

# SAVING CHRISTIANS FROM SECRET SOCIETIES

By Thomas M. Slater, D.D.

While in a restaurant recently I was seated beside a pleasant-spoken gentleman, whom I soon found was a professed Christian, and who rather abruptly asked me, "Are you a Mason?"

In our friendly discussion of the consistency of lodge life with true Discipleship he cited the example of a prominent Christian Endeavor leader as being a Mason, and claimed that with so many professed Christians and church-going people belonging to some form of Secrecy, it was hard for him to see why anyone should take the position I held. Before separating I promised to send him some Anti-Secrecy literature which I hoped would be helpful, and as he went his way and I followed mine, I may perhaps have no further personal relations with him. But his memory is still with me as a sad example of so many who, without knowledge or fear of the dangers of Secretism, unquestioningly follow the example of some lodge-going churchman, whom the secret lodges are glad to have as a decoy to entrap other victims.

## Two More Cases

Some time prior to the above incident I was sharply criticised in the public press by a Presbyterian Elder for my ac-

tivities in opposing Secretism. He claimed to have some standing as a Bible teacher, and said he had a son who would soon be of age, for whose future he desired no more hopeful outlook than that he should become a Mason. In correspondence with him I sought to present the truth faithfully, but with no immediate results. However, in the course of several months he called me by phone to say that he had changed his mind about Masonry, the awakening having come at a religious meeting in which all present were seeking a closer fellowship with Christ, and the removing from them of whatever was hindering the power of the Holy Spirit. One evidence of his sincerity was his willingness to attend and give his testimony in a public meeting that was being held in opposition to Secretism and his later devotion of himself to full-time Christian service.

In contrast with his attitude was that of a neighbor pastor who had recently begun work in a Mason-ruled congregation. Knowing that his predecessor had been an outstanding friend of Secretism, and fearing the new pastor would be put under pressure in this way, I did all I could to fortify him against it. Professing his neutrality on this subject he listened to my arguments and promised to read such Anti-Secrecy literature as I provided. To what extent he really desired to know the truth I am not here to judge, but not long thereafter I read a press notice of his being invited as a speaker joined, where he was promptly elected as lodge chaplain, and is now in special guest at a Masonic meeting, where he the ranks of Masonic ministers to whom

our youth everywhere are told to look as examples in this matter.

### Why Relate These Things?

Knowing that Secretism is a matter about which people differ, why discuss the subject? And why do I mention my personal experiences with these three lodgemen? Because to my mind these men represent three different types among all the lodgemen who have ever sworn the profane oaths of organized Secrecy.

1. My companion at luncheon was a sample of many professed Christians who seem never to have read or heard anything against Secretism, but enter lodge life merely because others do, in some cases influenced by men of prominence. Hence our testimony needs to be more widespread and emphatic.

2. The minister who before becoming a Mason had read and heard something of our testimony and treated it with no serious interest, was a type of many lodge-going churchmen who coddle themselves with the idea that it is a matter of no vital importance, and apparently have shut their eyes to the truth. For such we should have a deep concern, and not let them go.

3. And the Elder who was for a time an ardent advocate and defender of Masonry, but afterward through the conviction of the Holy Spirit and belief of the truth, was led to leave that organization and publicly testify against it and all other forms of Secretism, is also a type and example of thousands of other seceding Masons, reformed lodgemen, and former supporters of secret societies who have had a change of heart, and renounced forever the profane oaths that

once bound their souls. Such converts from Secretism are "Exhibit A" — unquestionable proof that in this phase of the age-long conflict between light and darkness, the God of light in whom is no darkness at all is the determinative factor; that He is caring for His witnesses who love to walk in the light, and blessing their testimony as light-bearers among all who need such help.

As long, therefore as so many of our fellow men enter secret societies unwarned; as long as many, including professed Christians and ministers of the Gospel, take these warnings lightly and as of no importance; it is for God's witnesses to continue their testimony, doing everything within their power to counteract the influence of lodge-going churchmen, while seeking to persuade them to renounce these harmful relations. For as long as God's truth stands, and the Holy Spirit finds fit channels for His power, Christ's word will be fulfilled that "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13.)

### The Truth in Love

In applying the foregoing text to secret societies, would anyone say that I am making an unfair use of Scripture? Or would any lodgeman say that in opposing Secretism I hurt their feelings and am lacking in Christian love? As a matter of fact among my friends are not a few lodge-goers, whose names and faces are in mind as I write these words, whose worth I highly esteem, for some of whom I have a true affection, whose interest in Christ I do not question, and with whom I am always glad to talk and

pray. For my opposition is not against any lodgeman personally, but against the system which he supports, and which I consider a menace both to himself and others.

