Modern Idolatry

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It is always an occasion of suspicion when a man travels under different names at different times and places. An old lawbreaker is known in part by his aliases. One has a feeling of the same sort when taking up the study of Freemasonry, the model and mother of Modern Secret Societies. One man declares it to be an insurance company. Another affirms that it is a social organization. A third says that it is a religion and is good enough for him. While a fourth insists that it is a benevolent organization. In this babel of voices, let us turn to the institution itself, to its rules and commentaries and seek to determine for ourselves what it actually is.

One begins this examination at once struck by the fact that in every Masonic lodge there is an altar. Now, an altar is a religious instrument. It is a means of offering sacrifice or thanksgiving, and the thought at once occurs: Why has Masonry an altar if it is not a religious institution? Neither a social organization, nor a business house has any need of an altar.

Advancing we learn that Freemasonry has a creed and this is not in a loose colloquial sense, but in an exact religious one. Mackey says (Lexicon, p. 100): "The creed of a Mason is brief. . . . It is a creed which demands and receives the universal consent of all men. . . . It is belief in God, the supreme architect of heaven and earth." These we learn that Freemasonry has altars and a creed.

Still further, Freemasonry has a religious ritual. It prints prayers for use in its meetings. It prepares religious lectures for use in conferring degrees. It baptizes infants and buries the dead. Business houses do not do such acts. Social organizations do not. Mere relief associations do not. Why should Freemasonry have an altar, a creed and a ritual unless it is a religious institution?

This impression is deepened when we find what effect the order produces on simple-minded, honest men. It is well known that most Masons do not profess to be Christians and all revivalists who have dealt with them know that these men frequently say that they have all the religion they need in the lodge. "Masonry is good enough religion for me," is a common saying among them. Ministers of the Gospel are at times led to deny the religious character of the lodge in order to save themselves from the charge of treason to the church, but the common sense of ordinary men interprets the lodge ritual as a religious ceremony and believes that one who lives up to Masonry goes to heaven when he dies.

The language of the rulers of the order confirms the impression produced by its secret and public work. Mackey, in his Ritualist, p. 22, speaking of a candidate for Masonry says: "There he stands on the threshold of his new Masonic life, in darkness, helplessness and ignorance. Having been wandering amid the errors and covered with the pollutions of the outer or profane..."
world, he seems iniquitously to our doors seeking the new light and the removal of the veil which hides divine truth from his unsatisfied sight."

In his Envisco, defining the word Aesclepius, he says that the word signifies "a Mason who by living in strict accord with his obligations, is free from sin." (Mackay's Lexicon, p. 16.) Oliver says on the same word: "When the Master Mason exclaims, 'My name is Christ,' it is equivalent to saying, I have been in the game, I have labored over it by rising from the dead, and being regenerate in the process, I have a claim to life everlasting." (Cyclopedia of Freemasonry, p. 48.) To the same effect Morris says on the third degree: "We show that a man complete in morality and intelligence, with the help of religion, added to insure him the protection of deity, and guard him against ever going astray, not in it capable of conceiving of anything more which the soul of man requires." It requires no argument to show that Masons who believe these statements and love Masonry will care nothing about the Christian church.

But the fact that Freemasonry is a religious organization is not of chief importance. Religious sects are very many, while Christianity is but one. Religiously, Christianity stands against the world. It is an exclusive faith. It claims to be true, and that true religion are false and ridiculous to men. "I am the way," the doors," says Jesus. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "He that hath the Son hath the life," says the Holy Spirit, "and he that hath not the Son hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The question then arises: What kind of a religion is Freemasonry?

Robert Morris, in the synopsis of Masonic Law which he prepared for the edition of Webb's Freemasons' Monitor, published by J. C. W. Bailey of Chicago, uses the following language under the title "Religion": "So broad is the religion of Masonry and so carefully are all sectarian lines excluded, that the Christian, the Jew, and the Mohammedan may and do harmoniously unite in its moral and intellectual work with the Buddhist, the Parsee, and the worshipper of deity under every form." (Mackey's Lexicon, under the same title says: "The religion of Masonry is pure Theism." Chase, in his Digest of Masonic Law, gives a large number of Grand Lodge decisions, the general purport of which is that Masons are required to believe in God, but are not asked to accept the Bible as God's Word or Jesus as the Son of God.

