terrible conditions in the slums of our great cities, and who was instrumental in the building of the Hull House. Thousands call her blessed, but she is not listed with the patriots. Frances Willard spent her life in crushing the liquor traffic, Rockefeller has given millions to find the cause and cure of diseases, Carnegie has built libraries all over our land so that the best and most expensive books can be read by all, yet with all these and many others who loved their fellowmen, Lincoln and Washington stand out as our two great leading patriots because they loved their country and our country and spent their lives in saving it and guiding it in the right direction that we might enjoy the freedom we all so much love.

Let us take an inventory of ourselves, and ask ourselves, "Are you a patriot"? Our Democratic form of government lives or dies on this answer. Because WE are the government. It is our business, and we must see that our principles are enforced.

The Order of the Eastern Star is not primarily a patriotic organization, but the time is here that every organization must be aware of World movements and join in the training and protection of our youth. They must know what our government really is, - its privileges and its ideals. We cannot afford to be idle a moment from giving our hands, our minds, our hearts to the protection of our children, our homes, our country. This is our patriotic duty, and it is only when we do all within our power to serve the best interests of our country that we may expect to be called patriots.

It is appropriate at this time to pay tribute to the Flag of our Country, which we all love so dearly. "Flag of America! Wondrous Flag of our Fathers! Glorious Flag immortalizing the brave lives who chose you for our standard, we salute you. We are aware of the significance of your colors. From them the voice of the Infinite Creator speaks, granting us the highest expression of religious freedom. At the sight of you we remember the victories of our ideals, and thrilled by your world-wide call, we are inspired to greater achievements, nobler deeds and purer lives. Beautiful Flag of our Country, you are the loveliest thing created by human hand. Within your folds is a treasure that cannot be bought, for wrapped therein are a million hearts of American men and women. Unfurled upon your staff you are a beacon of love. We hold you high that you may be a light to the world shedding peace, happiness, and good will to all men upon the face of the Earth. Old Glory, Flag of all Flags, "You are fairest among thousands altogether lovely," and we pledge you our allegiance.

interesting in itself