

**A REFORMED VIEW OF FREEMASONRY**

by

Everett C. De Velde Jr.

## PREFACE

My first meaningful encounter with Freemasonry occurred during my ministry to a Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia. One of the elders had been a 32nd degree Mason and one of the deacons was a leader of the "Blue Lodge". With several other leaders of the church being involved with Freemasonry, I undertook a study of subject and after due course all who were so involved, demitted Masonry. These men supplied me with ample quantities of study materials and the local city library provided much more. While Freemasons certainly entertain "secrets", the doctrines of Freemasonry have been openly published and are readily available. It seems incredible that many men, who have given so much of their lives to Freemasonry, should know so little about it. In this essay I will attempt a brief overview of what I have come to know as Freemasonry.

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The term "Freemason" is supposedly derived from King Solomon's use of Hiram's craftsmen. Hiram, then King of Tyre, did in fact supply craftsmen to work on the Temple in Jerusalem, but he received from Solomon "wheat, barley, oil and wine"<sup>1</sup> in return for his services. The term "Freemason", at the outset, is to some extent a misnomer.

The actual historical origins of Freemasonry relate to the fact that, unlike other craft guilds, masons had to travel from place to place to find work. In order to preserve distinctions of rank, and craft secrets, masons devised a set of secret signs so that one mason might recognize another as a true mason, and not as a pretender to the craft. In time, numbers of Renaissance freethinkers came to be attracted by these arcane signs, and became honorary masons. By the early 1700s there were large numbers of non-operative masons in England, and these organized into the lodges so familiar to Freemasonry today.

One defender of Freemasonry has written: "Freemasonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. The design of the Masonic Institution is to make its members wiser, better and consequently happier; and this is accomplished by means of a series of moral instructions taught, according to ancient usage, by types, symbols, allegorical figures and lectures."<sup>2</sup>

After my own studies of Freemasonry, I perceive it to be Unitarian in theology, to profess a soteriology of humanism, to exhibit Muhammedanism particularly in the higher degrees (e.g. the Shrine), to be influenced by the Cabala<sup>3</sup> in its handling of biblical symbols, and to be antithetical to Biblical and Reformed Christianity. My estimation of Freemasonry has been well stated by Chief Justice John Marshall; "The institution of Masonry ought to be abandoned as one capable of much evil, and incapable of producing any good which might not be effected by safe and open means." The Masonic Shrine has indeed been philanthropic with hospitals to care for children. On the other hand one need not participate in asinine, murderous oaths and an evil, occult religious philosophy to be philanthropic.

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<sup>1</sup> II Chronicles 2:15

<sup>2</sup> *Masonic Manual and Code of the Grand Lodge of Georgia, Free and Accepted Masons*, 8th ed., 1963.

<sup>3</sup> An occult religious philosophy developed by certain Jewish Rabbis, based on a mystical interpretation of the Scriptures.

## MASONRY IS UNITARIANISM

The Masonic symbol <G> stands for GAOTU or Great Architect Of The Universe. The Mason recognizes this being as God. In order to embrace many religions such as Muhammedanism the GAOTU does not explicitly involve Jesus Christ. In the preface to the Masonic bible<sup>4</sup> entitled "The Bible in Masonry", the Reverend J.F.Newton writes "...(We) join hands with the man of Islam as he takes oath on the Koran, and with the Hindu as he makes covenant with God upon the book he knows best." And of Masonry he continues "...therefore it invites to its altar men of all faiths, knowing that if they use different names for the nameless one of a hundred names, they are yet praying to one God and Father of all, knowing also that while they read different volumes they are in fact reading the same vast book of faith of Man as revealed in the struggle and sorrow of the race in its quest for God...We honor every book of faith. What Homer was to the Greeks, the Koran to the Arabs, the grand old bible is to us." Thus is Masonry opposed to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, because it would limit Masonic adherents to one religion.

There is a strange view of God, however, given to the Mason who is preparing for the 19th degree. This is known as the "Royal Arch" degree. He, to this point, does not know the name of the GAOTU or God but over the "Arch" is written JEHBULON, an abbreviation for Jehovah Baal Osiris! And consider the following blasphemy. One of the Lodge Hymns sung to the tune "Come Thou Almighty King" has this first stanza:<sup>5</sup>

Hail, Masonry divine!  
 Glory of ages shine,  
 Long may'st thou reign!  
 Where e'er thy Lodges stand,  
 May they have great command,  
 And always grace the land!  
 Thou art divine.