And does not the very fact that some of my Christian friends are mistakenly supporting Secretism, make it all the more necessary for me to seek their enlightenment, even of in so doing a strain is put upon our friendship? And as this is a matter of give-and-take, we will agree that if my opposition to Secretism hurts their feelings, their support of it may hurt mine. And if as Christians we do not now look at this matter from the same point of view, shall we just drop it in despair of ever coming together? Not so long as we are all open-minded seekers after the truth of things, and are willing to admit that God is able to teach us more than we have yet learned on either side. For even if some self-satisfied Christians can learn nothing more; some ministers "pooh-poo" this as not worth discussing, and some churches continue to welcome those who worship at lodge altars without criticism—am I faithful to Christ as His witness, or playing the part of a true friend to any lodge-goer, or true to myself, if I allow the fear of offending others to seal my lips concerning evils with which no Christian should be willing to live at peace?

All Christians will admit that for an unconverted lodgeman, leaving lodge-life is not his first and greatest need, but his acceptance of, and the full surrender of his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. But as the appeal of this discussion is addressed primarily to Christian lodgemen,

some of whom may already be uneasy in their conscience about this; my avowed effort is to show the inconsistency of Secretism with true Discipleship, and its utter incompatibility with the ideals of the Holy Spirit, through whom alone Christian fruitfulness is possible, or Christlikeness can come into our lives.

### Side-stepping the Religious Issue

Granting that to a Christian every religion other than Christianity is a false religion—whether it be in pagan lands or here at home—why do we witness the distressing spectacle of so many professed Christians identified with the false religion of Masonry? Only on the supposition that they do not look upon Masonry as a false religion, or a religion at all but something else. And here is the crux of the whole question. It is either a religion, or it is not a religion. No Masonically disposed Christian wants to admit it is a religion; for if it is a religion, his Masonic membership makes him a religious bigamist, unless Masonry and Christianity are identical, or in no way in conflict.

In my conversations with Masonic Christians they tell me that I am mistaken in classifying Masonry as a religion, for it is merely a fraternal organization, or a patriotic institution, or an insurance company, or a benevolent society, and would have me believe this is all there is to it. As Christians they wink at and minimize its religious features, and ministers who are supported by some branch of the Christian Church solemnly assure us that their lodge is not a religious institution in any strict sense, but something they have joined as

a means of having greater influence with lodgemen.

Of course if Masonry is a religion, and not the Christian religion, this side-stepping about it being something else is a form of duplicity which no real born-again, Spirit-filled follower of Christ will willingly continue after he has prayerfully accepted the evidences that prove Masonry to be a false religion. For as I have already said, the religious nature of Masonry is the crux of the whole question of a Christian's relation thereto—the citadel about the holding or surrender of which God's soldiers are not allowed to play fast-and-loose.

### Calling the Witnesses

What, then, are some of the proofs that Masonry, whatever else it may be, is primarily and essentially some kind of a religion? Of the many proofs that might be named I specify only three. First, its outward features. Second, its own avowed claims. And third, the bitter fruits of this plant growing in our midst which our Heavenly Father surely did not plant.

1. The outward features of Masonry, as all know, are temples, altars, chaplains, high priests, rituals, prayers, codes of morals, funeral services, teachings about the future life, and prescribed conditions under which Masons may enter Heaven. If these outward features of this institution do not proclaim it to be a religion, it would be hard to understand their meaning anywhere.

2. The official books, rituals and authorized spokesmen for Masonry all profess, affirm and declare in unequivocal

cal terms that the lodge is and wants to be a religious organization. The chief authority on Masonry is Mr. Mackey, who says in his Lexicon: "Masonry is a religious institution." Albert Pike, head of the Scottish Rite Freemasonry, says: "Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion, and its teachings are instruction in religion" Other quotations might be made at length but would be unnecessary, for they may be read in the literature of Masonry published by the Masonic Supply Company, 35 W. 32nd St., New York City.

3. The bitter fruits of Masonry show it is a false religion which yields nothing either to impart or support true faith in God. I am fair enough to admit it displays leaves and foliage that appeal to some tastes, if judged by its public demonstrations in parades, local and national meetings, its dances and convivial fellowships, as well as a measure of charitable service. But as judged by its undemocratic spirit, its consumption of time and money that might be better invested, its blasphemous oaths to implicit obedience and secrecy, Masonry and its kindred organizations flourish here as the tillage of Satan, and for lodgemen who have no other religion its full fruitage will be tasted in Hell.

Am I saying this as an extremist? The case is on record of a Christian Chaplain, Stephen Merritt of New York, being awakened to his inconsistency by the death-bed reproaches of an unsaved Mason in having joined with him in supporting a religion that did not save his soul from the fear of Hell, whither he expected he would soon go. The Chaplain's prayer for his brother's

salvation required him to relinquish, then and forever, the counterfeit religion from which every Christian Mason should secede at once.

