

All the Way Up There

By
Sir Knight William Perkins

How many times have we heard this phrase from friends and acquaintances that are not members and are referring to someone they know who was in the Lodge?

"My father-in-law was all the way up there." "I had an uncle who was all the way at the top."

Often we hear this or something similar from nonmembers and just as often, spoken with pride on their part. It is generally a reference to someone that is a 32° or a 33° in the Scottish Rite or is a past Illustrious Potentate in the Shrine. Daily our lives center around numbers, and as humans we look at numbers and often think: "onward and upward."

In Masonry, what really is "all the way up there?" After all, if two of something is greater than one, then thirty-two of that something must be the most. Right?

Well, not quite. We are initiated as an Entered Apprentice, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. Now let's take a closer look at one of the words in that previous sentence, the word being "sublime."

In the dictionary you will find a number of meanings for this word, everything from "lofty" to "supreme," even "utter" is listed in the adjectives. Also among them are the words "complete" and "absolute." A look at the word "complete" tells you that you have everything and lack nothing. The whole, the entire, ad infinitum. I avoid the word absolute

here as the definition includes "free from imperfection," which we are not, as we are reminded in Romans 3:23. Complete? Masonically speaking, yes we are.

We are charged with the authority to correct those of the lesser degrees and to help, guard, and protect our Brethren and our Fraternity. By the same token, there are no instructions as to a Master receiving corrections from those "higher up," but we hear about those that are "all the way up there," and "how far up are you?"

No doubt a number of you, like me, when explaining, go into a little of the detail of the appendant bodies of our Fraternity. I say that these other "groups" or rites go out from the 3rd degree and that they are "extra" and not directly in line with what we often call the "Blue Lodge." Once in a while the ego may rear its head and you simply give the answer that the person may expect, knowing it's not correct but answering and going on to other matters. While we may do this, we also must be mindful of Matthew 20:16; that "So the last will be the first, and the first will be the last." (NIV) So is this not what we are here for? Is not the fraternity here to make good men better? To this end to help our brethren and their families and in turn, to aid the less fortunate of our respective communities?

Of course the answer to all of the above is "yes," and why wouldn't it be?

To offer aid to others, to make the world a better place, and the interesting thing about this? You don't have to be all the way up there to do it. The Entered Apprentice, a DeMolay, even the candidate in waiting can help to accomplish these tasks. To give of yourself is all the way. Remember, if you are "all the way up there" and have not charity.

Naturally, there are a good number of us that are very active in the numerous bodies associated with our Fraternity, and we have a right to be proud of what we contribute and what those respective bodies accomplish. Those in this category are often referred to by the Brethren, Companions, and fellow Knights as being "big in the Lodge."

"I knew his dad, he was big in the Lodge."

Not all the way up there, just big. There is a difference, and actually a very simple difference. When you are raised to the sublime degree of a Master Ma-

son, you are all the way up there. If not it wouldn't be called Master Mason. Yet so many of our Brethren are so seldom seen after being raised that we sometimes meet them, not knowing who they are, while others are known in a good many circles of the Fraternity due to their selfless dedication and boundless energy for its propagation.

So my advice to you is don't just be up there, or all the way out there in the appendant bodies, but be big in your Lodge. In other words, be active. Attend meetings and be active where and when you can. Be mindful of Galatians 6:7 as you only get from the Fraternity what you put into it.

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