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<sup>4</sup> The Masonic Bible is an annotated King James Version also known as the Temple Version.

<sup>5</sup> *Masonic Manual and Code* etc.,p 173

## MASONRY IS HUMANISTIC IN ITS SOTERIOLOGY

The means to salvation consistently presented in Masonry is the performance of virtuous works. This is the stated meaning of the "Lambskin" or white leather Apron which is the emblem of innocence to the Mason when worthily worn. "By it we are reminded of that purity of life and conduct so essentially necessary to gaining admission to the Celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides."<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the Common Gavel is said to teach Free and Accepted Masons "the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our hearts and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting our minds as living stones for that spiritual building, that 'House not made with hands; eternal in the heavens.'"<sup>7</sup>

To maintain that people gain entrance to heaven by God's sovereign conversion of sinners and imputation of the blood of Christ to them, would again limit the perview of Masonry to Christianity. Evangelical, certainly not Reformed, soteriology is nowhere found in Masonic dogma.

Harold J. Bolen writes: "Freemasonry believes it is more holy to live by reason than to live by faith, for reason is a bridge of understanding while faith is only a bridge of hope. Reason challenges our minds, while faith might give comfort without achievement. Our mind is like unto God's, and man has a God-given obligation to use it to the benefit of his fellow man and to God's glory."<sup>8</sup> Can there be a more transparent humanism than this? Consider that the Word of God states to the contrary "The just shall live by faith" and "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p 141

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p 19

<sup>8</sup> *A Revelation of the Royal Secret*, New Age Magazine, October, 1968.

<sup>9</sup> Bolen explains the meaning of several Masonic symbols in this essay. He attempts to show that the Zoroastrian god Ahura-Mazda, and the Hindu gods Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, are really other names for the true God. Most of the Masonic writings I have read are of this genre. Romans 1:17, Hebrews 11:6

## MASONRY EXHIBITS MUHAMMEDANISM

Shriners are actually Masons who have completed the higher degrees of study. After the "Blue Lodge", the first three degrees, there are thirty higher degrees for a total of 33. Albert Pike, for example, was a 33rd degree Mason and as such was the supreme commander of the southern jurisdiction of Free and Accepted Masons just after the Civil War. It is his large volume that influences much of my perception of Freemasonry. He dwells at length on the Jewish Cabala and its application to Masonry. The Cabala, apparantly, is the source of the occult leanings found in many Masonic concepts. The obverse of the United States Seal shows a pyramid with the "All-seeing Eye" at the top. This eye, one of the symbols of Masonry, is the eye of God, be he Allah, Osiris, Jehovah, etc. The Great Seal of the United States bears this occult symbol because of Masonic influence. It has been noted that the date (1776) on the base of the pyramid refers to the commencing of the "Illuminati" under Adam Wishupt.<sup>10</sup> It is well known that the Illuminati infiltrated Freemasonry especially on the European continent. George Washington, a 32nd degree Mason and Master of the Alexandria Lodge, warned of this infiltration. All this should certainly raise questions for the Christian, concerning Masonry.

The Islamic flavor of the Shrine is obvious. The Shriners places of meeting are called temples and are given Islamic names. The Masonic or Shriners temple in Chicago is called Medinah, and in Savannah is known as Alee ("my God" in Arabic). The Masonic temple in Ft. Myers, Florida is constructed to look like a Muhammedan Mosque complete with minarets! The Shriners wear the Islamic Fez (hat) and wear Islamic earrings. All of this is quite in keeping with the theology of Masonry which openly panders to Muhammedanism.

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<sup>10</sup> *Destruction of Freemasonry through Revelation of their Secrets*, General Eric Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff, 1927, Munich, Germany. English translation by J. Elisabeth Koester, P.O. Box 280, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107. Ludendorff also identifies the Jewish secret order B'nai B'rith as Masonic. He seeks to show that the B'nai B'rith as a part of Freemasonry, and a Zionist organization is concerned with world revolution. Another source for this material is the B'nai B'rith Magazine, September, 1940. In addition, Albert Pike signed a treaty in 1874 stating "The supreme Dogmatic Directory of Universal Freemasonry recognizes the Jewish Lodges, such as they already exist in the principal countries. He further establishes by this treaty, the B'nai B'rith headquarters in Hamburg Germany known as the Sovereign Patriarcal Council of Hamburg.

