

So What Does the Bible Say About the Lodge?

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The question expressed in the title of this paper is really several questions in one. Depending upon the inquirer's viewpoint, the stress might fall on different words. Some might ask, 'So what does the *Bible* say about the Lodge?', expressing the opinion that there is no connection between Bible (or religion) and the lodge organizations. A smaller number of the inquisitive might ask, 'So what does the Bible say about the *lodge*?' They realize the lodge promotes certain moral and ethical dogmas, similar to some teachings in the Bible, but are doubtful that the Bible speaks directly to secret societies. We may be more interested in asking the question this way: 'So what *does* the Bible say about the lodge?', believing that God's Word will give us a clear reference and guide to lodge positions and practices.

This paper purposes to answer all three variants of this question. In answer to the assumption that there is no connection between religion and the lodges, we must let the lodges speak for themselves. Their own authors, public practice, and rituals will reveal whether or not they are religious. Tedious as the quotes and references may be in this section, they are necessary to show the actual philosophy of the lodges in an honest, unbiased manner.

The more informed person who acknowledges at least some similarity of the lodges with religion, may be interested to read that the Bible actually speaks against lodgery as a system, not to mention many individual and particular lodge practices and teachings.

When we "test the spirits to see whether they are from God." (I John 4:1), we will see that the faithful Christian and pastor faces a dilemma when dealing with the lodge member, often because of ignorance on both sides. By having, authenticating, and using the information at hand, it is hoped that we can answer effectively when asked, "So what does the Bible say about the Lodge?"

1. So what does the *Bible* say about the lodge?

Is the Lodge religious?

Many countless lodge members do not know what their organizations actually believe, or at least refuse to talk about it if they do. For this reason, it is necessary for the pastor to be well informed, so that he will know what he is really dealing with. Is it really accurate when lodge members say there is simply no connection between their lodge and God's written revelation to man? To judge fairly we will need to let the lodges themselves tell us what they stand for.

As far as was possible, material in this section has been drawn directly from lodge sources, printers, and authors, to avoid unfair, biased statements. Only when necessary were secondary sources consulted and even then only direct quotes from lodge sources were used. Informed lodge members will recognize the authenticity of the sources. The uninformed will be able to find this out from their more enlightened lodge brothers, if they really care to learn the truth.

After reading this first section, it will become obvious to the reader that all of the lodges share similar traits. For this reason, the Masonic Lodge will be treated first in order. Masonry is really the root from which all other secret societies have sprung up. Also, more explanatory material is available on the Masons than on any other group. To know Masonry is to know lodgism.

History

The earliest form of the Masonic Lodges was made up of groups of “operative” stone masons in ancient and medieval times. Specializing in large projects like temples, stadia and cathedrals, they were forced to move regularly from site to site, precluding any possibility, of a permanent guild. In place of guilds, local lodges were formed, with standardized passwords, signs, and other identifiers which would demonstrate one to be a qualified stone mason.

Groups such as these were officially chartered already by 926 A.D. in England. The charter gave the privilege of self-government and annual assembly. The first national assembly was held in York, the reason for one branch of Masonry being titled the York Rite. In Scotland, it is alleged that Knights Templars fleeing from France after the papal persecution of the Templars in 1307, joined with operative Scottish masons for protection. Scottish rulers reportedly reserved the right to personally rule these lodges, the ancestors of the modern Scottish Rite.ⁱ

By the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century, speculative masons (builders of “spiritual temples not made with hands) were allowed into the groups. Documented evidence can take this practice in England back as far as A.D. 1646. Seventy one years later, these non-working speculative masons assumed control of the lodges. In A.D. 1717 in London, two ministers, Dr. James Anderson (a presbyterian) and Dr. Theophilus Desaguliers, (a former Huguenot turned Anglican) and George Payne united to form the first Grand lodge. Every Masonic Grand Lodge in the world traces it’s origin from this lodge.ⁱⁱ

A few Masonic writers and even more rank and file Masons attempt to credit their group with greater antiquity. The Holman Masonic edition of the Bible includes the myth that King Solomon and King Hiram of Tyre were the founders of Masonry. Other associate the order with John the Baptist, the apostle John, Guatama Buddha, or even to the builders of Babel, to Noah, or to Adam. But according to Wilmshurst, a popular Masonic author, such fantastic tales “possess the merest modicum of truth.”ⁱⁱⁱ Masonry may well have borrowed practices from some ancient sources, but it can hardly trace its lineage beyond 1717.

The lodges spread quickly to Europe and her colonies. The rapid spread in Europe can be shown by the date of Mozart’s opera, the *Magic Flute*. Mozart, himself an ardent Freemason, was commissioned in Vienna to write a German opera especially for the Freemasons. Just 74 years after the founding order, then, an opera saturated with Masonic ritual and allusion opened to enthusiastic German (Masonic) audience^{iv}. The first lodge appeared on our own shores in 1729, remaining under the control of the Grand Lodge of England until the end of the revolution. Perhaps in our country Masonry is the most popular. Each state plus the District of Columbia has its own Grand Lodge for the basic three degrees of Masonry. Local lodges in the U.S. are large compared to those of England. Forty three in Texas range from 1000 to 3000 members.^v Masonry has had a decided influence in Unitarian organizations, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, whose temple service is patterned after Masonic ritual.^{vi}

Organization

Originally, Masonry was fairly simple with only one rite of three degrees. These basic three degrees^{vii} now form the “Blue Lodge”, or symbolic Craft Masonry. Since 1912, all Grand Masters, and all Grand Secretaries have met annually in advisory meetings.

Over the years, the system has been elaborated, with at least eighteen different rites. Most popular currently are the York Rite and the Scottish Rite.

The York Rite consists of ten degrees beyond the Blue Lodge. The Royal Arch Chapter confers the capitular four degrees of Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and Royal Arch Mason. The next Three degrees (8-10) are optional, not required before going on to the 11-13 degrees, ending with try: Knights Templar degree.^{viii}

The Scottish Rite of thirty-two degrees (plus one honorary degree) came to the U.S. in 1801. Local bodies are chartered by a Supreme Council, rather than represented on the council, which explains the variety of systems and names for the thirty three degrees.^{ix}

Both of these “advanced” rites include “Christian Degrees”. For the York Rite it is the Knights Templars degree. Only Royal Arch Masons or “professing Christians” are allowed to receive this degree. Several Bible references are read in this initiation, along with enacted allusions to the Lord’s Supper. (The wine is drunk from a symbolic human skull!)

The Scottish Rite has two “Christian Degrees”, the 18th, or Sovereign Prince of Rose-Croix; and the 32nd or Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, which is really the second step of the 30th degree, Knights of Kadesh (שׁדך). The Christian aspect of the degrees also revolves around a misuse of the Lord’s Supper, (explained by 33rd degree Masons in *The New Age Magazine* as a pagan ceremony observing the vernal equinox), and the “rediscovery” of the words *INRI* and *Emmanuel*.^x

To become a Mason of *any* degree, a person must apply for membership. He cannot be solicited. He also must be at least twenty-one, a male, and a non-negro. Additional requirements include soundness of mind and body, a minimum of a year’s residency in that particular state and the profession of a belief in some God or gods. There were about four million Masons in the United States at the time of its bicentennial and about two million in the rest of the world.^{xi}

Affiliated Organizations

The Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons do not officially recognize any adoptive orders for women. Yet Eastern Star members generally consider themselves to be Masonic affiliates, so special mention should also be made of them.

By 1850, adoptive Masonry was quite popular in Europe, but poorly represented in the U.S. Robert Morris originally conceived the idea for the Eastern Star in that year. By 1855 he had set up a system of local lodgework called “Constellations”, but it failed due to its complexity. In 1859 a more popular version called “Families of the Eastern Star” was introduced by Morris. Taken over in 1866 by Robert Macoy, a Masonic publisher, the group began to flourish. By 1876, the present form was adopted with a General Grand Chapter in control.^{xii}

As of 1980, the Eastern Star claims over 3,000,000 members. Headquarters are at 1618 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20009. Each state and province of Canada has a Grand Chapter under this office. Chapters are now headed by the Worthy Matron, rather than the sponsoring Master Mason. Membership is limited to

Master Masons is good standing, their wives, daughters, legally adopted daughters, mothers, widows, sisters, half-sisters, granddaughters, stepmothers, stepdaughters and stepsisters.^{xiii}

Local chapters of the Order may, like Masonic Lodges, sponsor local Order of Rainbow Assemblies. Charitable work by the Eastern Star is mostly confined to its own membership. Although Negro lodges are not recognized by white Masonic bodies, Negro Eastern Star Chapters have been formed with a total membership of over 100,000.^{xiv}

Eastern Star confers five degrees, loosely based on five Biblical characters. “Jephtha’s Daughter” (named Adah, here) illustrates respect for the binding force of a (Masonic) vow. “Ruth” is said to illustrate devotion to religious principles. “Esther” is to instill fidelity to kindred and friends. “Martha” teaches undeviating faith in the hour of trial. “Electa”, based on the “Elect Lady” of II John, is to portray patience and submission under wrong.^{xv} “These are all the Masonic virtues, and they have nowhere in history more brilliant exemplars than in the five characters presented in the lectures of the Eastern Star.”^{xvi}

The purpose of the organization can be deduced from these character portrayals. The Eastern Star portrays itself as a

fraternal order dedicated to service to those in need, to social enjoyment and to civic interests. It awards scholarships to students in religious training.^{xvii}

A paid advertisement from the Wisconsin Grand Chapter, dated 1977 expresses the same purpose, pointing out several excellent charitable projects, as well as an “atmosphere of faith in God.”^{xviii}

The commonality of Eastern Star purpose with that of Masonry, may be seen in the opening words of the initiation ceremony.

“In the Initiation Ceremony the Worthy Matron outlines the purposes of the Order.

The Order of Eastern Star exists for the purpose of giving practical effect to one of the beneficent purposes of Freemasonry, which is to provide for the welfare of the wives, daughters, mothers, widows, and Master Masons. *Here we may share with the Masonic brother in promulgating the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.* (emphasis mine) Here we may aid, comfort and protect each other in our journey through the labyrinth of human life, and by cheerful companionship and social enjoyments, lighten the burdens of active duty.^{xix}

The philosophy of the Eastern Star has already been alluded to in this statement of purpose. Religion plays all important role in their philosophy. The ceremony is opened with prayer. The closing prayer has decidedly religious requests in it.

Holy and Merciful God, who answerest prayer and dost not scorn the petition of the humblest of Thy children, bestow upon us in our parting that spirit of affection which can resist the selfishness of the world, and cause us to remember our obligations to each other and to Thee. Grant that we may be *permitted with loving hearts to assemble here again for Thine honor*, for our instruction, and for the good of our fellow men. All of which we ask for Thy name’s sake. Amen. (*New Ritual of the Order of Eastern Star*, p. 38)^{xx}

During the initiation itself, the Worthy Matron prays on behalf of the initiate:

Source of all wisdom, truth, and love, grant, we beseech Thee, that in the reception of this member into our Order we may add strength to strength and grace to grace. Oh, may the golden chain thus lengthened become the brighter for this link and be strengthened for the great work we strive to do. Enlarge our powers to benefit mankind *and to honor Thee, our God.* (emphasis mine) And when, one by one, each link shall fall away in death, may the parting be temporary and the meeting eternal. In the world where death comes not, may *we* realize the full happiness of loving and serving Thee forever. Amen.^{xxi}

The object to whom these prayers are addressed is described for us in the Eastern Star initiation:

This order is founded on a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being that rules the universe for good, and no one can become a member of the Order who does not hold this belief...Do you believe in the existence of a Supreme Being? (Answer)^{xxii}

The Order expects all initiates to verify the answer to this question by taking an oath. This oath is taken "*In the presence of Almighty God, and before these witnesses...*"^{xxiii}

These prayers and the oath carry a strong religious message already. The religious purpose of the Order is further enhanced by the many funeral service provided by the Grand Chapter, and especially by the General Grand Chapter, which includes scripture readings, prayers, hymns, poetry, and symbolic allusions to assure the participants that the departed lodge sister has "entrance upon a glorious immortality."^{xxiv}

We must ask ourselves, then, 'Is the Eastern Star religion acceptable in the eyes of God; is it true Christianity?' The position of the Eastern Star is really the same as the Masons, so a detailed review of their religion will follow later in the paper. However a few details relating specifically to the Eastern Star may be in order.

