

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, AR

Volume 25

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

February, 1991

No. 2

THE LODGE, THE CHRISTIAN AND THE BIBLE

by Eddy Gilpin

"There are approximately six million Masons in the world – four million of them in the United States...." ¹ Since this is the case, it is safe to assume that Masonry has an influence on society in this country as well as the entire world. Any organization boasting such a membership, which does anything at all, will of necessity have an influence. From the standpoint of the Bible, then, it is a necessity for the Christian to determine the direction of his influence in such an organization in order to conclude whether his being a member of such will harm his influence for the cause of Christ. If his being a member of such is in opposition to his being a member of the body of Christ (His church), naturally he cannot maintain membership among the Masons. But, is this the case with Freemasonry? In this series of articles we should like to examine some evidences from and about Masonry, compare them with Bible teachings and determine if a Christian can be a Mason. The question of the compatibility of Masonry and Christianity has been addressed many times, by many people resulting in conclusions for both sides of the issue. Thus, this article will not settle the matter for all time and for all people. However, it is hoped that some of the items presented will be beneficial to those who might be struggling with the issue.

The Masonic Lodge is being addressed in this article because it serves as the basis for most other lodges (Moose, Elks, Eagles, National Grange, etc.), after which, by comparison, they seem to be patterned. ² Much good has been and continues to be done through the charitable efforts of the Lodge. The Shriners' Burn Centers are perhaps the best in the world. However, a Christian must look beyond the mere deeds done by a particular group in his efforts to determine its Scripturalness. Again, in its own defense, Masonry contends that many famous Americans have been Masons. Men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, William McKinley, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry S.

Truman are said to have graced its membership. Altogether it is claimed that 15 presidents have been Masons. ³ Again, however, it must be noted that the endorsement of any and/or all men of a particular group or activity does not within itself mean that a Christian can likewise endorse such a group or activity. His means of judgment of such must be God's Word, the Bible. And so it becomes a matter not of what is done by the Lodge, nor the notoriety of its membership (past or present), but the comparison of its foundational principles which will deem it worthy of the Christian's wholehearted support, or relegate it to an organization which must be spoken against (Eph. 5:11).

The first order of business in examining the Masonic Lodge should perhaps be the defining of some terms relative to it. In his book General History, Cyclopedic and Dictionary of Freemasonry, Robert Macoy (a 33rd degree Mason and author of several Masonic works) defined "Freemasonry" thus:

"The definitions of Freemasonry have been numerous, and they all unite in declaring it to be a system of morality, by the practice of which its members may advance their spiritual interest, and mount by the theological ladder, from the Lodge on earth to the Lodge in heaven." ⁴

There are a number of explanations given in Masonic sources for the inclusion of "Free" in Freemasonry. Some of these are: 1) Operative Masons worked in free stone (stone which could be carved) and thus were originally called "free-stone masons;" 2) They were free men and not serfs or slaves; 3) They were free from the regulations usually placed upon members of trade guilds. ⁵

The phrases "Operative Masons" and "Speculative Masons" should likewise be defined. An "Operative Mason" was one who actually worked in stone in medieval times. Macoy refers to Operative Masonry with these words:

"Masonry, in its character as an operative art, is familiar to everyone; as

such, it is engaged in the application of the rules of architecture to the construction of public and private edifices. It abounds in the use of technical terms, and makes use of implements and materials which are peculiar to itself...At first operative Masonry existed simply as an art of building." ⁶

Concerning "Speculative Masonry", Macoy states:

"Speculative Masonry, now known as Freemasonry is, therefore, the scientific application and the religious consecration of the rules and principles, the technical language and the implements and materials, of operative Masonry to the worship of God as the Grand Architect of the universe, and to the purification of the heart and the inculcation of the dogmas of a religious philosophy." ⁷

Thus, it is clearly seen that it is not the "application of the rules of architecture to the construction of public and private edifices" (Operative Masonry) that is under consideration when one speaks of modern Freemasonry. Rather, it is the latter definition of "the scientific application and religious consecration of the rules and principles...of operative Masonry to the worship of God" (Speculative Masonry) that is being considered.

