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THE LODGE, THE CHRISTIAN AND THE BIBLE (Part 3)

by Eddy Gilpin

(Editor's Note: In the last two months' issues a brief history, some definitions and quotations concerning Masonry's being a religion were given. Before continuing with Part 3 of this article, it might be well to review the first two installments.)

Yet another area of concern about Masonry is the oaths which one must take for the varying Masonic degrees. Notice some of these and, as you do so, ask yourself if such vows are in accordance in any sense of the word with the word of God. (All emphasis mine—EG).

"I _____, of my own free will and accord in presence of Almighty God and this right worshipful Lodge... hereby and hereon, do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear I will always hail, forever conceal and never reveal any of the secret arts, parts or points of the mysteries of Freemasonry...all of which I solemnly and sincerely promise and swear to keep and perform the same, without any equivocation, mental reservation or secret evasion of mind whatever, BINDING MYSELF UNDER NO LESS A PENALTY THAN THAT OF HAVING MY THROAT CUT FROM EAR TO EAR, MY TONGUE TORN OUT BY ITS ROOTS, AND WITH MY BODY BURIED IN THE ROUGH SANDS OF THE SEA, A CABLE'S LENGTH FROM SHORE, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate this, my most solemn obligation as an entered apprentice, so help me God and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same." (Oath of an Entered Apprentice).

(The following quotations are in part, listing only the penalties for violation.)

"...Under no less penalty than that of HAVING MY BODY SEVERED IN TWIN, MY BOWEL TAKEN THENCE, AND WITH MY BODY BURNED TO ASHES, AND THOSE ASHES SCATTERED TO THE FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN, so that there might remain name, trace nor re-

membrance of so vile a wretch as I would be, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate this, my most solemn obligation, as a Master Mason, so help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same." (Oath of a Master Mason).

(Note: Prior to this oath, the inductee holds the top half of a human skull which is filled with wine.)

"This pure wine I now take in testimony of my belief in the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul and may this libation appear as a witness against me both here and hereafter—and as the sins of the world were laid upon the head of the Savior, SO MAY ALL THE SINS COMMITTED BY THE PERSON WHOSE SKULL THIS WAS BE HEAPED UPON MY HEAD, IN ADDITION TO MY OWN, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate or transgress any obligation that I have heretofore taken, take at this time, or shall at any future period take in relation to any degree of Masonry or order of Knighthood. So help me God." (Oath of Knights of Malta, one of the so-called Christian degrees).

"...And in failure of this my obligation, I CONSENT TO HAVE MY BODY OPENED PERPENDICULARLY, AND TO BE EXPOSED FOR EIGHT HOURS IN THE OPEN AIR, THAT THE VENOMOUS FLIES MAY EAT OF MY ENTRAILS, MY HEAD TO BE CUT OFF AND PUT ON THE HIGHEST PINNACLE OF THE WORLD AND I WILL ALWAYS BE READY TO INFLICT THE SAME PUNISHMENT ON THOSE WHO SHALL DISCLOSE THIS DEGREE AND BREAK THIS OBLIGATION, so help me God and maintain me, Amen." (Oath of 10th Degree, Scottish Rite).

"...In willful violation whereof I may incur the fearful penalty of HAVING MY EYEBALLS PIERCED TO THE CENTER WITH A THREE-EDGED BLADE, MY FEET FLAYED AND I BE FORCED TO WALK THE HOT

SANDS UPON THE STERILE SHORES OF THE RED SEA, until the flaming sun shall strike me with livid plague, and MY ALLAH THE GOD OF ARAB MUSLIM AND MOHAMMEDAN, THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS support me to the entire fulfillment of the same, Amen, Amen, Amen." (Oath of the Shrine A.A.O.N.M.S.). (Recall that near the beginning of this article it was stated that the Shrine is a Muslim-oriented degree with a Muslim oath.)

In light of the foregoing, does this appear to be something in which a Christian could participate; or, rather, does it not seem to be more along the lines of Satanism? Even though such oaths might never be carried out, can it be said to be in accordance with Christian character to make such vows? Never!

In the final aspect of this investigation of Freemasonry let us look at various quotations from Masonic sources and, since they do so, basically let them speak for themselves. (All emphasis mine—EG).

"Masonic symbols are but working tools by the use of which we are seeking TO FORM OURSELVES INTO PERFECT STONES for that building which is to be our eternal home."⁵⁵

"Masonry is not a religion but Religion."⁵⁶

"In the early church, AS IN THE SECRET DOCTRINE, THERE WAS NOT ONE CHRIST FOR THE WORLD, BUT A POTENTIAL CHRIST IN EVERY MAN. Theologians first made a fetish of the impersonal Omnipresent Divinity; and then tore the Christos from the hearts of all humanity in order to deify Jesus; that they might have a godman peculiarly their own."⁵⁷

(Note—It is admitted that in "the secret doctrine" {Masonry} is the idea that there is not "one Christ for the world, but a potential Christ in every man." However, it is not true that this was the case in "the early church.")

"Freemasonry is A RELIGION UPHOLD BY THE MOST HIGH GOD."⁵⁸

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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The Lodge, the Christian and the Bible

(Continued from page 1)

"Acacian—a term signifying a Mason who BY LIVING IN STRICT OBEDIENCE TO THE OBLIGATIONS AND PRECEPTS OF THE FRATERNITY IS FREE FROM SIN."⁵⁹

(Note—Yet, the majority of Masons will tell you that Masonry does not teach salvation through the lodge.)