The oath taken in initiation, "in the presence of Almighty God" is taken before the initiate even knows what she will be upholding. God says "Swear not at all...", let alone in matters which are totally unknown.

At the end of the initiates ceremony,

The signs, passes, grip, and symbols of the Order are explained to the candidate, including the letters F.A.T.A.L. which appear on some Eastern Star documents. These are an abbreviation of the Cabalistic Motto: "Fairest Among Thousands, Altogether Lovely."

The abbreviation FATAL is said to remind the initiate that "it would be fatal to the character of any lady" to disclose the secrets of the Order.^{xxv}

Those who do not assassinate their character by telling the secrets are assured that their faithfulness *to the Order of the Eastern Star* will grant them eternal life. The universal salvation offered to all members of the Order of the Eastern Star regardless of faith in Christ can be seen both in the initiation and funeral services.

And when, one by one, each link shall fall away in death, may the parting be temporary and the meeting eternal. In the world where death comes not, may *we* realize the full happiness of loving and serving Thee forever.^{xxvi}

Notice that "we"—that is, all Eastern Star members--will supposedly realize the happiness of loving and serving God forever. This universalism is reiterated in the symbolism of the order. Walking through "the labyrinth" in initiation is said to have the following significance:

In the winding of the labyrinth...*each soul* will surely come into the light of His Star and then will understand.^{xxvii}

In the funeral services, assurance of eternal life is given, not because of Christ's *sacrifice* and *resurrection*, but because the revival of plant life each spring assures us that there is a reawakening from death, and because Jesus *spoke* of a resurrection and life. (But note that they do not, and *cannot* insist that Jesus is the *only* reason for eternal life.)

Even more alarming is the confusion they perpetrate when suggesting that the departed sister has not only "gone on before us...through the heavenly portals", but simultaneously is also among us with her spirit.

Our Sisters affection ceases not; therefore may she not now be whispering to grief-stricken hearts, "Peace, be still," "Lo, I am with you always." Think not that the spirit world is distant. Our loved ones, though lost to mortal sight, may be with us in spiritual

existence. Let their loving presence be to us a perpetual inspiration, calling us to a higher moral and spiritual life.”^{xxviii}

This suggestion of spiritism certainly contradicts I Thess. 4:14; which informs us that the souls of believers are with Christ, and will return with Christ on Judgement Day. It is not hard for us to understand why the Order of the Eastern Star could come up with such conflicting ideas, and still consider them to be “scriptural.” Consider their view of the Bible, God’s Word. They see it, not as an open book of truth, but as a book of hidden wisdom properly understood only by the initiated.

The bible as (sic) an esoteric book, dealing with spiritual and psychic matters, making a *symbolic* use of words *for the purpose of concealing* from those who are not prepared to know the Truth. ... The student can find all our O.E.S. work and symbols in the bible, hidden, it is true, but easily found.^{xxix}

The fact that the Bible with its “hidden wisdom” is *not* understood by the initiated members can be seen by their equation of the Holy Spirit with “instinct.”

Paul trusted everything to what we might call the Christian instinct and what he called the Holy Spirit, and he was justified. No force in the world has done so much as this nameless thing that has controlled and guided and illuminated—whatever we call it.^{xxx}

Rev. Phillip Lochhaas, of the LC-MS has well summarized the Order of the Eastern Star. The Eastern Star is, as it claims, a religious institution, but it is not the religion of Holy Scripture to which this “religious” refers. Omitting the central doctrines of Scripture—sin, redemption, grace—it offers religious instruction to men and women of all creeds, promoting “faith in Divinity” and “brotherly love”. In spite of obvious good that may be done by its moral standards and demands for purity, the Order’s distortion of the central message of the Bible cannot be approved. All men are not brothers, they are widely divided from one another and separated from God by sin. Non-Christians cannot stand before God proud of their moral achievements, for without Christ these “profit nothing” I Cor. 13:3. The convinced Christian man and woman, constrained to testify to the unique redemption in Jesus Christ, cannot participate in the ideals, purposes and programs of the Order without compromise of faith and public denial of Christ.^{xxxi}

Other affiliates of the Masonic organization are less widespread than the Order of the Eastern Star, and will be mentioned only in brief. The following groups have been listed by J.W. Acker, in the book *Strange Altars*, as groups connected closely, if not officially, with Masonry.^{xxxii}

Tall Cedars of Lebanon of the U.S.A.—This is a side degree with no official standing. It is supposed to bear about the same relation to the Master Mason degree as the Mystic Shrine does to the 32d degree.

The Grotto—It is officially called Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm. It is a social organization, bearing the same relation to the Blue Lodge as that borne by the Shrine to the 32d degree and Knights Templars. Its various branches are called grottoes. Its chief objective is entertainment and the enjoyment of carnal pleasures.

Shrine—Its full title is Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. Stevens describes it as “a social and benevolent society with a ritual and history linked to Arabic traditions, in which Oriental mysticism, names, legends, and titles are freely employed.” The jewel of the order is the crescent, usually made of the claws of the Bengal tiger,

united at the bases with a gold setting. The sphinx is engraved on one side and a pyramid, urn, and star on the other. The crescent is generally suspended from a scimitar and holds a star pendant between the drooping horns. Claiming to have originated in Arabia, this order is secret and closely affiliated with Freemasonry. Only 32d-degree Masons and Knights Templars are eligible for membership.

The purpose of the “Shrine” is spelled out by Emmett McLoughlin in a recently written introduction to one of the older Masonic encyclopedias. “...the fun and philanthropic units of Masonry, the Sciots and particularly the Ancient Arabic Order of the Mystic Shrine...have built and they maintain the largest chain of crippled children’s hospitals in the work. They are open free of charge to children of all creeds and all races.”^{xxxiii}

Knights of the Red Cross of Constantine—This is an order consisting of six degrees; of which three are “working” degrees. Its members must be Royal Arch degree Masons. “The legend is adopted from the story of Zerubbabel and speaks of him and four other Jewish leaders seeking the protection of Darius against the interruptions caused by the Samaritans in the work of rebuilding the temple after the Babylonian Captivity. Having been granted their request by Darius, the latter founded a new order it is claimed.” -- Christian Cynosure, March 1932, p. 272.

Acacia Fraternity—This is a Greek-letter fraternity consisting almost exclusively of Masons attending college. Recently its ranks have been opening to non-Masonic students also. Established at the University of Michigan in 1904, it is a sort of club where the brother Masons and friends can be of social benefit to one another. The acacia is an important symbol of third-degree Masonry; standing primarily for the immortality of the soul and secondarily for innocence.

Acacia is not alone as a Masonic college fraternity.

“Although many of these college fraternities had members of the Masonic Fraternity among their founders and had their rituals written and insignia designed by Masons, only four were founded exclusively by college Masons who restricted their membership to student and faculty Master Masons: Acacia...Square and Compass...Sigma Mu Sigma...Order of the Golden Key. (Almond Fairfield, “Collegiate Freemasons,” *The New Age Magazine*, November, 1965, p. 14)

To these *Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia* adds, under the listing “Masonic Clubs”, Tau Kappa Epsilon. (Henry Wilson. *Coil*, op. cit., p. 133).

All of these fraternities receive encouragement and support from Masonic bodies they seek to promote Masonic principles among college students.

White Shrine of Jerusalem—This is a social organization of the Eastern Star. According to Masonic authority, it supplies a Christian degree for the deistic Eastern Star. Its ritual is based on Luke 2. Its objectives are fourfold : “Biblical research and further study of sacred history; to unfold and reveal to the initiate a more beautiful understanding of, and devotion to, the sacrificial teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth; to teach that in the embodiment of faith, love, and good works in our contact with our fellow men and in service to humanity lie the supreme attainments of life; closer friendships that exalt and amplify our conceptions of Christian conduct.” Only members of the Eastern Star are eligible.

Order of Amaranth—Organized in 1653 by Queen Christina of Sweden, it purposes to gather the cream of the Order of the Eastern Star and the Masonic Fraternity into an organization of the highest quality. Another society of similar name was founded by Robert Macoy in 1883. Its ritual is highly regarded in some Masonic quarters. Lectures are offered on Truth, Faith Wisdom, and Charity. Its work is almost purely benevolent, and its teachings aim at the everyday practice of virtues.

Daughters of the Nile—This is a secret society of women relatives of Shriners. The branches are called temples and the officers, princesses. Its membership is found chiefly in the Western States.

Daughters of Mokanna—This organization is composed of women relatives of Grotto members. Its subordinate chapters are called caldrons.

Order of the Builders—An order of boys, sponsored and controlled by Master Masons, it includes not only sons of Master Masons between the ages of 13 and 21 but also their closest boyhood companions. Each son of a Master Mason may recommend one friend for membership. The Builders were organized in Chicago.

Order of De Molay—This is a boys' fraternity organized in 1919 at Kansas City under Masonic sponsorship. The ritual is "built around the fundamental precepts of love for parents, reverence for sacred things, patriotism, purity, courtesy, comradeship, fidelity, and loyalty to the public school as the citadel of American liberty. De Molay was the last Grand Commander of the medieval Knights Templars and died in 1314. Membership in the fraternity is open to boys from 14 to 21 who are sons of Freemasons or vouched for by one of them worth comrade. The organization has a ritual, altar with Bible, chaplain, organist, deacons, burial and memorial ceremony. Its ritual is characterized by deism. The idea of work-righteousness abounds in its pages. "A blameless life robs the grave of its victory" (Square and Compass magazine, Nov. 15, 1925, p. 48). There are many prayers, but all are Christless.

Job's Daughters—This order was organized by Masons for female relatives of Master Masons between the ages of 12 and 20 and for other girls who might eventually become members of the Eastern Star. Its headquarters are at Omaha. National in scope, it seeks "to band together daughters, sisters, nieces, and granddaughters of Master Masons and of members of the Eastern Star for the betterment of social conditions and to teach practical things." The members are to be impressed with a love of home and country and with a reverence for the Bible. The Book of Job is used for Character guidance. There are no prayers in Jesus' name. Salvation is by character "Righteous service will lead to life eternal."

Order of the Rainbow—Under Masonic sponsorship, this order opens its membership to female relatives between the ages of 12 and 18 of Masons or Eastern Stars, or friends of Rainbow Girls. There is a ritual permeated with deism which speaks of heaven attained by good moral conduct apart from Christ and His atoning work. All prayers omit the

name of Jesus. The ritual refers to the Bible as “the rule of right living for all,” not the Gospel of Christ’s love.^{xxxiv}

Based on statements from the Masons and the Eastern Star regarding their purpose; and on some comments regarding the “affiliates” of Masonry, we will want to consider none of the fine characteristics they display.

Fraternalism is not, in itself, bad. Masonry works hard to promote a close knit group of members who will defend, aid, and care for one another as friends. The concern of the lodge for its members is reflected in the concern of the members for their lodge. Rarely will a Mason reveal his secrets or “bad-mouth” his organization. Christians (especially Lutherans?) should be so discreet and concerned about their pastor, congregation and synod.

Patriotism and morality (civic righteousness) are also well maintained and inculcated among the members of the Masons. The results of this moral teaching can be seen in the community services provided by their Orders. Local lodges carry out programs of Christmas baskets for the poor and sponsor funding drives for hospitals and other social agencies. The Grotto supports cerebral palsy clinics; the Tall Cedars of Lebanon raise funds for muscular dystrophy; the Shriners support their children’s hospitals. We cannot honestly and properly deal with Masonry without recognizing and admiring such magnificent gestures of human compassion.

The Philosophy of Masonry

However, such good traits cannot mask an underlying philosophy which is thoroughly religious. The rank and file Mason may protest long and loud that his lodge is not religious. But this hardly agrees with the great writers of Masonry in every age.