As seen, modern Freemasonry is the application of the language, tools and principles of operative Masonry "to the worship of God as the Grand Architect of the universe, and to the purification of the heart and inculcation of the dogmas of a religious philosophy." Simply stated, then, Masonry is the use of the "tools of the trade" of stone masons as symbols of moral truths and religious practices. While the stressing of moral truths and the practice of one's beliefs sound good on the surface, when one examines Masonry he cannot allow himself to be duped into thinking that "the end justifies the means." Clothed within the symbolism and workings of Masonry are matters in which a Christian cannot participate. For example, Albert Pike (a noted Masonic authority) states concerning the first of the three degrees of Blue Lodge Masonry that the "Christian" candidate for this degree is symbolic of "man, after the fall." He states: "In this condition of blindness, destitution, misery, and bondage, from which to save the world the Redeemer

Continued on page 2

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

... is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name be SURE to include the ZIP CODE. It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know the financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request. Mail all address corrections to:

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

P. O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Eddy Gilpin EDITOR

Publication No. 211780

came, is symbolized by the condition of the candidate, when he is brought up for the first time to the door of the Lodge." In the ritualism of this first degree (Entered Apprentice), Pike states that the "Worshipful Master" of the lodge is "a symbol of the Redeemer" to the initiate in that initiation rite.⁸ Can a Christian make such mockery of truth?

By means of further explanation of Freemasonry let us note briefly the terminology concerning the "degrees" in the Masonic system. In the United States Masonry is represented by the Blue Lodge of three basic degrees. These are: 1) Entered Apprentice; 2) Fellow Craft; 3) Master Mason.⁹ Thus, the Blue Lodge is the basis of Masonry in this country (U.S.A.). The expression "Blue Lodge" is said to have originated from two theories. The first theory is that operative masons thought the blue sky to be symbolic of the purity of God, which should in turn cause them to strive for greater purity in life whenever they beheld it. The second theory holds that shortly after "Speculative Masonry" (again, modern Freemasonry) came into existence, the color blue was substituted for white as the official color of the first Grand Lodge of England.¹⁰ At any rate, Blue Lodge is the basis upon which Masonry operates. After one reaches the degree of Master Mason, he can choose to go in one of two fields, or he can choose neither and remain a Master Mason. He may choose to pursue York (or American) Rite or Scottish Rite Masonry beyond the basic Blue Lodge.¹¹

York Rite Masonry consists of 10 degrees beyond the Blue Lodge, which are divided into three categories. These are:

- 1) Degrees 4-7 which comprise the "Chapter." They are the "Capitular Degrees" of Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and Royal Arch Mason.
- 2) Degrees 8-10 which comprise the "Council." They are the degrees of Royal Master, Select Master and Super Excellent Master.
- 3) The third grouping is called the "Commandery" (which claims to be "Christian").¹² It contains the Order of the Red Cross, Order of Knights of Malta and, the highest degree, Order of Knights Templar.¹³

The structure of Scottish Rite Masonry is somewhat different, being built around four groupings. These are:

- 1) The Lodge of Perfection, which has eleven degrees (4-14). These are called the "Ineffable Degrees."
- 2) The Council of Princes of Jerusalem, which has two degrees (15, 16), called the "Historical Grades."
- 3) The Chapter of Rose Croix is likewise composed of two degrees (17, 18), called the "Philosophical Grades."
- 4) The Consistory contains the final 14 degrees (19-32). These are called the "Traditional and Chivalric Grades." The often heralded Thirty-Third (33rd) Degree is called the "Official Grade." It is strictly honorary. (Note- In order to be a candidate for the Shrine [A.A.O.N.M.S.], one must be a 32nd degree Mason or Knights Templar. This degree is Muslim oriented and has a Muslim death oath.)¹⁴

