

Freemasonry: May a Christian be a Member?

By Mr. Marvin Kamps

Recently, I was confronted with the question; “whether membership in the Church of Christ was compatible with membership in the Masonic Lodge, Freemasonry?” I made a rather detailed study of what constitutes Freemasonry in order that I might come to a personal conviction in attempting to answer the above question.

I would like to share with you what I found. Further, I ask of you to prayerfully consider my evaluation and judgment regarding this matter of compatibility between the Masonic Lodge and the Church of Christ.

First in treating this subject, I will briefly outline the organizational aspects of Masonry and then, secondly, proceed to evaluate it as a religious organization.

Freemasonry or the Masonic Order had its beginning in England. It was originally a society of cathedral builders in the 17th century. The stone masons and stone cutters constituted its membership. The Masonic Lodge was officially established in the year 1717 in England. From England, Freemasonry soon spread to continental Europe and by 1740 to North America. For over 250 years “men have knelt to swear the solemn oaths of the Masonic Lodges. Freemasonry was organized in England but four out of five of the world’s Freemasons now live in the U.S. They and their brothers in other countries have made Freemasonry the largest international secret society.”¹ There are over 16,000 Masonic lodges in this country with a membership of over four and a half million. How powerful the Masons are, is difficult to say, but “in any single year the majority of state governors, senators, and U.S. representatives are likely to be Freemasons.”²

You may know that there is something called a 32nd degree mason. It is the highest regular degree of Masonry, though there is also a 33rd honorary degree. The three basic Masonic degrees are the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. These three degrees constitute the Blue or Symbolic Lodge. In this country after one has reached the 3rd degree of Master Mason, he can follow one or both of two Masonic rites. “A Master Mason may elect to climb one or both of the two Masonic ladders of the higher rites: the Scottish or the York... About... one out of four Master Masons have taken the Scottish route.”³ One in ten Masons belong to the York rite, which is closed to Jews and other non-Christians. The principle officers of a Masonic lodge are the Master, the Senior Warden, and the Junior Warden. The Master or chaplain begins the lodge meeting by reading a portion of Scripture and with a word of prayer to the Supreme Being.

Membership in the lodge is forbidden to blacks and to those who are not of a sound body such as the blind and crippled. The candidate for membership in the lodge must express some belief in a higher power than himself . . . an avowed atheist cannot be made a Mason.⁴

The candidate for membership must also take an oath to keep inviolate the secrets of the order. The secrets include all the instructions given in the lodge, the events of the lodge meeting including its extensive, mysterious ritual, and the lodges various passwords and secret handgrips which serve as a mode of identification for one Mason to another. The oath of the Entered Apprentice is in part: “To all of this and these I solemnly and sincerely promise and swear without equivocation... binding myself under no less penalty than having my throat cut from end to end, my tongue torn out by its roots... should I knowingly... violate this my solemn obligation... So help me God...”⁵

There is connected with induction into the Masonic lodge also a mysterious, degrading, humiliating initiation. I do not intend to describe it for you, but you may check some of the literature available if you desire. The point of the initiatory rite is to impress upon the candidate that as he becomes a member of the lodge, he passes from the darkness and ignorance of non-Masonry to the “light” of Masonry. In fact, the initiation is to depict the candidates rising from the dead, an intellectual and spiritual resurrection.

As we conclude our description of the Masonic Lodge as an organization, I ask you to consider the following definition of Freemasonry as provided by some of its own adherents; “Masonry is the activity of closely united men

who are employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, striving morally to enable themselves and others, and thereby to bring about a universal league of mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale."⁶

This definition speaks of a commitment, a religious commitment. Masonry is a religion.

It is a proud religion! "It is true that Masonry is not a religion, but it is Religion, a worship in which all good men may unite, that they may share the faith of all."⁷ A rather proud assertion, you understand. Masonry, accordingly then, transcends all the peripheral elements in all other religions or faiths and unites them into one grand principle, which supposedly is the heart and core of all religion. Hutchison remarks: "Masonry directs us to divest ourselves of confined and bigoted notions and teaches us that Humanity is the soul of Religion . . . and as Mason we only pursue the universal religion, the Religion of Nature."⁸ And from Mackey we read: "The religion of Masonry is cosmopolitan, universal . . . God is equally present with pious Hindu in the temple, the Jew in the synagogue, the Mohammedan in the mosque, and the Christian in the church."⁹ This is the religion of Nature or the religion of Humanism. Its principles and goals are the expression of what man will do in the name of goodness of humanity. Masonry identified God with Nature. Man becomes his own God. Since Nature is God and Man is the intellectual head of all nature it stands to reason that Man must define his own religion. Masonry refuses to recognize that God is the independent, self-sufficient One, who is the Creator and Ruler of all things. God must in and through an act of revelation define the content and object of worship for man.

The god of Masonry has many different names. He is the "Grand Architect," the "Supreme Being," the "all seeing eye," the "Grand Being." This god of the Masons is not the One, Personal, Triune, Living God of the Holy Scriptures. The Masons have a pantheistic concept of God. God is Nature and Nature is God. "Its G.O.D. is merely a symbol of nature; - 'Nature self-originated, the cause of its own existence, as Pike says."¹⁰ The god of Masonry is an idol of the mind. A god that man invented for his own purposes!