Older authorities, such as Waite and Wilmhurst both describe Masonry in religious terms.^{xxxv}

Waite acknowledges that many Masons “would be astonished beyond words if they were told that apart from religion Masonry has no title to existence...”^{xxxvi} But the truth of the matter is expressed elsewhere in his encyclopedia, by pointing out “the fundamental doctrine of orthodox Freemasonry: That God is, and that He recompenses those who seek him out...”^{xxxvii}

Wilmhurst backs this up by saying that “in its broad and more vital doctrine Masonry (is) essentially a philosophic and religious system expressed in dramatic ceremonial.”^{xxxviii} “The intention of Masonry (is) to deal solely and simply with the greater science of soul-building”, it is “dedicated to purposes that are wholly spiritual, religious and philosophic.”^{xxxix}

More recent Masonic authorities indicate that this is still the case. Mackey^{xl} writes in his *Masonic Ritualist*, “Masonry is a religious institution” (p. 44). On p. 46 he writes “Freemasonry is indebted for its origin to its religious and philosophic character.”^{xli}

The latest and most widely acclaimed Masonic Authority, Henry Wilson Coil’s *Masonic Encyclopedia*,^{xlii} continues and broadens this trend in the article titled “Religion” by describing the Masonic Lodge as a church.

Freemasonry certainly requires a belief in the existence of, and man’s dependence upon, a Supreme Being to whom he is responsible. What can a church add to that, except to bring into one fellowship those who have like feelings? That is exactly what the lodge does.

That brings us to the real crux of the matter; the difference between a lodge and a church is one of degree and not of kind. Some think that, because it is not a strong or highly

formalized or highly dogmatized religion such as the Roman Catholic Church where it is difficult to tell whether the congregation is worshipping God, Christ, or the Virgin Mary, it can be no religion at all. But a church of Friends (Quakers) exhibits even less formality and ritual than a Masonic lodge. The fact that Freemasonry is a mild religion does not mean that it is no more religion.^{xliii}

The goal of this Masonic religion is the same as any other religion; to bring man into a closer relationship with 'god', and finally into an eternal relationship. Waite describes Masonry as an "open gate into a world of real knowledge where Divine Quest ends in Divine Attainment."^{xliv} Allan Boudrea^{xlv} writing in 1980 about one of Wilmshurst's books describes the "divine attainment" as regeneration.

Wilmshurst carefully places his designs upon the trestle board to build his thesis that the alpha and omega of Freemasonry is not the repetition of the ritual nor the safe guarding of secrets, but the regeneration of the Brethern.^{xlvi}

Wilmshurst himself corroborates this by describing the Entered Apprentice as one who seeks spiritual rebirth,^{xlvii} so that "by the principles of the Order (Emphasis mine) he may be better enabled to display that beauty of Godliness which previously perhaps has not been manifested through him."^{xlviii}

The manner in which this is carried out is described as "sacramental" by both Waite and Wilmshurst. Waite typically bewails the fact of the ignorance of many local Worshipful Masters. "So also at this day the ordinary Worshipful Master in the chair of Solomon does not dream that he is seated there to administer a body of instituted sacraments..."^{xlix} But sacraments they are, in the Masonic view, and Wilmshurst explains in what way the rites are sacramental.

"The first degree (Entered Apprentice) is also eminently the degree of preparation, of self-discipline and purification. It corresponds with that symbolical cleansing accorded in the sacrament of Baptism, which, in the churches is, so to speak, the first degree in the religious life;..."^l

"The inward development which the second degree (Fellow Craft) symbolizes...is equivalent to the rite of Confirmation in the Christian Churches."^{li}

"The Craft (the three basic degrees)...was given out to the world, from more secret sources still, as a great experiment and *means of grace* (emphasis mine)..."^{lii}

The traits pointed out by these Masonic authors ought to be enough to convince any reader that Masonry is intended to be and is practiced as a religion.

What we must ask ourselves then, is "What kind of a religion is it?"

"Clymer, a Masonic authority, says: "Masonry does not teach salvation by faith, nor by the vicarious atonement. Go through its degrees, study the history as taught by its great Masters; you cannot find that it teaches this doctrine. Boldly I claim that this doctrine does not make Christians but it does make criminals" (*Ancient Mystic Oriental Masonry*, pp., 10, 11). Another Masonic authority, Ward, states: "Freemasonry in practice teaches that all good men, whatever their personal beliefs, have a right to hope for salvation. Each Mason can for himself work out his own conception of God and thereby achieve salvation" But Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father but by me." (John 14:6)"^{liiii}

Clearly the Masonic religion is a religion of universalism and works righteousness.

Concerning works righteousness, we are told that the all seeing eye of “Providence” pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, “*and will reward us according to our merit.*”^{liv}

Just what sort of merit will be rewarded? Use of the rituals is seen as a good work in itself.

“Freemasonry has a *religious service* to commit the body of a deceased brother to the dust whence it came *and to speed the liberated spirit back to the Great Source of Light.* (Emphasis mine)^{lv} Much more common however are remarks to the effect that the virtuous life of the Mason are the cause for his hope of “heaven.” In the opening of a Royal Arch Chapter, the high priest reviews all of the implements of the ceremony. During this review, the High Priest questions the Captain of the Host:

“What is the color of his (Royal Arch Captain’s) banner?”

“White, and is emblematical of that *purity of heart and rectitude of conduct which: are essential to obtain admission into the divine sanctum-sanctorum above.* (Emphasis mine)^{lvi}

How are we to find that purity of heart and divine rectitude? According to Masonry, it is within ourselves. “...modern speculative Masonry was instituted...to indicate the path of *self-perfecting*, to those who care and dare to follow it...”^{lvii} Masons even wear white gloves and white lambskin aprons “as emblems that *we have purified ourselves* (emphasis mine) and washed our hands in innocency.”^{lviii} something which Fellow Craft Masons are told they can do “only by toil and suffering.”^{lix}

In the third degree, the Master Mason is reminded of the alleged result of this toil and suffering. The Master Mason, it is suggested, has made himself dead to sin.

He had been ‘sown a corruptible body’ and in virtue of the self-discipline and self-development he has undergone, there has been in him “an incorruptible body,” and death has been swallowed up in victory he has attained over himself.^{lx}

At best Masonry seen by Wilmshurst as a semi-Pelagian system of salvation.

(Masonry holds out the great promise that, with divine assistance and by our own industry, the genuine realities of which we at present possess but the imperfect shadows shall be restored to us, and that patience and perseverance will eventually entitle every worthy man to participation in them.)^{lxi}

A works righteous universalism is not the only count on which Masonry proves to be a false religion. We also must look at the manner in which Masonry uses God’s Word.

The fact that the Bible is used in Masonry can hardly be debated. Holman prints a Masonic edition of the Bible complete with the story of Masonry’s legendary founder, Hiram Abif. “The Holy Book, together with the square and the compasses, are the great lights of Masonry.”^{lxii} The “Holy Book”, which is usually the Bible in predominantly Christian countries, must, however, do nothing more than set open on an altar in order to be a great light in Masonry.

But even if the Bible itself is no more than a piece of furniture to most Masons, Masonic authors and authorities seek every opportunity to include biblical ideas, quotes and practices into their system.

Thus in Waite’s encyclopedia, we find an article on “Angels in Masonic Ritual”, which informs us that

“Masons under the obedience of the *Craft Degrees* and the *Royal Arch* may be surprised to hear that there are angels at all in Masonry: it is only over the wide-extending field of

the High Grades that the flash of their wings is seen; but even then the visits are few and far between, which—the proverb tells us—is after the manner of angels.^{lxiii}

Later, Waite reveals that the Mark Masonry ritual has many biblical allusions.^{lxiv} If Mark Masonry is rich in biblical symbol so is Master Masonry and Royal Arch Masonry.^{lxv} The Royal Arch Ritual alone employs over 35 separate Biblical allusions!

We can get a general idea of the Masonic view of the Bible when Wilmshurst anachronistically accuses St. Paul of using Masonic language.^{lxvi} Even more unsettling is the following misuse of John 1:1-5.

In the Royal Arch Initiation, the final scripture reference is John 1:1-5, which, as John 1:14 shows us, refers to Christ. Masonry, however, misappropriates this passage to show that the *word* is not of Christ, but the “long lost Master Mason’s Word,” Jah-Bul-On.^{lxvii lxxviii}

Generally speaking, the Masonic misuse of the Bible falls into two general categories: either quoting it out of context as above or misinterpreting it as allegory. Consider the following non-contextual uses of Scripture.

“The “All-Seeing Eye” (God) is said to “never slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121:3). The same “All-seeing eye” (God) is said to “reward us according to our merits” which he sees through His watchfulness.^{lxix}

There is supposedly “joy among the angels of heaven” (Luke 15:7,10) when as Entered Apprentice has been initiated.^{lxx}

The Master Mason, through his own efforts, has made Himself “dead to sin.” Rom. 6:11^{lxxi}

As far as improperly interpreting the Bible allegorically, consider these examples. They place Masonry clearly in the camp of the neo-orthodox.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is not seen as a bodily, physical resurrection. Rather, it is *described* as something which takes place within us as we are raised up (Masonically) to new levels of awareness.^{lxxii} The resurrection is an event *in this life*, which gives us a perfect union with God.^{lxxiii}

The Paradise of the Garden of Eden, says Masonry, is not a historical fact, but a myth. Creation is not clearly described in the Bible, it is merely “shadowed forth.”^{lxxiv} The fall of Adam and Eve into sin is likewise seen as allegory.^{lxxv} The sun standing still for Joshua is also seen as allegory.

“The problem of the much discredited biblical miracle of the sun standing still in the heavens disappears when its true meaning is perceived in the light of the interpretation given by the compilers of the Masonic ritual, who well knew that it was not the solar orb that was miraculously stayed in its course in violation of natural law, but that the “sun” in question denotes an enlightened perceptive state experienced by everyone who in this “valley of Ajalon” undertakes the task of self-conquest and “fighting the battles of the Lord” against his own lower propensities.”^{lxxvi}

Such repeated misuse of the Word of God should be enough to show that the Masonic religion is not the religion of the Bible. Yet, there are several other miscellaneous points which also show us the paganism of Masonry.

The most glaring deficiency of Masonic deism is its equation of the *Lord* with every other so-called God in the world. What follows from one of the Masonic ritualists, concerning the “lost word” “Jah-Bul-On” certainly misrepresents Deut. 6:4, “The Lord our God is one.”

“One says it was Jau, another thinks it was Jaoth, a, third, Java; others, Juba, Jao, Jah, Jehovah, and Jove. In a word, the letters of the name are perishable, and the pronunciation of little moment; but the Being himself is ineffable, incomprehensible, and worthy of our utmost veneration. He was called by the Romans Jove, or Jah; by the Chaldeans, the Phoenicians, and the Celtae, Bel or Bul; and by the Indians, Egyptians, and Greeks, Om or On.”^{lxxvii}

The Lord is equally misrepresented by the Masonic idea of the Trinity. Masons do speak of a trinity, but not the Father; Son and Holy Ghost. Typical of Trinitarian references in Masonic literature is Wilmshurst’s reference to the threefold purity of body soul, and spirit.^{lxxviii}

Deism is also evident; in the Masonic approach to God’s providence. Basically, Masonry says that God has put the “scheme of the universe...into the hands of humanity to restore.”^{lxxix} This restoration is to take place as Masons seek light, seek more light; and seek still more light in the Masonic rituals.^{lxxx} I order to assist them in finding this light, Masons are encouraged to employ astrology^{lxxxi} and the powers of the occult, which, the Masons say, are released in the purposeful use of Masonic ritual.^{lxxxii} Once the Mason has received this light he is expected to let it guide his life as he shows benevolence *to other Masons*. But even that benevolence is limited to those occasions when it will not harm or inconvenience the Masonic good samaritan.^{lxxxiii} What a contrast to Christ who was benevolent enough to die for us “while we were yet enemies!”