There are some side orders in Masonry that will be listed in passing, as space will not permit their being fully examined. These are: Tall Cedars of Lebanon of the U.S.A., Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm (Grotto), Knights of the Red Cross of Constantine and Acacia Fraternity. Female organizations affiliated with the same are: Order of the Eastern Star, White Shrine of Jerusalem, Order of Amaranth, Daughters of the Nile and Daughters of Mokanna.¹⁵ Others include DeMolay (for boys 14-21 years of age), Job's Daughters, Rainbow Girls and Daughters of the Nile (for the daughters of Masons).¹⁶

Another matter basic to an understanding of Freemasonry is its history. Masonry itself claims its origin to be of great antiquity. Albert Pike stated the following concerning Masonry's role in history:

"The true Mason...knows that both books and the antique symbols of Masonry are vessels which come down to us full-freighted with the intellectual riches of the Past; and that in the

lading of these argosies is much that sheds light on the history of Masonry, and proves its claim to be acknowledged the benefactor of mankind, BORN IN THE VERY CRADLE OF THE RACE."¹⁷

"The legend of the columns, of granite and brass or bronze, erected by him (Enoch), is probably symbolical. That of bronze, which survived the flood, is supposed to symbolize the mysteries, of which Masonry is the legitimate successor - FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES THE CUSTODIAN AND DEPOSITORY OF THE GREAT PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS TRUTHS, unknown to the world at large, and handed down from age to age by an unbroken current of tradition, embodied in symbols, emblems, and allegories."¹⁸

"...the true primitive religion...was no new religion, but the reproduction of the oldest of all; AND ITS TRUE AND PERFECT MORALITY IS THE MORALITY OF MASONRY, AS IS THE MORALITY OF EVERY CREED OF ANTIQUITY."¹⁹ (All emphasis mine-EG).

Others have spoken of it in terms of its longevity as well. "Some Masons claim that Masonry is of divine origin."²⁰ In the Masonic Burial Service (adopted by the Grand Lodge of Texas in 1921), it is stated that "This white apron (or lambskin) is the emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason; MORE ANCIENT THAN THE GOLDEN FLEECE OR ROMAN EAGLE." It is further claimed that the Masonic Lodge preserved the Bible through the dark ages.²¹ Masonry reveals to prospective members and new initiates that its present organization owes its history to the building of Solomon's Temple. It is claimed that there were "close Masonic ties" between Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre, as Hiram provided wood, carpenters and masons to Solomon in his efforts.²² The Holy Bible-Masonic Edition states concerning the Lodge's probable antiquity, "It is admitted that Masonry is descended from the ancient mysteries. These were first arranged when the constellation Leo was at the summer solstice. Thus, THE ANTIQUITY OF MASONRY WAS WRITTEN IN THE STARRY HEAVENS."²³ (Emphasis mine-EG). And, finally, notice this quotation from Robert Macoy:

"Anderson, Preston, and many other Masonic writers claim for the order the highest antiquity. Preston is particular in his expressions as to the origin of the institution by saying: FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF

THE WORLD, WE MAY TRACE THE FOUNDATION OF MASONRY.' " 24
(Emphasis mine-EG).

Are these claims of antiquity true? Not in the least. Noted Masonic authors have themselves admitted that the true history of Freemasonry can be traced no farther back than the early 18th century. Notice the following quotations from some of these authors:

"Various Masonic writers have endeavored to trace the history of Masonry beyond such records, charters and constitutions as have been accepted and verified, with little more than conjecture for evidence. To discern the origin of the present institution as a growth from the guilds or trade-unions existing prior to 1700 A.D., is justified by neither fact nor reason. No such germ could develop into such flower and fruitage." 25

"Modern Freemasonry dates from the year 1717 when four existing Lodges met together in London to form the first Grand Lodge." 26