In pursuance of this theory we have the practice of the Lodge, which is to carefully exclude the name of Jesus from the creed and ritual of the order. The creed is strictly deistic, the candidate must avow his belief in God. The prayers are deistic, the name of Jesus is absolutely excluded from them. The Bible readings are deistic. Passages which do not contain the name of Christ are usually selected, and when passages, like 1 Peter, 2:21-24, 1 Thess., 2:8-16, are used, the name of the Saviour of the world is stricken out.
But more than this is true. Mentioning the name of Jesus is not pleasing to God if we disregard His example and temple His law under foot. The Knights Templar do name the Savior, but they are perhaps the most desperately unchristian and godless of secret orders. Other lodges also name Him, which are evidently anti-Christian. Jesus Himself said to men: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" In the first chapter of Isaiah also the Holy Spirit explains to God how He loathes the forms of even the true faith when the Spirit has departed. Away, He says, with your prayers and sacrifices. "I am weary to bear them." It is not the one who says only, but who says Lord, and obeys, who is pleasing to God.

Now Jesus gave commands and set an example which Freemasonry deliberately tramples under foot. He said: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," and speaking of His own life He said: "I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." It is obvious that no lodgeman can follow this example as long as he is in his order, and it is equally plain that if the secret work is good and helpful to men, he cannot obey the command. If lodgism put the name of Jesus everywhere, in oath and prayer and reading and lecture, still so long as it was secret it would be a high-handed rebellion against the Savior of the world. An order that pretends so do good by swearing men to secrecy is an enemy of Jesus Christ.

Still further the hostility of Freemasonry to Christianity is shown by the neglect of the divine methods. Jesus wishing to cure men of sin and fit them for heaven, requires them first of all to deal with sin. "Re-pent," is the great word uttered by John, by Jesus, by the apostles, by every faithful minister of Christ from the beginning until now. And after repentance, confession and restitution, and not a ray of light on the path of any sinner who will not repent, confess and put away his sin. And then an equally clear acceptance of Jesus as his great sin offering, as the One who has put away his sins by the sacrifice of Himself.

Now, as Freemasonry contemptuously sets aside Jesus Christ, so it ignores the great and terrible fact of sin, which made His death needful. Masons are never required to confess their sins or to agree to cease from them, or to trust in the pardoning love of Jesus. They are asked to apply for admission, to pay their fees, to submit to the ceremonies of initiation, to swear the lodge oaths, to pay dues, but they are never asked to acknowledge themselves sinners before God. Still is occasionally alluded to, vices and superfluities are mentioned, but never in personal confession and never in connection with the sacrifice of Jesus.

Another particular in which the anti-Christian character of Masonry is revealed is in its contradiction of the moral system taught in the Word of God.
Masonry, for all Christians known, is a universal one. Men are required to do right to all, to sin against no one, while Masonic morals are partial and undertake to secure the rights of none except those who are in some way connected with the order. The Mason is sworn to benefit Masons and their relatives, not to steal from Masons or a lodge, not to speak evil of a Master Mason before his face or behind his back, not to strike him in anger, not to draw blood, not to commit adultery with his female relatives. Such a system of morals is as far from the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount as heaven is from hell. The devil, if embodied, could observe a code of that sort and be a devil still. These are not all the particulars in which Masonry shows itself to be hostile to the religion of Jesus Christ, but they are sufficient for any man who has felt the guilt of sin and the pardoning blood of Jesus.

Idolatry is nowhere more plain or damning than in the Masonic lodge. Its creed is deism; its prayers are Christian; its morals are satanic; yet it professes to teach men how to live well and to die in peace. Together with all other lodges invented and ruled by Masons, it is the great hindrance to Christianity. All prayers are the hindrance to Christianity. In heathen lands, so the heathen religions of the lodge are the great hindrance to the Christian church, in our Lord's time. Dr. Derr of Berlin said: "The church is America must stand as one man against Freemasonry or it will be destroyed."—Christian Cymarar.