Yes, it is safe to say that Masonry is religious. But it is anything but the Christian religion. And, unfortunately, we shall now go on to see that this false religion is the basis of all the other lodges.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows

The I.O.O.F. has its roots in eighteenth century England. It was first brought to the U.S. in 1819 by Thos. Wildey and four other Englishmen who organized a lodge in Baltimore, connected with the Union Order of Odd Fellowship. The first Union Grand Lodge was founded in 1821. The order drew enough to warrant a Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows of the U.S. by 1825. In 1843 the Grand Lodge of the U.S. severed its connection with the English Grand Lodge, and in 1879 renamed itself the Sovereign Grand Lodge, Independent Order of Odd Fellows.^{lxxxiv} From a peak membership of more than two million in the 1920’s, the Odd Fellows have declined to about 1.25 million currently.^{lxxxv}

Odd Fellows may obtain four basic degrees, plus three superior degrees given through separate “encampments”.^{lxxxvi} Another separate military branch, the Patriarchs Militant, has three degrees similar to the Masonic Knights Templars. The basic degrees beyond the initiation degree, entitled Friendship, Love, and Truth, are taught by means of enacted Bible stories. “Friendship” is taught by the story of the good Samaritan - “Love” is portrayed by the story of Jonathon and David. “Truth” is taught by a number of symbols, the Bible among them. In none of these however, is God’s grace ever presented as the reason and motivation for living as these degrees urge the members to live.^{lxxxvii}

The Rebekah Degree may be conferred on men and women in a Rebekah Lodge, making it similar to the Masonic Eastern Star. The Sovereign Grand Lodge controls all Rebekah’s Lodges, as well as the Junior Order of Odd Fellows for boys, and the Theta Rho girls’ clubs.

The purpose of the I.O.O.F. may be summed up by a few quotations from their ritual. It, (the I.O.O.F.) will arouse the soul to a just sense of its responsibility to God, and its duty to man. It will fill his heart with a salutary horror of that monster *sin*, whose power

has arrayed man against his fellowman and washed the earth with tears, and deluged it in blood.”^{lxxxviii}

But the purpose of fulfilling our duty to our fellowman is severely restricted by the I.O.O.F. In spite of these and many similar declarations of universal brotherhood the Odd Fellows exclude from their lodges (the so-called illustrations of the fraternity of mankind!) the defenseless, the poor, the afflicted, and the weak; namely, all women, all persons except free white Caucasian males; and from these again they exclude all afflicted with chronic diseases, the deaf, and the blind, all others that on account of their poverty cannot pay their dues, or who on account of the enmity of three members of the lodge cannot secure a clean ballot.^{lxxxix}

Such restrictions on their own love for man certainly take the power out of this exhortation to benevolence:

May your initiation and consequent practice, aid in releasing you from all blindness of moral vision, set you free from the fetters of ignorance and error, and bring you from a death in selfishness into a life of active benevolence and virtue.^{xc}

Even more to the point, for us, is the self-acknowledgement that the I.O.O.F. is a religious order.

What regeneration by the word of truth is in religion, initiation is in Oddfellowship.^{xcii}

...we are a religious body, and have a religious faith for the basis of our fellowship and to unite us in religious duty.^{xciii}

It should not surprise us at all that the I.O.O.F. is religious in the deistic sense. All of the above quotes from their ritual were written by their lost venerated spokesman, the Universalist minister, Rev. A.B. Grosh. The 1895 edition quoted here, is still substantially what the I.O.O.F. stands for according to Rev. Phillip Lochhaas of the LC-MS Commission on Organizations.

According to Grosh, “Oddfellowship was founded on great religious principles...”^{xciii} Other Odd Fellow authors assert the same.

To some it may seem sacrilegious and ridiculous to assert that every lodge of Odd Fellows is a religious organization, but I say it with a clear conscience and without fear of successful contradiction.^{xciv}

Odd fellowship will make man more religious rather than less religious. It will draw him to God rather than away from God.^{xcv}

To further enhance the religious aspect of their order the I.O.O.F. insists on having prayers in their meetings^{xcvi} as well as the *presence* of a Bible. “No lodge or encampment can be legally opened without the presence of a Bible.”^{xcvii}

A closer analysis of their religious features tells us what kind of a religion the I.O.O.F., the Rebekahs, and their junior affiliates have. Universalism is evident in the words of Paschal Donaldson, Odd Fellow author:

Mankind is divided into numerous sects and parties. The Christian’s faith in Christ is not more earnest and positive than the Jew’s in his expected Messiah, the Mohammedan’s in his prophet or that of the Chinese in the object of his worship. Christendom is itself divided into scores of sects and parties. Difference of opinion on religious subjects, especially, has always existed, and will be likely to continue to divide the hearts of men, until the reign of the sublime principle of Universal Brotherhood shall have been

established on the earth. Let us exert our utmost endeavor to hasten this most desirable period.^{xcviii}

A verse taken from a song in the Odd Fellow ritual reads:

A temple where no narrow creed
Protects a chosen few
It holds alike deserved heed
To Christian, Turk and Jew.

The prayers of the Odd Fellows are also designed to be universally acceptable by men of all creeds. Note that *all* Odd Fellows, while in the lodge, are expected to forsake Christ in their prayers.

The Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows for the State of Massachusetts asked the following question of the Sovereign Grand Lodge of the World, Feb. 14, 1889 (Report, page 336):
“Is it lawful for a chaplain to commence and finish his prayer in the name of Christ?”

In answer, the Sovereign Grand Lodge states:

Our Order only requires a belief in the existence of the Supreme Being as a qualification for membership, and has no affinity with any religious sect or system of faith hence *everything savoring of sectarianism is not to be tolerated*. The words ‘system or sect’ do not have reference merely to the sects within the pale of Christianity, but have a far broader significance and include all the religions of the world. In this sense Christianity is a sect; hence it is inexpedient, and I think unlawful to make prominent reference to it in lodge work. We have Jews, and may have Mohammedans and others of non-Christian sects within our Order, and the rule applies to them equally with members of the Christian faith.^{xcix}

Such a low view of Christ and Christianity as a “sect” is certainly not compatible with Jesus words, “No one come to the Father, but by me.”

Finally, consider these asserted quotes from the manual by Grosh.

Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism recognize the one, only living and true God.^c

The funeral odes, below are sung for *any* departed lodge brother, *whether Christian or not*:

“Though in the Grand Lodge above,
We remember thee in love.”^{ci}

And now he quits our weary train
And marches o’er the heavenly heights;
But he shall walk with him again
And share his rest and his delight.^{cii}

In response to this Christless universalism, we read,

There appears to be little dispute among Odd Fellow authors as to whether the Order is religious or not. At least two books entitled *The Religion of Odd Fellowship* and *The Religion of Fraternity* have been written by members. Both present the basic religious tenets of the ritual: God is the Father of all men, His goodness dictates that He deal in mercy with all, and all men can look forward to eternal life if they hope of such life within them. In Odd Fellowship man can find that hope. He enters morally blind, but in the principles of the Order he receives “light” which enables him to rise above selfishness and passion. There is within the individual the potential to reflect the image of God, and within society the latent ability to achieve the “golden age” of universal brotherhood.

There is within man a tendency toward selfishness which he can overcome through the lessons the Order teaches.

The Order has no concept of sin as it is described in the Bible as “separating between man and God,” “enmity against God,” or deserving of eternal death. Hence there is also no concept of redemption in Jesus Christ and no necessity for approaching God through the merits of His Son. Forgiveness is merely God’s overlooking of faults because of His having bound Himself to man in a covenant of friendship. Saving faith is viewed as belief in the Creator and Preserver and the hope of immortality. “To all who practice the charities and virtues of the Order is given the assurance that they shall be commended of God, “well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of Thy Lord.” As men unite in the bonds of friendship, love and truth, the happiness that God intends for man to have will be discovered. The true Christian will find that in the ritual of the Order he is required to give assent to a substitute gospel, “The Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man,” by which men can be led to eternal perdition. His responsibility to his Savior’s injunction to be a “witness” forbids his compromising his faith for the sake of business or social advantage or the sick and disability benefits which are offered. As in many similar fraternal organizations, the frequently-declared concept of universal brotherhood, based on “consanguinity” and the “Springing from one parent” breaks down in the membership restrictions, since only those are accepted who are male, free, white Caucasians, devoid of physical impairments and chronic diseases, of an economic level enabling them to pay their dues, and who have not incurred the enmity of more than two of the members.^{ciii}

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

The BPOE, was formed in 1866 in New York in order to help members of the acting profession evade the strict Sunday liquor laws then in force. Originally the group of actors called themselves “The Jolly Corks”, either in allusion to corks flying from the liquor bottles, or an allusion to the theatrical profession. Seeking a distinctly American name after they were organized, a name to reflect their growing interest in benevolence, they chose the name Elks, because the Elk is a purely American animal “fleet of foot, timorous of wrong, but ever ready to combat in defense of self or the female of the species.”^{civ}

Membership in the Order is limited to white male American citizens at least twenty-one years of age, who believe in the existence of God. There are no branches or degrees of membership and no auxiliary organizations, except for State Associations, Past Exalted Rulers’ Associations, and the Grand Lodge.

The ritual of the Elks bears several marks of Masonry, including the aprons, and several references to “quarry work.” However, none of the ritual is known to be standardized except the special services, such as memorial, and burial services.^{cv} Overall, ritual is receiving less and less emphasis among the Elks, although the full initiation rite is still required by the national organization as well as the opening and closing of the regular meetings.^{cvi}

Social memberships are known to exist, whereby a person may obtain the use of lodge facilities for a fee, without actual membership. Such practice, however, is repeatedly condemned by the national organization, as in this letter from a national officer, dated 1970:

Let me assure you very positively that we do not and never will permit any candidate to become a member of the Elks without the full initiation ceremony prescribed by our ritual, and neither do we permit, nor will we tolerate, any so-called social membership,

and if any of us in positions of authority learn of any officer of any Lodge granting so-called social memberships, or permitting candidates to be classified as members without the full initiation ceremony, then you may be assured that such officers will be promptly removed from office, and if the Lodge itself is at fault, the charter will be revoked.^{cvii}

“Official” membership of initiated members is currently over 2 million. The “Antlers”, “Antlerettes”, “Does” and “Lady Elks” generally accept the position of the lodge, but are not officially endorsed.

The purpose of the Elks has become much more social than some lodges like the Masons. Fraternal orders in the United States are enjoying their greatest growth and success in those geographic areas where they have transformed themselves into middle-class country clubs, where a man and his family may dine, swim, golf or buy liquor in an otherwise “dry” area. The Order of Elks has been quick to seize upon this advantage. He...or a masculine haunt, the Elks Lodge has emphasized conviviality coupled works of charity. A national officer recently observed, “Our emphasis is now upon family participation.”^{cviii}

More formally stated, the purpose of the Elks is:

To inculcate the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its members; to quicken the spirit of American patriotism; to cultivate good fellowship; to perpetuate itself as a fraternal organization; and to provide for its government.^{cix}

If this were all the further the Elks went we would find little to complain about. But when we delve into their rituals further, we find reason for the same basic objections which we see in other lodges.

As with other lodges there are several “religious” features. The order does apply a religious test, asking if the applicant believes in a “Supreme Being”; prayers and sacred music are employed in the rituals; the Bible must be placed on the altar before opening a meeting.^{cx} The candidate swears, “And may God help me” to obey his vow of secrecy and fidelity to the Order.^{cx} Explanations of the resurrection in the funeral services also point to the religious character of this lodge.^{cxii}

The Order is to be highly commended for its patriotic, civic, social, and benevolent contribution to society. But because it has obvious religious teachings also, we must include them in our evaluation of the Elks.

As with the other lodges the religion we find here is deistic. The Elks say that they “question no man’s religion.”^{cxiii} This is because, as far as the Elks are concerned, all religions are the same.

The Altar has in all ages been regarded as most sacred. With us it typifies neither sect nor creed, but a shrine erected to signify our belief in the Fatherhood of the Grand Exalted Ruler of all the universality of the Brotherhood of man.^{cxiv}

Beyond the *general* deistic attitude, we see specific practices which point to the “Fatherhood” of a general god which is non-trinitarian and excludes Christ.

In correspondence dated 1927, Mr. B.M. Holt was informed by the Managing Editor of *Elk’s Magazine*, “The name of Jesus Christ is omitted from Elk Prayers.”^{cxv} Through the decades since 1927, little has changed. In three out of three Elk prayers quoted in full in the LC-MS Commission Article on the B.P.O.E., there is no reference to Jesus Christ and no mention of the Trinity.^{cxvi}

The Trinity was also conspicuously absent from a doxology sung at an Elk memorial service in Ft. Wayne. Notice the rewording of the last two lines.