"...All truths are Truths of Period, and not truths for eternity...."⁶⁰

(Note—Truth is truth, in all places and for all time. It is absolute and not relative.)

"...NO HUMAN BEING CAN WITH CERTAINTY SAY, in the clash and conflict of hostile faiths and creeds, WHAT IS TRUTH... WHATEVER ONE FIRMLY AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY BELIEVES, IS TRUTH TO HIM."⁶¹

(Note—Jesus said, "And ye shall KNOW THE TRUTH, and the truth shall make you free." Truth is NOT subjective.)

"...We know not what is the truth."⁶²

(Note—Jn. 8:32; 17:17.)

"No man is responsible for the rightness of his faith; but for the uprightness of it."⁶³

"The doctrines of the Bible are often NOT CLOTHED IN THE LANGUAGE OF STRICT TRUTH, but in that which was fittest to convey to a rude and ignorant people the practical essentials of the doctrine. A perfectly pure faith, free from all ex-

traneous admixtures, a system of noble theism and lofty morality, would find too little preparation for it in the common mind and heart, to admit prompt reception by the masses of mankind; and TRUTH MIGHT NOT HAVE REACHED US, IF IT HAD NOT BORROWED THE WINGS OF ERROR."⁶⁴

With all this evidence (and there is much, much more) revealing that Masonry and Christianity are diametrically opposed, how can anyone claim that one can exist faithfully as a member of both the Masonic Lodge and the Lord's church? Dear reader, Masonry is a religion, a false religion, based on paganism and sprinkled with just enough Bible terms to convince the unlearned of its "Christian" influence. Convincingly the question of whether or not a Christian can allow himself to be an influence for the church and the Masonic Lodge has been answered; and that answer is a resounding NO! "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (II Cor. 6:17).

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SERVITUDE

by Bennie Forister

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Mt. 6:24) Joshua said to Israel, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15) Jesus said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4:10) You will wear either the yoke of Christ, or yield to the bondage Satan imposes. Paul said, "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son." (Rom. 1:9) Paul realized he was a bond-servant of the Lord, and that by personal choice. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servant ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-18). Satan's yoke of bondage had been thrown off through their obedience to the form of doctrine: i.e. the death, burial and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4). This is shown in this passage: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together with Him in the likeness of His death we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Rom. 6:3-7). There is no

other passage that shows more clearly how we are freed from sin, and made a new creature in Christ. Jesus offers an easy yoke. Until one has turned from Satan to serve God he is the servant and tool of the devil. Jesus stated this quite simply: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (Jno. 8:34) Jesus followed this statement by saying, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." (Jno. 8:44) It is only through Jesus Christ that this yoke of bondage to the devil is thrown off. "He that committeth sin is of the devil for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 Jno. 3:8) Rather than the yoke of Satan, Jesus offers another yoke that is for our own good. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Mt. 11:28-30) How different the yoke of the Savior than that which Satan imposes. A loving Saviour pleads with us to exchange the intolerable yoke of bondage to the devil, for the easy yoke of spiritual obedience unto Him.

While wearing the yoke of Satan, one is bound together with all unbelievers. This is a most degrading association, for "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. 15:33) One is joined with all those who revile Christ and oppose His gospel. Unbelievers are all in the devil's territory, and are doing his bidding. Therefore the warning is given: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:14-18) The devil yokes together evil people, and all unbelievers are under his influence; and that influence spreads and becomes increasingly worse. "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." (Tit. 1:15) To avoid all such contamination, Paul urged, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11) The contamination of sin-

ners is so vile that Paul wrote, "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." (1 Cor. 5:11) The servants of Christ must be separate from the sinful lot of unbelievers.

BELIEVERS ACCEPT THE YOKE OF CHRIST.

One pledges service to Christ in becoming a Christian. Paul said to the saints of Thessalonica, "How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. (1 Thess. 1:9) This meant that as believers, they accepted the yoke of Christ. He referred to such as "true yokefellows" and my "fellow labourers". (Phil. 4:3) We are yoked together in Christ as the best people on earth, God's people. "Now, therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. 2:19-22) What sweeter relationship can be desired? This makes the yoke of Christ even yet more desirable, as saints unite in true service. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." (Rom. 14:18) Being yoked with believers offers spiritual strength.

SATAN'S YOKE IS LOVE OF THE WORLD

The yoke of Satan offers unbridled lusts and insatiable worldly desires. James wrote, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God." (Jas. 4:4) This yoke places one in opposition to God who controls our destiny. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (Jas. 1:17) Surely no good can come from opposing Him. Therefore we are charged: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 Jno. 2:15-17) Those who mind worldly things will perish along with those worldly things; but those who accept the yoke of Christ,

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and render selfless obedience to Him will live forever with the Father above. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (Jno. 14:15) This makes the yoke easy, the burden light, and the pathway to heaven a joy.

When one throws off the yoke of Satan for obedience to Christ, his love and affection are transferred to spiritual blessings. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:1-3) Paul emphatically warned against those who walked disorderly, "whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." But immediately he gave the contrast to this sordid behaviour, "for our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." (Phil. 3:17-21) The Christian's yoke binds him to that which is good. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (Jas. 1:27) No longer bound to the world, the Christian lives on a higher plane. "And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2) We must turn the world down and be a servant of Christ in order to be pleasing to God. Whose servant are you?

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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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