"Neither Adam, nor Nimrod, nor Moses, nor Joshua, nor David, nor Solomon, nor Hiram, nor St. John the Evangelist, nor St. John the Baptist belonged to the Masonic Order. It is unwise to assert more than we can prove, and to argue against probability. There is no record, sacred or profane, to induce us to believe that these holy and distinguished men were Freemasons, and our traditions do not go back to their days." 27

The fact remains that Freemasonry owes its organization to two men of the early 18th century, Dr. James Anderson (a Presbyterian "clergyman") and Dr. John Theophilus Desaguliers (a French Huguenot turned Anglican), who convinced others of like mind to form a select group. 28

It has been claimed by some that Masonry is a religion. In consideration of this it should be asked if Freemasonry makes that claim for itself and noted that if it is a religion it is a false religion. It should also be stated that one's circle of knowledge about Masonry has the prospect of being enlarged. In other words, even those who are Masons do not claim to know everything about it. If in this or any other study evidence is shown which one has never before seen, it does not necessarily mean that such is not true. It could possibly mean that one has just never advanced that far in his knowledge of Masonry. There are some matters which are reserved only for those who reach the higher degrees. These matters are not revealed to those who have only attained the basic de-

grees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. Concerning the Royal Arch (of Enoch), the 13th degree of Scottish Rite, Albert Pike stated: "There are profounder meanings concealed in the symbols of this Degree, connected with the philosophical system of the Hebrew Kabalists, which you will learn hereafter, if you should be so fortunate as to advance. THEY ARE UNFOLDED IN THE HIGHER DEGREES." 29 (Emphasis mine-EG). Thus, if one who is a Mason claims some of these matters not to be true based upon his experience as a Mason (no matter how long he might have been such), it does not mean that these matters are not true. It just means that he has not advanced far enough to have yet been exposed to them. The vast majority of Masons reach only the 3rd degree (Master Mason) and have little idea what is involved in the higher degrees. But, ignorance of such falsehoods does not make one free from the consequences of being associated with them. If Masonry is a religion, one who is affiliated with it is a part of a false religious system (and, thus, in opposition to God's Word) whether he realizes it to be a religion or not, whether he sees it as a religion or not, or whether he practices it as a religion or not! Now, let us address this issue.

Listed below are several quotations from renowned Masonic sources concerning whether it is a religion or not. Remember as you read these, that they are not what outsiders are saying about Masonry, but what Masonic authorities say about it themselves. (All emphasis in quotations mine-EG).

"Books TO BE OF RELIGIOUS TENDENCY IN THE MASONIC SENSE, need not be books of sermons, of pious exercises, or of prayers. Whatever inculcates pure, noble, and patriotic sentiments, or touches the heart with the beauty of virtue, and the excellence of an upright life, accords with THE RELIGION OF MASONRY, and is the Gospel of literature and art." 30

"Every Masonic Lodge is A TEMPLE OF RELIGION; and its teachings are INSTRUCTION IN RELIGION." 31

"MASONRY IS A WORSHIP; but one in which all civilized men can unite..." 32

"THE RELIGION, THEN, OF MASONRY IS PURE THEISM..." 33

"I consider Freemasonry is a sufficiently organized school of mysticism to be entitled to be called a RELIG-

ION." 34

"It is true that Freemasonry is THE PARENT OF ALL RELIGION." 35

"I boldly aver that FREEMASONRY IS A RELIGION, yet in no way conflicts with any other religion, unless that religion holds that no one outside its portals can be saved." 36

"We have one dogma, a belief in God, but this is so firmly established as the principal foundation-stone of the brotherhood that no one can ever be admitted a member of an English-speaking lodge without a full and free acceptance thereof. In all reference to Deity, God is reverently spoken of as the Great Architect of the Universe...Upon this foundation-stone we construct A SIMPLE RELIGIOUS FAITH." 37