Praise God from whom all blessing flow;
Praise Him, all creatures, here below;
Praise Him above for all that's good;
Praise God for our true brotherhood.^{cxvii}

Besides describing God in non-trinitarian terms, consider this Elk hymn which describes the type of god the Elk worship.

Great Ruler of the universe
All-seeing and benign,
Look down upon and bless
And be all glory Thine;
May Charity as taught us here
Be ever borne in mind,
The Golden Rule our motto true,
For days of Auld Lang Syne.^{cxviii}

“Great Ruler of the Universe” is a catch-phrase in almost every deistic unitarian group. The Lord of Scripture, who says “The soul that sinneth, it shall die”, is certainly not “benign.” The “Golden Rule” is certainly a fine guide for our conduct, as far as it goes; but can it be the motto of a Christian whose creed is, “A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law”?

Such confusion is natural when we consider the Elks use of the Bible. Usually, it is just a piece of furniture, placed on the altar to identify the lodge as a religious meeting place. But when they do speak of it they miss half the message. Seeing only the Law they disregard the Gospel. The Grand and Esteemed Loyal Knight calls the Bible, at the dedication of a new hall, “The book of law, upon which is founded justice.”^{cxix}

In the Elk’s unbiblical theology, the resurrection unto eternal life in heaven is granted because of merit: merit earned by a virtuous life and Elk membership. We can see this in the memorial services.

it will be their deeds on earth which will aid them in partaking of the treasures of a better world.^{cxx}

so direct us *in observing and advancing the principles* upon which our fraternity is founded *that we may ever wear the badge of thy fellowship* and the crown of Thy approval.^{cxxi}

bless us in the benevolent and practical work of our order...*that we may ever merit Thy blessings and approval.* Amen.^{cxxii}

Can this harmonize with the words “By grace are you saved through faith...”?

Since they misunderstand God’s Word and salvation by grace, we will not be surprised at their misguided efforts at benevolence. Blacks are not allowed to join. Anyone with any kind of physical defect or chronic illness is barred. They have no system to solicit funding for their “benevolent” projects. Membership can be prohibited if only 3 members dislike the applicant.^{cxxiii}

Finally, the universalism of the Elk religion must be questioned. They say of all Elk members, whether Christian or not, “...guide us across the uncharted spaces of death, and bring us at last where worlds unite in bonds of eternal peace. Amen.”^{cxxiv}

Jesus said to such attitudes, “Not everyone who says to me Lord! Lord! will enter the kingdom of heaven...” Elsewhere He made it clear that *our* merit has nothing to do with salvation. “No one comes to the Father but by me.” Jesus said.

Loyal Order of Moose

The Moose lodge was founded in 1888 and by 1893 it had grown to fifteen Watering Places and 1000 Moose. But in a few years membership had slumped to fewer than 250.

The initiation of James J. Davis changed the history of the LOM. Davis was initiated at a national Moose convention in 1906 at which only seven delegates were accredited. He was invited to address the gathering and the enthusiasm of his words prompted the remnant of Moose to appoint him Supreme Organizer on the spot.

During the next two decades Davis stumped the United States setting up lodges and enrolling members. In 1911 alone he traveled 75,000 miles and spent 300 nights on Pullmans and coaches. By 1928 Davis had brought in 650,000 members in 1709 lodges along with another 59,000 members of the women’s auxiliary.

Open to all “male persons of the Caucasian or White race, who are of good moral character, physically and mentally normal, who shall profess a belief in a Supreme Being,” the Loyal Order of Moose now reports slightly more than 1,000,000 members in 3500 lodges. It enrolls members in all fifty states, Guam, Canada, Bermuda, and England. Female relatives may join the Women of the Moose.^{cxxv}

Beyond initiation, members may go on to the second degree, the Mooseheart Legion of the World. There are two higher degrees, the Fellowship and Pilgrim degrees.^{cxxvi}

Although there has been some abbreviation of the Moose ceremonies and the word “enrollment” has been adopted to describe the initiation ceremony, these changes can in no way be interpreted to mean that the Order has abandoned its lodge character. The moose no longer consider themselves a secret order, although the candidate for enrollment pledges to retain as confidential all matters revealed to him in the lodge.^{cxxvii}

The purpose of the LOM can be seen in part by looking at “Mooseheart”

“The heart of the Moose is Mooseheart.” These words express the loyalty and devotion that members of the Moose Lodge have for their famed “child city” near Chicago, Illinois, where a home and school are provided for children of Moose, who have lost one or both parents. A project perhaps unrivalled by any other fraternal organization, Mooseheart, together with Moosehaven, a home for elderly Moose in Florida, is considered the top drawing card for Moose membership.

The additional appeal of the lodge sponsoring more family activities has stimulated its growth. Participation in civic affairs, as well as the providing of bars in dry or partially dry areas, also contributes to the lodge’s appeal.^{cxxviii}

But these social and benevolent projects do not by any means state the purpose of the Moose fully. The Mooseheart Legion of the World has as a part of its stated purpose to “advance throughout the world the principles of Faith, Hope, and Charity as based upon the broad platform of the common brotherhood of all mankind.”^{cxxix}

The “broad platform of the common brotherhood of all mankind” already tells us what kind of philosophy the Moose upholds. It is religious in the deistic sense. The same things which make other lodges deistic are at work in the Moose.

God is in the Loyal Order of Moose...The ritual teems with God's thought from the Bible. The Bible holds the high place of honor on the altar in the center of the lodge. Worship of God swathes the ceremonies of the initiation of every Moose. Under the most impressive conditions he takes his obligation upon the *great religious book of Jew and Gentile*, of Protestant and Catholic.^{cxxx}

This god of the Moose is to be worshipped. But notice the guideline for worship in the first commandment of the Moose read by the junior governor:

“Thou shalt believe in God, *and worship Him as thy conscience dictates.*”^{cxxxii}

God is not in control of such worship. The likelihood of its being “God-pleasing” worship is doubtful, considering the lack of God's guidance.

The ill-defined god of the Moose is to be invoked by the candidate for membership, even though the Moose now call this an “obligation” rather than an oath.

Prayers abound in the enrollment service, and especially in the Memorial and graveside services. When these special services are used they must be used as outlined. No exceptions are made for the conscience of a concerned Christian. Religious songs used in the ceremonies are carefully (re)worded to avoid distinctly Christian references.^{cxxxii}

Like all lodges which insist on using the Bible, the Moose misuse it. It is a piece of furniture on the altar to give an air of religiosity. The Bible is also misinterpreted. In the Moose 9 o'clock ceremony.

Assembled Moose join in repeating “Suffer the little children to come unto *me* and forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. God bless Mooseheart. Amen.” The context and song following indicate that the “me” refers to Mooseheart. When it was pointed out that the promise “of such is the Kingdom of heaven” is made to those who come to “Me—Jesus Christ,” it was declared that this is not a saying of Jesus, but an old proverb originally, part of the heritage of language, not to be restricted to Jesus. One non-Christian Moose official declared that if the Ceremony was using words restricted to what Jesus meant, he could not be a member of the Lodge.^{cxxxiii}

Such allegorical interpretation is bound to lead to a confusing religion. Look at the following section of the “Moose Credo” and consider how confusing their religion is.

I believe in the Gospel of work (sic), in the divinity of Good Health (sic), in the exercise of persistence, patience, economy, and good cheer. I believe in co-operation, mutuality, reciprocity...I believe in the Loyal Order of Moose. Amen and amen! (From the Moose Credo)

Other indications of a “Gospel” of work (righteousness) are woven throughout rituals of the Moose. From the enrollment ceremony with its story of the moose, the candidate is to learn “those *precepts* which will lead you to the heights.”^{cxxxiv} A circle of Moose lodge brothers is to be found worthy “because of the love that builded it (the circle).”^{cxxxv}

This shows us that the virtuous life of the Moose member is counted on as the reason for his hope of heaven.

When in good time our scroll is written and the record of our achievements made up, let us, “Meet death with a level gaze.” Upon the faces of the great and good there shines a light reflected from the golden hills of heaven, which death cannot efface or dim, and for such for all eternity there waits a peer's place upon the Seats of the Mighty.^{cxxxvi}

In a sentence the author has expressed the religious philosophy which pervades the Moose ritual, and about which the sincere Christian must express concern. The

humanitarian accomplishments of the Order are to be commended and the social opportunities are frequently very constructive, but the tenets of the Order to which the Christian must subscribe in order to become a member are incompatible with the clear Word of God, in spite of the ritual's assurance of no conflict. The principles of moral living taught in the ritual are noble, but when the ritual speaks of man's relationship to God and the way of eternal life in the manner in which it does, it has trespassed upon the area in which only the Bible speaks the truth. The ritual presents God only in terms of Moosedom, "the Supreme Governor of the Universe", not as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which concept alone can God truly be known. A quotation from Scripture is made to appear as God's endorsement of Mooseheart, while its context in Scripture assigns to the Kingdom of Heaven only to those who come to Jesus Christ. Prayers and ritual references call upon God for blessing, without the least acknowledgement that man has separated himself from God and that this relationship can be restored only in Jesus Christ. To further strengthen the concept of universal salvation, the word "Christian" is deleted from a familiar Christian hymn. Especially does the teaching universal salvation appear in the Funeral Service which promises that the Moose Circle will be restored in eternity. Cited in support of this are God's love and mercy. Death is not to be feared, for God gave us life, and He will surely gather into His presence all to whom He gave this gift. In evidence of this, attention is drawn to the annual resurgence of Spring. The "great and good" shall be granted "a peer's place upon the Seats of the Mighty." The divinity of Jesus Christ and the blood-atonement are considered sectarian and must not be referred to in the promise of a resurrection from the dead. While it must be charitably assumed that there are members of the Order who do not in their hearts subscribe to this philosophy, nevertheless the Christian who participates in the required ritual will find himself with his lips denying the unique grace of God in Jesus Christ alone, thereby blunting his otherwise effective witness to the Son of God. It is hoped that the future will one day see this organization which does not purport to be religious, abandon its position of religious pronouncement.^{cxxxvii}

Due to the lack of available materials besides Graebner's book of 1948, the report on the Fraternal Order of Eagles would have been hopelessly outdated. For this reason, the report of the LC-MS Commission has been reproduced to provide the necessary background on the Eagles.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles

To a greater extent than in many fraternal orders, where "charity begins at home" and often ends there, the Fraternal Order of Eagles frequently adopts projects which reach far outside its ranks. Such diverse accomplishments as the national observance of Mothers Day and the adoption of the Social Security Act were largely due to Eagle efforts. Recent years have seen an increasing emphasis upon community service. The Order, however, remains ritual-bound and requires initiation under a specified ritual-form. It has abandoned its secret pass-words, but has retained the religious character of its ceremonials.

The purposes of the Fraternal Order of Eagles are stated as follows:

To unite fraternally for mutual benefit, protection, improvement, social enjoyment and association, generally all persons of the Caucasian race, of good moral character, who believe in a Supreme Being; to inculcate the principles of Liberty, Truth, Justice, and Equality;...and to promote the general welfare. (*Constitution and Statues of the Fraternal Order of the Eagles, Preamble*).

The regulations governing membership in the Order require that candidates be over twenty-one years of age, of good moral character, white, believers in the existence of a Supreme Being, and in no way connected or affiliated with the Communist Party. (*Ibid.*, Section 70.2). Two kinds of membership are offered beneficial and non-beneficial, the distinction being made because of sick or funeral benefits offered beneficial members. In either case, initiation under the ritual is required; the Order offers no “social memberships” to permit the use of club facilities for the payment of a fee without initiation. In midwinter, 1961-62, the board of Grand Trustees of the Order adopted a resolution permitting a shortened form of initiation ceremony to be used where there was objection to the full ritual, but such as are initiated under the shortened form were still required to take the vows and participate in all rituals of the Lodge following reception into membership.

The Eagle Ritual

The Opening Ceremony for Eagle Lode meetings consists chiefly of a review of the duties of the various officers. The Chaplain, for example, defines his duty:

To ask in the name of all, the guidance of God, to urge that wisdom mark all our deliberations, and to insist that Justice be measured out impartially. (*The Official Ritual of the Local Aeries Fraternal Order of Eagles*, p. 11).