## MASONRY IS ANTITHETICAL TO CHRISTIANITY

Freemasonry is in fact a complex organization with several "rites" and ancillary organizations. The two rites with which I am familiar are the Scottish and the York. At the apex of the York Rite is a select group known as the Knights Templar and I have previously made reference to the Shriners. It is this latter that in my opinion is the most evil branch of Masonry. The Knights Templar present, perhaps, the best image of Masonry. In addition to these there are dozens of Masonic "Colleges" and Councils such as The Council of The Nine Muses, The Grand College of Rites or The Societas Rosicruciana In Civitatibus Foederatis etc. There are also Masonic organizations for the ladies and young people, such as Eastern Star. However "Christian" some of the Masons may appear to be, there is yet a great polyglot embracing of all forms of religion, cult, and occult. Then, too, many great men have been Masons such as George Washington, and Warren G. Harding, a Knight Templar. My point here is this: The great thrust of Masonry does not establish the Kingdom of Christ; it is in fact hostile to Christ. The Scottish Rite Creed states, for example, "The cause of human progress is our cause, the enfranchisement of human thought our supreme wish, the freedom of human conscience our mission, and the guarantee of equal rights to all peoples everywhere, the end of our contention."<sup>11</sup> The Scottish Rite also re-affirms its desire to refrain from criticizing any faith or religion, yet making on the other hand profound statements of religious dogma that would embrace all religions into a kind of Theosophy. This is the teaching of humanism.

The mission of Christians is not merely the promotion of human progress, and compassion for others is certainly a Christian virtue, but **true human progress is impossible apart from Christ and His Kingdom.** The one who makes the precepts and counsels of the True and Living God his way of life is the only one who will prosper in the end. All other efforts to promote human progress are the way of the wicked, the counsel of the ungodly or the seat of scoffers. They are but chaff!

Many godly people have studied Freemasonry and have come to the opinion that I present herein. A few examples are The Missouri Synod Lutheran Church,<sup>12</sup> The Christian Reformed Church, and The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Should this not raise serious questions about the nature of Freemasonry? How can a Mason take oaths that cannot be performed without breaking God's law.<sup>13</sup> Is this not sin in itself?

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<sup>11</sup> The New Age, Vol lxxvi, No. 10, October 1968 (A publication by the Scottish Rite)

<sup>12</sup> *Masonry in the Light of the Bible*, Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1964

<sup>13</sup> According to Theodore Graebner's *A Treatise on Freemasonry* (pp.22,23), the first oath taken by an Entered Apprentice Mason is: "I, \_\_\_\_\_, of my own free will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God and his Worshipful Lodge, erected to Him and dedicated to the Holy Saint John, do hereby and hereon most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will always hail, ever conceal, and never reveal any of the secret arts, parts, or points of the hidden mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry, which have been heretofore, may at this time, or shall at any time in any future period be communicated to me as such, to any person or persons whomsoever, except it be to a true and lawful

I plead with our christian men to spend their substance and energies on programs and organizations that really serve to glorify Christ and establish His Kingdom. Let us dominate this world for Christ as good soldiers. Let us not waste ourselves on a hodge-podge of well-meaning but ineffective humanism.

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brother Mason, or within a regularly constituted Lodge of Masons, and neither unto him nor them, until by strict trial, due examination, or legal information I shall have found him or them as lawfully entitled to the same as I am myself.

"I furthermore promise and swear that I will not write, print, paint, stamp, stain, cut, carve, make, nor engrave them, nor cause the same to be done upon anything movable or immovable, capable of receiving the last impression of a word, syllable, letter, or character, whereby the same may become legible or intelligible to any person under the canopy of heaven, and the secrets of Freemasonry be thereby unlawfully obtained through my unworthiness.

"To all of this I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution 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 across, my tongue torn out by its roots and buried in the rough sands of the sea at low low water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty four hours, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate this my solemn oath or obligation as an Entered Apprentice Mason. So help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same."

Similarly the second degree obligation has the following penalty: "Binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my left breast torn open, my heart plucked out, and given as a prey to the wild beasts of the field and the fowls of the air...", and the third degree oath contains: "Binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken from thence and burned to ashes, the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven, so that no more trace or remembrance may be had of so vile and perjured a wretch as I, ..." These oaths are a direct breaking of the third commandment. They take God's name in vain by connecting His Holy Name with murder.