#### Who Keeps Lodgism Alive?

I make this affectionate appeal for all Christian lodgemen to become seceders from these secret organizations on the ground of God's command in the searching words of 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. In this I have the support of a wise man who once said that if all Christians would unitedly and permanently withdraw from secret societies, and the line were kept clear between Church-life and Lodge life, Secretism as a movement would soon fall to pieces and the lodges go out of business. For it is the lip-service of some Christian ideals, the mimicry of some Christian observances, the counterfeiting of some Christian hopes, and the support of some professed CHRISTIANS that gives the lodges their present popularity, their supposed harmlessness, and the power that keeps them going. And if this is questioned by any Christian lodgeman, let him make a survey of his own meetings and calculate what kind of organizing talent would be left if the true followers of Christ would all secede.

But this eventual exodus of Christians from secret societies—and from Masonry in particular, which is the oldest and most powerful form of Secretism, on whose model all minor orders are built, and which largely controls the life of all others—I say Christian Masons will never join this eventual exodus until the Holy Spirit brings conviction to their hearts concerning these unquestionable facts:

1. Masonry makes no satisfactory acknowledgement of the inspiration and exclusive authority of the Bible, its teachings about the fatal and universal sinfulness of mankind through the Fall, of our Lord Jesus Christ as our only Saviour and Master; the personality and work of the Holy Spirit; nor man's need of repentance and faith if he hopes to be saved on God's terms.

2. The non-Christian character of Masonry is judged out of its own mouth in the words of Mr. Mackey who says: "The religion of Masonry is pure Theism." He further says: "The creed of the Mason is brief . . . It is belief in God, the supreme ruler in heaven and earth." In his Digest of Masonic Law, George W. Chase informs us: "The Jews, the Chinese, the Turks, each reject either the New Testament, or the Old, or both; yet we see no good reason why they should not be made Masons. In fact Blue Lodge Masonry has nothing to do with the Bible; it is not founded upon the Bible. If it was it would not be Masonry, it would be something else" (pp 207, 208). Against these boastful words in which Masonry claims to be the one religion in which the whole world must agree, as found in their official books, stand the unchanging words of Jesus—"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6).

#### Further Reasons for Seceding

3. Mr. Mackey is further quoted as saying: "Among the pagans, ceremonies of the most magnificent nature were often used in setting apart their gorgeous temples to the purposes of worship. A Masonic lodge is, in imitation of these ancient examples, consecrated with

mystic ceremonies, to the sacred purposes for which it is constructed. By this act it is set apart for a holy object, the cultivation of the great tenets of a Mason's profession, and becomes a place where, as he passes over its threshold, he should feel the application of the command given to Moses: 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.'" (The Master's Carpet, by Edmund Romney, pp 52, 53).

4. Furthermore, Masonry is guilty of displacing Christ from so much of the Bible as it may suit its purpose to be using. For in its Scripture readings, lectures, and prayers all mention of our Holy Saviour's name is intentionally omitted. Of this Dr. Charles A. Blanchard truthfully says: "In no way could the deep hatred of our Saviour be more clearly manifested than in its striking the name of our Lord out of the very Book which He has given to teach men the way of salvation. In 1 Peter 2:5, and in 2 Thess. 3:3-12, the name of the world's Redeemer is fully written, and in each case the Masonic religion strikes it out. If Masonry should become universal, the name of Jesus could not be found in the whole earth."

#### "Choose You This Day"

Dear Christian lodgemen, including some whom I esteem as personal friends; will our friendship bear the strain of this earnest appeal? Do not the foregoing proofs of what Masonry is by its outward features, its own avowed claims, and its bitter fruits, stir your blood as good soldiers of Jesus Christ? If this is the way Masonry treats the Bible; if

this is its attitude toward the fundamentals of Christianity, and toward Christ Himself; what place can this horrible travesty and counterfeit of the true religion have in our faith and fellowship?

At the risk of seeming to be monotonous I repeat what needs to be repeated until all believe the facts—that some Christian lodgemen have passed within the doors of Secretism with no knowledge of its evils and dangers; others have heard something of the arguments against Secretism, but treat them with no serious interest; while still others under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and belief of the truth have been led to abandon these unholy relations, and as seceders from Masonry and all affiliated secret societies live and preach the Gospel of Light. They followed the only course consistent with Christianity, or the ideals and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. In loyalty to Jesus our Saviour they could do no other.

Nor can you. For as Charles G. Finney, himself a conspicuous seceder from Masonry says: "Masonic oaths are a conspiracy against God and man. They are not repented of while they are adhered to. Refusing to renounce is adhering. Adherence makes us partakers of other men's sins."

Jesus Christ said: "In secret have I said nothing." Let us as His followers stand with Him outside the closed doors of Secretism.

*Reprinted from "The Christian Cynosure."*

**National Christian Association.**  
850 W. Madison Street  
Chicago, Ill.