The Bible is laid open upon the altar with the words,

This is the Bible. Its pages contain the wisdom of the ages and its teachings are founded on the everlasting laws of Truth. (*Ibid.* p.14)

Prayer is then offered by the Chaplain, asking God’s favor upon the work of the Aerie and presenting the wish to assist one another as an offering to God. The prayer includes:

If we are loyal and true to ourselves, we shall be loyal and true to our Brothers. If we give Justice to all men, we ourselves shall be better for it. If we believe all men equal in Thy eyes, we shall be the more worthy of Thy loving care. Help us, Almighty God, to live toward the betterment of our own lives and to be worthy of the ideals of this Order. Amen. (*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16).

The Closing Ceremony consists of a brief prayer and the assembly speaking in unison the motto of the Eagles, while the Junior Past Worthy President, the Worthy Chaplain, and the Worthy Vice-President “shall each stretch forth his right hand and touch the Bible with the tips of his fingers.” The motto is: “If I cannot speak well of an Eagle, I will not speak ill of him.” (*Ibid.*, p. 26).

The “initiatory Ceremony” introduces the candidates before the Altar where they pledge to devote their best efforts to the upholding of the teachings of the Order, which, they are promised, “will in no way conflict with any civic or religious duty”. (*Ibid.*, pp. 33-34). The candidates affirm their belief in the existence of a Supreme Being. The Obligation is then taken “Before God and on my honor.” The candidates promise to keep Eagle matters confidential, obey Eagle Laws, support the projects and ideals of the Order, and in various ways show respect and honor for Brothers and their families. The Obligation ends with the affirmation:

I understand the meaning of these pledges and I ask my God and my Brothers to help me keep them. I acknowledge that the willful violation of any of them is just cause for expulsion from the Order...I do accept them and I will observe them, so help me God. (*Ibid.*, p. 35)

The Chaplain offers prayer in behalf of the candidates, and an Ode is sung, in which the candidates are reminded that,

This Altar to be bound with you in vows forevermore. (*Ibid.*, p. 37)

Candidates are conducted to the various stations of the Lodge, where they hear the virtues of Liberty, Truth, Justice, and Equality extolled. Preceding the final procedural instructions which conclude the initiation, the candidates are told:

The few years that you call life pass swiftly as the shooting of a star across the midnight sky. Your earthly hopes and strivings end at the grave. No matter with what honors life may clothe you, you must go naked to the Throne of God. At times your lot seems hard and the burden so heavy that you grow weary; but struggle on manfully, for, when you reach this goal, you shall enjoy eternal rest...Uncounted years will change your body into dust...Wealth and poverty, pride and humility, greed and charity, alike must pass this way—but beyond is God! This equality at the grave is the lesson that Death teaches, and the man who learns it early in life, early finds happiness in the knowledge. (*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44)

The Memorial Service, which every local Aerie must conduct annually, speaks of death as “eternal sleep” and “the enduring sleep of death, which is the new walking into life eternal.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 67-68). The Chaplain’s prayer asks blessing and mercy upon the Brothers and the families of the deceased of the former year. The junior Past Worthy President addresses the assembly, saying,

We gather to pay tribute to those who have passed into the Grand Aerie of Heaven...(*Ibid.*, p. 69)

The roll of names of the year’s deceased is called, after which the assembly sings, “Nearer, My God, to Thee.” The Chaplain again prays, concluding,

May this memorial make us appreciate our God-given mission and live up to the noble ideals of our Great Brotherhood. Amen. (*Ibid.*, p. 72)

The Final Tribute to Deceased Members, or funeral service, which is not bound with rituals, but is subject to the wishes of the family of the deceased, assures those present,

It is a time-honored custom in our Fraternity that amid the busy turmoil of this life we pause to note the departure of our Brothers. Yet, it is not a final parting. The Fraternal Order of Eagles teaches that we shall meet again, and that the tender associations of life are broken only to be reunited. Whether we look into the living eyes of those we love or gaze upon the placid faces of our dead, love divine comforts us with the blessed assurance that this relation is eternal. (*Final Tribute to Deceased Members*, p. 1)

Of the deceased it is declared,

He believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, the Father of us all, giver of every food and perfect gift, and in this belief he died in the hope of a blessed immortality beyond the grave. He bore the trials of life and fought its battles, till, tired and weary of the struggle, he fell asleep. For him eternal rest remains...

“There is no death;
The stars go down
To rise upon some fairer shore,
And bright in Heaven’s jeweled crown
They Shine forevermore.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3).

The Chaplain’s prayer asks God to take unto Himself the soul of the departed, and asks that all present be filled with the hope of immortality. The Worthy President addresses the assembly, and another prayer is offered by the Chaplain:

Help us to realize that the parting is only for a short season, and that we shall meet again in the Grand Aerie beyond, where the faults and frailties of this earthly life are forgotten, and all become perfect in the love of an infinite God. Amen. (Ibid., pp. 5-6).

Evaluation of the Religious Aspects of the Ritual

Growing emphasis upon community and family service has outstripped the Ritual in declaring the expressed purposes of the Eagles' Order. This mandatory Ritual, however, still continues to identify the Order as a fraternal organization with a religious philosophy incompatible with the Christian's confession of faith. Like similar Orders, the Eagles Lodge predicates its religious philosophy upon the belief that God hears all prayers of any who call upon Him, and that whatever Name they choose to call Him, and that He extends eternal life to all who embrace noble ideals. The Order must be considered objectionable by the concerned Christian, since it denies the efficacy and necessity of the work of Jesus Christ in procuring God's eternal blessing for man, while it at the same time offers an approach to God and a promise of His mercies.

Officers of the Order have long contemplated revising the Ritual to remove its religious features and yet retain its encouragement toward civic and moral responsibility. Considerable attention and study have been given to suggestions made by the Commission on Fraternal Organizations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, but no actual charges have been adopted.

Structure and Projects

The Fraternal Order of Eagles was organized in February, 1898, in Seattle, Washington, by six theater owners, and immediately set out upon a series of crusades in support of workmen's compensation laws, old age pension laws, and the Social Security Act. Through the years the Order has donated Truth Libraries to schools in 35 countries, supported Radio Free Europe, donated to coronary, cancer and dystrophy research, sponsored crusades for safety, civil defense, community betterment, and has contributed to various homes for homeless children and the aged.

The Order is composed of local Aeries under the Grand Aerie in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Ladies auxiliaries to local Aeries are official adjuncts of the order. Membership in the Order is approximately 900,000.

II. So What Does the Bible Say About the *Lodge*? Does the Bible Really Address the Lodge Issue?

When we are dealing with a lodge member, he may be willing to grant that some lodge practices find parallels, or even their origin, in the Bible. But like the Jehovah's Witnesses challenging us to find the word "Trinity" in the Bible, lodge members may be quick to challenge us with the absence of any Bible passages which use the word "lodge".

Does such a challenge leave us without a foot to stand on? Must we be content to have God speak only to a few isolated practices in lodgery, or can we see Him deal with it as a complete system?

In answer to this, let's consider the problem to which St. Paul was reacting in Colosse. A sect with definite gnostic tendencies was beginning to influence the Colossians. Their teachings have surprising parallels with our twentieth century lodges, even imitating the "non-interference" image projected by the lodge toward the church. That such a parallel to ancient sects exists is not accepted by all; not even by orthodox Lutherans such as Acker.^{cxxxviii} But let's consider the evidence ourselves, to see if God speaks against the lodges when he speaks against the gnostics.

What exactly do we have in mind with gnosticism? First, we must say that we have nothing *exact* in mind. Scholars do not agree as to just what qualifies as “gnostic”.^{cxxxix} The following definition from the *Lutheran Cyclopaedia* will serve our purpose. Gnosticism is a Syncretistic movement with roots in pre-Christian times; flowered in 2d-3d c. AD; continued to the 7th c.; involved occult lore, magic watchwords, and secret names; claimed to have a divinely-given secret message that held the key for a higher life.

The beginnings of gnosticism may be found in the fusion of religious beliefs and cultures that arose as a result of Persian power and the conquests of Alexander III (the Great; 356-323 BC; king of Macedonia 336)...

While this redemption took place through initiations, rites, mysteries, magic (each sect having its own peculiarities), the more speculative adherents needed philosophical basis. Hence the dualism inherent in the doctrine of redemption was expanded (supreme God—demiurge; good-evil; light-darkness; cosmic fall-historic fall; spirit-matter; pleroma-hysterema) and synthesized in the good God.^{cxli}

Church historians can readily corroborate this definition. The use of secret names, magic watchwords and so forth as symbols is recognized as a sure sign of gnosticism.

“The gnostics...clothe their ideas not in the simple, clear, and sober language of reflection, but in the many-colored fantastic mythological dress of type, symbol and allegory.”^{cxli}

Some gnostic groups, it is true, rejected all ritual and symbol. “But with this came also the opposite extreme of a symbolic and mystic pomp...”^{cxlii} Knowing what we do of the lodge rituals with their pomp and symbolism, need we even ask if there is a correlation?

The use of symbolism among the gnostics was purposeful, to keep the uninitiated from learning the secrets. “The highest source of knowledge, with these heretics, was a secret tradition, in contrast with the open, popular tradition of the Catholic church.”^{cxliii} It has, for instance, been noted that Clement puts forward a theory of Christian gnosis”...whereby the LOGOS serves to guide the neophyte through successive stages of illumination.^{cxliv} Into how many “degrees” of illumination must the lodge member be initiated before he has all the *secret tradition*?

The parallel use of secret successive revelations for initiates is no less convincing than the parallel of “syncretistic fusion” of religious ideas. In Gnosticism we see the barbarous and orientalized Platonism which resulted from an indiscriminate conflation of elements derived from Greek idealism with the metaphysical dualism of the Orient.^{cxlv}

Among the many religions contributing to gnosticism we find “Oriental Mysticism, Greek philosophy, Alexandrian, Philonic, and Cabalistic Judaism, and Christian ideas of salvation, not merely mechanically compiled, but, as it were, chemically combined.”^{cxlvi} Need we refer to anything more than the Royal Arch Mason’s Word, “Jah-Bul-On”?^{cxlvii} Do not the Oddfellows express the same philosophy when they say, “Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism recognize the one only living and true God”?^{cxlviii}

It is precisely because of such broad inclusiveness that the gnostic groups felt themselves to be quite superior.

...they (the Gnostic's) regarded themselves as the genuine spiritual men in the full sense of the word; while they looked upon the great mass of Christians (οἱ πολλοί!) as only psychical, not able to rise from blind faith to true *knowledge*...^{cxlix}

The lodges also extol their open mindedness which accepts all religions. Christians, on the other hand, who believe that Jesus Christ is the only means to eternal life are accused by Lodge authors of having “a narrow view.”^{cl} And even though the lodge candidate is promised that his membership will not interfere with his religion,^{cli} we must wonder how sincere that promise is, in light of the “narrow view” accusation.

The concept of having only one ruling power in the universe would also be labeled a narrow view by both the early gnostics and their modern day lodge brother descendants.

Gnosticism generally advocated a dualistic concept of deity and existence.

The ascetic Gnostics,...like the Essenes and the errorists noticed by Paul in the Colossians and Pastoral Epistles ...confounded sin with matter,...Instead of hating sin only, which God has not made, they hated the world, which he had made.^{clii}

This attitude toward the worldly is reflected by the lodges as we see from the Masonic exhortation to rise above material/fleshly domination to a spiritual plateau.

...he who aspires to be master of his fate and captain of his soul must walk upon these opposites in the sense of transcending and dominating them, of trampling upon his lower sensual nature and keeping it beneath his feet in subjection and control...His object is the development of his innate spiritual potencies, and it is impossible that these should develop so long as he is over-ruled by his material tendencies and the fluctuating emotions of pleasure and pain that they give birth to.^{cliii}

The Masonic view of the resurrection backs this up by interpreting it not as a bodily resurrection but as an ascending to new heights of spirituality and self-direction.^{cliv}

When we see so close a correspondence of lodge philosophies with the beliefs of the ancient Gnostic sects, we cannot escape the fact that they are essentially the same. Having established this similarity, let us now proceed to an evaluation of the sect troubling the Colossians. If they were actually gnostic, then Paul's treatment of them would also apply broadly to the lodges.