"We now come to the core of the matter. What is THE RELIGION OF FREEMASONRY? It is THE OLDEST OF ALL RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS, DATING FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL...We worship and believe as a first principle in the fullness of the Godhead of which OTHER RELIGIONS see only in part." 38

"But Freemasonry has a wider influence and power, and far greater facilities for the accomplishment of its benevolent purposes; and besides, it looks out over all of life and embraces all the possible circumstances of man. MORE TRULY HERE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IS REALIZED THE CHRISTIAN IDEAS OF LOVE, UNION, AND BROTHER...We do not hesitate, therefore, to say, that WE REGARD FREEMASONRY AS THE TRUEST EXPRESSION OF THE MIND AND THOUGHT OF CHRIST THIS AGE IS DESTINED TO WITNESS. Christianity is its central idea, and at the same time the foundation and corollary of our temple. Nay, MASONRY IS CHRISTIANITY." 39

"Some attempt to avoid the issue by saying that Freemasonry is not a religion but is religious, SEEMING TO BELIEVE THAT THE SUBSTITUTION OF AN ADJECTIVE FOR A NOUN MAKES A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE. It would be as sensible to say that a man had no intellect but was intellectual or that he had no honor but was honorable... Freemasonry certainly requires a belief in the existence of, and man's dependence upon, a Supreme Being to which he is responsible. WHAT CAN A CHURCH ADD TO THAT, except to bring into fellowship those who have like feelings? THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT

THE LODGE DOES...It is said that Freemasonry is not sectarian, by which is meant that it has not identified itself with any well-known sect. But, **IF IT HAS A RELIGIOUS CREDO, MAY IT NOT, ITSELF, CONSTITUTE A SECT TO BE ADDED TO THE OTHERS...**Nothing herein is intended to be an argument that Freemasonry ought to be a religion; our purpose is simply to determine **WHAT IT HAS BECOME AND IS.**" 40

From these quotations (and others could be listed), it can be seen that Masonic authorities claim that: 1) Masonry is a "a religion"; 2) Its lodges are "Temples of Religion"; 3) Its teachings are "Instruction in Religion"; 4) It is "a worship"; 5) It is "the parent of all religion"; 6) It is "a simple religious faith"; 7) It is the "oldest of all religious systems"; 8) It is "the truest expression of the mind and thought of Christ this age is destined to witness"; 9) That it "is Christianity"; 10) The Lodge does exactly what "a church" does; and, 11) It is a sect that needs to be added to "the others". Can any honest individual read such quotations and have any doubt as to the intent of Masonic doctrine? Can any rational thinking person read such quotations and still say that Masonry does not claim to be, is not, a religion? To ask these questions in the light of the foregoing quotations is to answer them. This study would need to go no further in its efforts to determine whether Masonry and Christianity are compatible. But, lest some say such evidence is still inconclusive, we shall see more.

(The remainder of this article and the sources for each reference will be included in following issues.)

**CONTRIBUTIONS
CHURCHES**

Pilot Church of Christ	\$20.00
Mammoth Spring, Ar.	
Church of Christ, Elizabeth, Ar.	15.00
Church of Christ, Agnos, Ar.	15.00
Viola Church of Christ, Viola, Ar.	10.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ	20.00
Myrtle, Mo.	
Church of Christ, Garfield, Ar.	25.00
Jeff Church of Christ, Thayer, Mo.	25.00
Hatfield Church of Christ	25.00
Koshkonong, Mo.	
Clarkridge Church of Christ	25.00
Clarkridge, Ar.	

INDIVIDUALS

Mrs. Carl McKee, Pottersville, Mo.	5.00
Walter Johnson, Harrison, Ar.	10.00
Anonymous Gifts	400.00
Tom Jones, Eustis, Fl.	20.00

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; Revelations 2:10).

YOU CAN HELP WITH POSTAGE?
MOVING?
 Be sure to send us
 your change of address



Mail all address changes to:
CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 251
MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554