In the lodge meeting place there is an altar and placed on that altar there is a Bible. What conception of the "good book" does Masonry have? Freemasonry, remember, accepts men of all creeds into its brotherhood, and consequently, it accepts all the "good books" of all religions. Masons are broadminded! Masonry often quotes the Holy Bible, which fact lends to this evil movement a facade of respectability. Their favorite passages are those concerning the building of the temple, the prophets, and the four gospels. In Masonic writings one will find repeated references to the good shepherd, the good Samaritan, the ark of the covenant, the golden candlestick, the temple and its priesthood, and even the resurrection. But all these expressions and what they mean and represent according to the Scriptures are corrupted and distorted by Masonry. The Bible of Masonry is not the authoritative infallible Word, "its Bible is not the Christian Book of Divine Revelation . . . but merely one of many religious books, such as the Koran, the Vedas, the Zendavesta, the Book of Mormonism, etc."¹¹ Masonry will tolerate any lie.

But true Christianity is intolerant of the lie. The believer confesses that only God Himself can and does reveal the Truth. The only record of the self-revelatory speech of God is recorded for us in Scripture. The believer denies the claim of revelation to any and all books other than the Bible. Truth is intolerant of the lie, for God's name sake. Christianity condemns as products of sin the Koran, the book of Mormon, etc. You can perceive then that Masonry has too many "good books." Though it claims to accept the Bible as the Word of God, it in reality denies this fact. This is true, for Masonry fails to acknowledge the exclusive position of the Bible as the only infallible, wholly inspired record of the revelation of the one triune God. Masonry's attempt to equate the Bible and the Koran, for example, viewing them as having equal value and validity, is to deny the sole, exclusive position of Holy Scripture. The matter is not relative.

What does Masonry have to say about Jesus Christ? Masonry chooses to ignore, rather than to deny explicitly, the divinity of Christ Jesus. But their attempt to ignore the cornerstone of the Church will not free them from condemnation. The Bible, as God's Word, demands of everyone that they believe; no one has the right to ignore the issue. Christ confronts every man with the pertinent question: "Whom say ye that I am." We must, man must believe and confess that Jesus is the eternal Son of God in the flesh, the Saviour of His elect people.

Many there be that condemn the secrecy of the lodge, many there be that condemn its “bloodcurdling oaths.” Oh, one can say that these oaths are just innocent fun, kids’ stuff; but that is not true. The matter of an oath is a serious spiritual matter. When one takes an oath he calls the living personal God to witness to the truth of his statement. The Masons understand that fact too... just read again of the oaths of the lodge and its secrecy; but what we must clearly understand is that its secrecy and its oaths in all their repulsiveness are only peripheral matters. The Masonic Lodge is wrong at more basic points. Know too, that their basic wrongs are not innocent errors of judgment, but are deliberate rejections of the truth of Scripture. The Masonic Lodge denies the truth concerning the one, living, eternal, triune God; it rejects revelation, it refuses to confess the eternal divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the heart of the matter! Since the religion of the Masonic Lodge is wrong at its center, it is dead wrong in all its aspects. It is man’s religion, Humanism. Masonry holds to an unscriptural, unbelieving concept of anthropology, sin, brotherhood, unity and salvation.

The Masonic Lodge is an anti-Christian organization. Their religion is not merely wrong... it is anti-Christian! It is Man’s proud attempt, (which will surely fail) to establish this universal brotherhood of men over against the One, Holy, Catholic Church of Jesus our Lord. Only in the Church of Christ is there and can there be Brotherhood. Believers in all nations and in all ages are One in faith in Christ, for Christ hath redeemed us in order that we should be One in Him.

Let me conclude this discussion with the following succinct evaluation of the Masonic Lodge: “Freemasonry... is a religious sect diametrically opposed to Christianity... The morality of Masonry is a pagan sensuousness; its much vaunted benevolence is devoid of the charity of Christ; its history shows Masonry to be the renaissance of pagan mysticism, the religious application of the principles of the humanists, who strove to carry the world back to paganism.”¹²

Such is my evaluation! Do you agree?

Footnotes:

- (1) Whalen, William J., Handbook of Secret Organizations, Burce Pub. Co., Milwaukee 1966, p.46
- (2) Ibid. p.53
- (3) Ibid. p.54
- (4) Mackey, Albert, An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Moss and Co. Philadelphia 432 Chestnut St. 1875, p.315
- (5) Whalen op.cit. p. 57
- (6) Newton, J.F., The Builders, Macoy Pub. and Masonic Supply Co. New York 1930, p.241
- (7) Newton, op.cit. p. 251
- (8) Newton, op.cit. p. 258
- (9) Mackey, loc. cit.
- (10) Pruess, Arthur, dictionary of Secret and Other societies, B Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo. 1924 p. 143
- (11) Pruess, loc. cit.
- (12) Pruess loc. cit.