As we read through Martin Franzmann's evaluation of Paul's epistle to the Colossians—especially after reading in detail the beliefs of the lodges—catch words and phrases used by the lodges virtually jump out at us.

It is difficult to get a clear and consistent picture of the heresy which threatened Colosse, for Paul in his letter to the Colossians does not so much oppose it argumentatively as overwhelm it by confronting it with the whole riches of the true Gospel of Christ. It seems to have been a religion of self-redemption of the “gnostic” type.^{clv}

Consider three words in the last sentence. “Religion”: we have already seen ample proof that the lodges are *essentially* religious. “Self-redemption”: Wilmshurst, just above, wrote of being “captain of our own fate”. “Gnostic”: the preceding two pages have already shown the similarities.

Franzmann continues by describing the sect in Colosse as one Built upon a Jewish or Jewish-Christian basis, it was fusion of Greek and Oriental ideas and combined at least three elements.^{clvi}

We see, a similar fusion of Christian and Egyptian religions in the writings of lodge authors, one of whom equates Christ with Osiris, the Egyptian God of the dead.

If in Masonry the mystical death is dramatized more realistically than the resurrection that follows upon it, that resurrection is nevertheless shown in the “raising” of the candidate to the rank of Master Mason and his “reunion with the companions of former toils,” implying the reintegration and resumption of all his old faculties and powers in sublimated state, *just as the limbs of the risen Osiris were said to reunite into a new whole and as the the Christian Master withdrew His mutilated body from the tomb and reassumed it*, transmuted into one of supernatural substance and splendour.”^{clvii}

Because of this fusion, the Colossian sect is defined as theosophic,

that is, the new teaching claimed to have and to impart an occult profound knowledge derived from God; Paul speaks contemptuously of, a “tradition” and a “philosophy” (Col. 2:8).^{clviii}

Consider first of all the reference to “occult” knowledge, paralleled by the masonic reference

The possession of the Mysteries, after initiation, and the use of the signs, either vocally, actionally, or ejaculatorily, with “intention” in their use (not as mere mechanical repetition), were attended by occult powers directed to the subjects of their special intention.^{clix}

This belief in occult power combined with the countless hundreds of written lodge “philosophy” and “tradition” parallel the “theosophic” tendencies of the Colossian sect.

The Colossian sect, like the lodges was also ritual bound. For the Colossians it was a requirement of a circumcision service, (2:11,16) and the observance of special religious festivals. Initiation and other rites in lodgery parallel this emphasis.

Paul’s references to the “worship of angels” (Co. 2:18) and to elemental spirits of the universe” (2:8,20) indicate what was the heart of the danger present in this teaching.

Other powers besides the Christ were being proclaimed and invoked as mediators between God and man; the ritual and ascetic aspects of this religion probably represent means of placating or of obtaining contact and communion with these powers.^{clx}

Reference has already been made to the invocation of occult power through the lodge rituals and secrets. In a similar vein, lodge members are advised also to use the powers of astrology in order to bring themselves to greater light and self-understanding, since the heavenly bodies are said to parallel the psychic cosmos within us.

Moreover, as in the outer heavens of nature the sun, moon, and stars exist and function, so in the personal heavens of man there operate metaphysical forces inherent in himself and described by the same terms. In the make-up of each of us exists a psychic magnetic field of various forces, determining our individual temperaments and tendencies and influencing our future. To those forces have also been given the names “sun”, “moon” and planets, and the science of their interaction and out-working was the ancient science of astronomy, or, as it is now more often called astrology, which is one of the liberal arts and sciences *recommended to the study of recommended to the study of every Mason and the pursuit of which belongs in particular to the Fellow-Craft stage.*^{clxi}

Even angels are included in the “other powers” employed by the lodges religion.

Masons under the obedience of the Craft Degrees and the Royal Arch may be surprised to hear that there are angels at all in Masonry: it is only over the wide-extending field of the High Grades that the flash of their wings is seen; but even then the visits are few and far between, which—the proverb tells us—is after the manner of the angels.^{clxii clxiii}

If all of this sounds like a highly developed religious system, it is! So highly developed in fact that lodges see themselves as a helpful adjunct to the church.^{clxiv} This in turn makes them

actually superior to the church, since they are supposed to provide something good which the churches cannot provide. Franzmann describes the exact same attitude in the Colossian sect.

“What made this heresy all the more dangerous was the fact that it claimed not to supplant, but to supplement, the Gospel which the Colossians had received. The new teaching would, so the new teachers claimed, carry the Colossian Christians beyond their rudimentary Christianity to fullness and perfection.^{clxv} But as if all this were not serious enough in Colosse and in the modern day Lodge, consider the most dangerous element which is inherent in both.

What Epaphras, with a sound Christian instinct, surely sensed and what Paul clearly saw was this: the new teaching called into question and obscured the unique greatness of the Christ and the complete sufficiency of His atonement.^{clxvi}

Over and over again we heard the lodges tell of eternal bliss being gained as the reward for a virtuous life through the person’s faithful membership in the lodge. Read the Fraternal Order of Eagle’s burial service and judge whether *Christ* is honored, or the *deceased*, as the reason for eternal lie.

He who lies here was both friend and brother. Knowing that he believed in the eternal principles of this Order, we are comforted. He valued liberty, loved Truth, and was just in his dealing with all men, and gracious and brotherly in all the observance of true equality. He believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, the Father of us all, Giver of every good and perfect gift, and in this belief he died, in the hope of a blessed immortality beyond the grave. He bore the trials of life and fought its battles till, tired and weary of the struggle, he fell asleep. For him eternal rest remains.^{clxvii}

If the gnostics and the lodges did nothing more than deny the necessity of Christ’s sacrifice in this way, they would still require censure. Combining all the other gnostic tendencies along with these we can fairly conclude that also the lodges are condemned in the Bible when gnosticism is condemned.

Lodgery may be only a “pale shadow” of the early mystery cults and gnostics,^{clxviii} but Paul’s advice is still sound: “See to it that no one take you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” Colossians 2:8.

III. So What *Does* the Bible Say About the Lodge?

The Biblical Position Regarding Specific Beliefs and Practices of the Lodge

It may seem that this question has already been answered in the previous section. That entire section, however, depends on whether or not the lodge is “gnostic”. Someone may deny the connection and convince himself there is no problem.

But the Bible does do much more than just look at the overall philosophy of the lodges. Many specific beliefs and actions of the lodge are challenged by God’s Word. The following groups of passages can help us to find very quickly where God deals with specific problems, so that we can answer for ourselves, ‘What *does* the Bible say about the lodge?’ (For details or verification that these problems are in the lodges see parts I and II.) (Thanks to Pastor Jon Schmugge, who prepared most this table.)

The Lodge Says	“God”	The Bible Says
The one God is not triune	De. 6:4, Mt. 28:19	The one God is triune
Any god is acceptable	Ps. 96:5, Ep. 2:12	Any other god is no god
Any view of Christ is acceptable	Jn. 5:25	Denying Christ denies God

The Lodge Says	“Word”	The Bible Says
The Bible is a furniture showpiece	II Ti. 3:16	Bible is God’s inspired Word
All “holy books” are good	Jn. 17:17	Only the Bible is truth
The Lodge Says	“Salvation”	The Bible Says
God doesn’t expect perfection	Ro. 6:23	A just God punishes sin
Some can be virtuous	Ro. 3:23	All men sin
God provides <i>illumination</i> to “save” us	Jn. 3:16	God sent His Son
Christ is only a good example,	II Co. 5:21	Christ is our substitute
To set us on the right path.	Is. 53	To suffer for sin
Resurrection is not physical	Ro. 4:23	Jesus’ resurrection proves justification
Salvation must be earned	Jn. 19:30	Salvation is already accomplished
The Lodge Says	“Faith”	The Bible Says
Man is basically good	Ep. 2:8, Ro. 5:6-8	Man hates God by nature
Man seeks god...	Jn. 3:5pp.; I Co. 12:3	God creates faith
Through symbol and allegory...	II Th. 2:14; Ro. 10:17	Faith comes through God’s Word
To learn to please god by actions	Ro. 3:28	Faith alone accepts salvation
Faith in any god <i>plus</i> good works saves	Ac. 4:12	Only faith <i>in Jesus</i> saves
The Lodge Says	“Good Works”	The Bible Says
Any lodge member can be virtuous	Jn. 15:5	Come only from faith
Lodge members induce one another	Ep. 2:10	Encouraged by Holy Spirit
Anything “good” is god-pleasing	Mt. 15:9; He. 11:6	Civic righteousness—not meritorious by itself
The Lodge Says	“Salvation by Grace”	The Bible Says
Man saves himself	Ep. 2:8-9	God does all redeeming
The Lodge Says	“Prayer”	The Bible Says
Praying adorns a ritual	Mt. 6:5-8	Prayer is real communication
Any prayer is true prayer	Jn. 14:6; 16:23	<i>Christ</i> mediates prayer
The Lodge Says	“Witnessing”	The Bible Says
Teach only the physically healthy	Lu. 14:21	Witness to every person
Speak way of life only to lodge members	Ga. 3:26-28	Witness to every person
Women and blacks kept out	Mt. 28:19; I Ti 2:4	Witness to every person
Don’t challenge another religion	Ez. 33:8	Warn every unbeliever
Never reveal, conceal	Jn. 18:20; Mt. 10:26-27	Speak gospel openly
The Lodge Says	“Worship”	The Bible Says
Lodge dues promote lodge teaching	I Ch. 16:29	Worship the <i>Lord</i> with offerings
Rituals and songs only set a mood	Co. 3:16	Worship the <i>Lord</i> with praise
Lodge reverence honors idols	Ps. 95:6	Worship the <i>Lord</i> with reverence

Lodge religion leads away from the <i>Lord</i>	De. 11:16	True worship draws near God
Glorify all gods as one	Is. 42:8	Worship befits Lord only
Leave Christ outside the lodge door	Co. 3:17	Do all in Christ's name
The Lodge Says	"Oaths"	The Bible Says
Rituals usually require oath	Ex. 20:7	Don't misuse God's name
Reworded rituals require a promise made in the presence of God	Ja 5:12; Mt. 5:33-37	Our simple answer is enough
Swear to uphold what is unknown	Le. 5:4	Thoughtless oaths condemn us
Oath is nothing to worry about	Le. 5:5	Confess thoughtless oath as sin
The Lodge Says	"Fellowship"	The Bible Says
We can worship many gods	Mt. 6:24; 12:30	We can be loyal to only one
Lodge membership won't effect church participation	II Jn. 10-11; Re. 18:4	Participating with sin brings guilt
Join indiscriminate worship	II Co. 6:14-17; Ro. 16:17	Avoid known sin
Avoid religious debate	Ep. 5:11-12	Reprove idolatry by avoidance

May God guide your use of these passages!

IV. We Share What the Bible Says About the Lodge

Common practice in all lodges forbids members to speak of Christ as the exclusive source of forgiveness and eternal life. Such practice, they say, is too narrow and sectarian. Assuming that all lodge members comply with this—and the Grand Lodges *do* enforce it—we will find the lodge member in precarious situation. Whoever disowns me before men”, Jesus warns, “I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” Mt 10:33.

We will want to share God's warning against sinful lodge practices wherever we *see* the enticement of membership leading someone to a new, strange, deistic altar.

The best way to accomplish this is to keep people away right from the start. It may or may not surprise us to find out that even the elders and other leaders of our congregations do not realize the seriousness of the lodge problem. We can begin by showing our spiritual co-workers a comparison of lodge lies with God's truth. If our leaders are convinced by God's Word of the dangers, the rest of the congregation will more easily follow.

Yet, no matter how insistent our efforts, we will find some involved with a lodge. Yes, even among our own members! We may have weak members who don't see the problem, or not so weak members who have simply hidden their membership until we discover it somehow.

Even more common, is the interested prospect who finds out in adult class that we accuse the lodge of teaching sinful anti-Christian doctrine. Naturally he wonders why. Hopefully he has seen enough of our Biblical teaching to give us a chance to explain.

In either case, member or prospect, we share what the Bible says about the lodge. We do not want someone to risk having Jesus deny him before the heavenly Father, just because we are too timid to speak up, or too fearful of losing a member.

So often, it is simply a matter of ignorance anyway. The authorities of the lodges frequently bewail the fact that the average member doesn't really know as much as he should about his beliefs. (At least in that respect, we can empathize with them!) Quite generally the church-going lodge member is also ignorant of what God's Word says regarding the real lodge

positions. We share what the Bible says about the lodge, so that once informed, they can demit and live in obedience to their Lord.

When someone is willing to compromise and join a lodge even when he isn't totally ignorant of the problems, it is probably because he doesn't accept the Bible position on fellowship with sin and unbelief.

In these cases we need to show that our membership in an organization is a confession of agreement with its official aims, purposes, and actions. Every organization has such purposes: social, business, recreational, charitable, or religious. Often a combination of purposes are found in one organization. In any case it is the obligation of a Christian to judge the organization carefully before becoming responsible for its actions by his membership.

With any organization we join, we make ourselves responsible for all of the official actions of the organization. We are responsible because our membership is *voluntary*. No one forces us to do anything. That is why the lodge is ultimately not answerable to Christianity for its idolatry.

When we participate with the ceremonies and rituals of any group, we are saying by our actions that we approve of their content. The lodge member, by his membership, says that he finds the rituals of his lodge acceptable.

Just as condemning, is the fact that lodge officials, including the chaplains are elected. By his vote the lodge member gives the officers the right to represent him with their rulings and actions.

Nor can we overlook the fact that lodge dues support lodge rituals, lodge lecturers, lodge printers...and thereby the lodge's philosophy. We share what the Bible says about the lodges, because God says that we can't have both. The ghost writing Masonic apologist "Vindex" expresses the same attitude that Christianity and Masonry (and thus lodgery) are mutually exclusive.

If true religion is thus to be narrowed down to salvation in no other name under heaven, and St. Paul's words to this effect be understood in a spirit of bigoted literalness, then any such "Christian" must indeed be straining his conscience to the breaking point by accepting initiation into the broader deeper mysteries of Freemasonry. I, for one, can never understand how anyone who takes an exclusive view of Christ as the only complete revelation of God's truth can become a Freemason without suffering from spiritual schizophrenia. (*Light Invisible*, pp. 24-27).

Lodges are inherently religious. Therefore it is necessary for Christians to judge the lodge religion by the standard of God's Word alone. It is our duty as Christians (Ezek. 33:8) to help people do this. We share what the Bible says about the lodge, because failure to sound the warning will make us accountable.

We can sound the warning first of all, in a very positive way. Start with the basics. When witnessing to prospects, simply use a TAS or similar presentation. The word of God alone, without any specific lodge references may very well lead a person to see the inconsistencies between the Bible and the lodge...and lead him to leave the lodge without a further word.

The same principle can apply to members who ignorantly join or are finally discovered. Maybe "salvation by grace through faith" is still a foreign concept in spite of years of "church membership." "Elders use TAS", or a similar approach may solve the problem immediately.

A proper application of law to show that no amount of lodge induced virtue will save them, will lead many to see that the professed salvation in Christ is the only solution.

At times of course, it may be necessary to re-apply the law more specifically, to show that a particular lodge practice is sinful. Two things should be kept in mind with this. The positions of the lodges presented in part one of the paper were included to show the lodge member, where necessary, exactly what he is supporting. But we need to be prudent. Use only what is necessary. We don't want to "beat a dead horse" and alienate the lodge member by an "overkill" with the law.

We also need to be aware of just what it is we are objecting to in the lodges.

"When asked what are the objections of the Luther Church to many of the lodges, the answer is often given: the rituals, the secrecy, the closed membership, and the oaths. This answer is at the same time both valid and invalid.

The Ritual. The mere use of a ritual is not in itself objectionable. Liturgy is a form of ritual. Some State Laws require fraternal organizations to have some kind of ritual or other binding statements of principles in order to qualify for certain tax benefits. It is the *contents* of its ritual, not the mere *use* of a ritual, that determines whether membership in an organization is objectionable to the committed Christian or not.

Secrecy. Every organization is entitled to keep its affairs confidential if it desires. Secrecy, however, becomes morally and ethically objectionable when an organization declares that it possesses knowledge that is beneficial to all mankind, but shares it only with those who meet its standards for membership. Secrecy becomes more blatantly objectionable when an organization requires that its members support or defend something in which they have not been instructed or that has not yet been revealed to them.

Closed Membership. There are valid reasons for an organization to limit its membership to people who are in sympathy with its purposes. A hobby club, for example, could quickly lose its purpose if it admitted into membership people who were not the least bit interested in the hobby about which it gathers. Closed membership, on the other hand, becomes objectionable from the Christian point of view when an organization declares, for example, that it "stands for the highest ideals of brotherhood," but at the same time excludes certain races. The Christian cannot consent to such "highest ideals" when he knows of a brotherhood far higher.

Oaths. All calling upon God as a witness cannot be condemned. Such an act becomes objectionable, however, when little or no thought is given to the implications of the oath. An oath or pledge taken in God's name can never be "a mere form you must go through" in order to gain certain social, recreational or business advantages. Robert Bolt, in the preface to his play "A Man for All Seasons", catches the significance of an oath for the Christian when he speaks of it as "an invitation to God, an invitation God would not refuse, to act as a witness and to judge...a man takes an oath when he wants to commit himself quite exceptionally to the statement, when he wants to make an identity between the truth of it and his own virtue; he offers himself as a guarantee." (WELS Lodge Membership, Information Packet, p. 2)

Overreacting to any of these sub-points obscures the main allegation that the lodges degrade and deny Christ.

Should a reasonable yet firm presentation of the law lead to repentance, we will naturally apply the gospel immediately. Assure the former lodge member that there is forgiveness for his false oath (Lev. 5:5), and that there is joy among the angels in heaven because he has demitted, *not* because he has “sought light” in the lodge.

In some cases, it may be helpful to leave materials to read. But we must be careful what we leave. Most anti-lodge material is highly inflammatory. After reading a few pages, no lodge member would really listen to us. Only where true rapport exists, might it be wise to let the lodge member dig through the writings of the “enemy” on his own.

In every case, however, we can follow a simple guideline. We are seeking lost souls who need God’s free forgiveness and justification. The cause of their lost condition just happens to be specific, and shrouded in secrecy. By asking God’s guidance in prayer, before our conferences with lodge members, using God’s Word abundantly in the conference, and using the informational tools available, we can do our best as ministers of Christ to sound a signal against the sins of the lodge.

V. Can We Be Sure We Know What the Lodges Say?

One of the chief concerns expressed when this paper was assigned, is that it contain *reliable, up-to-date* information. There seems to be a feeling that because we are dealing with “secret societies” that we can hope for only second-hand information, at best. Nothing could be further from the truth! We can and *do* know what the lodges teach and believe.

Some of this information is available from men who have left the lodge. Realizing that these sources may be biased, and usually are quite polemical, it seemed best not to *rely* on them as final authorities.

More reliable are the authorities within the lodges themselves. Many men have written detailed explanations of lodge doctrines. The only drawback is that the lodge may try to disown their writings as just so much personal opinion. The need not deter us from using those authorities to tell us what the lodges believe. These authors have a perfect right to represent their respective lodges, because one tenet of lodge teaching is that each man may work out his own philosophy of salvation within the broad framework of lodge principle. By not *condemning* these writings, the lodge is accepting them.

Even more reliable are the ritual books themselves. Whether in code or not, these rituals spell out exactly what the lodge does and believes.

The books and other sources of information mentioned above are publicly available. The lodge publishers and distributors themselves are known to be indiscriminate in their sales to member and non-members alike. But other, *public* sources also list lodge publications. Publishers Central Bureau lists several books on Masonry in its catalog. The entire catalog of anti-lodge materials from the National Christian Association is now available from Sword of the Lord Publishers, including several primary sources from other lodges. Perhaps even more helpful and certainly the most recent, is the material available from the LC-MS Commission on Organizations, with its profuse quoting from primary lodge sources.

These and other materials have been used extensively in this paper to provide accurate materials from the lodges themselves. The careful documentation in part one of this paper will show that almost all of the material is from primary sources, or is directly quoted elsewhere from primary sources.

Any opportunity to attend the public ceremonies and funeral services of the lodges could vividly confirm the accuracy of these materials.

None of this quoting would do any good however, if the materials were at all outdated. The footnotes and text, to a degree have brought out the contemporary nature of the material. Introductions to two of the Masonic sources were written recently in 1970, the other in 1980. Each commended the older writings of Waite and Wilmshurst to Masonic readers as faithful and useful information. Publication dates on many items in the bibliography will show them to be quite recent.

Those which are not recent, have been vouched for as being currently accurate by the executive secretary of the LC-MS Commission on Organizations, Rev. Phillip Lochhaas. In a telephone interview with Rev. Lochhaas, the following information was obtained.

Elks and Moose. Photocopies of letters in the file of this author from the national offices of these lodges date 1973, indicate that these lodges have *not* dropped any of their (false) religious practices. The LC-MS Commission has sent annual inquiries regarding the disputed doctrine. But according to Lochhaas, "They have become impatient, they no longer answer our yearly inquiries, they haven't changed."

Eagles. The LC-MS Commission has a thorough article on the Eagles, written some time after 1962. Since then, the Eagles have also cut off all further exchange of information with the LC-MS. A recent study document of 107 pages prepared by the LC-MS at the request of the Eagles was rejected by the Eagles. Their religious position remains the same.

Scottish and York Rite Masonry. They refuse to talk to the LC-MS, just as a 32d degree Mason refused to comment to this author regarding any of this paper.

Odd Fellows. The latest information available to this writer was dated 1965. Rev. Lochhaas assured this writer they have changed nothing. Their book of ritual, referred to in this paper and dated 1895, "has undergone no real changes" according to Rev. Lochhaas.

Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. Rev. Lochhaas confirmed the reliability of the author's primary sources. Waite's Encyclopedia is "acceptable to Masons", although Coil's *new* encyclopedia (quoted in this paper from LC-MS sources) is more widely accepted. *Duncan's Ritual* is still a faithful representation of the Masonic rites. Says Rev. Lochhaas "...nothing has changed." Wilmshurst, author of *The Meaning of Masonry* is sometimes "a dreamer", that is, too speculative, according to Lochhaas. But at the same time, he said Wilmshurst can be relied on, because Masonry gives him the right to see things as he wants.

Because of the personal contact between the LC-MS Commission on Organizations, and the lodges, and of the reliability of Rev. Lochhaas verbal confirmations, we can be assured of the reliability of the information provided here. May this evidence assure the reader that he is reading an accurate account of the lodges.

Appendix

The following organizations should *not* be treated as lodges. They may, incidentally, use objectionable practices such as unionistic prayer. But they have no *requirement* of any religious usage or belief as a basis for membership. They are basically just community service organizations.

- Kiwanis
- Rotary
- Lions
- YMCA
- YWCA
- American Legion
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Disabled American Veterans of the World War
- American Veterans of World War II

Anyone wishing to obtain their own source materials, may wish to write to the following to make a start in getting their own lodge materials:

The Commission on Organizations
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
500 North Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63102

314-231-6969 (ask for Rev. Phillip Lochhaas)

*Request: "Christians and their Affiliations", as well as individual information papers on specific lodges.

Institute for Contemporary Christianity
Box A

Oakland, New Jersey 07436
201-337-0005

*Request the *full research report* (\$3.00), "Is Masonry a Religion?" by Shildes Johnson.

National Christian Association
Tennessee Office
P.O. Box 1492
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

*Assorted tracts on lodges.

Publishers Central Bureau
Dept. 180
One Champion Ave.

Avenel, New Jersey 07001

*A growing selection of Masonic reprints.

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Is Freemasonry Religion?-Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia
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Loyal Order of Moose
The Fraternal Order of Eagles

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ⁱ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Vol. VI*; (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1910) p. 52.

ⁱⁱ Charles William Heckethorn, quoted in Shildes Johnson, “Is Masonry a Religion?” (Oakland, N.J.: Institute of Contemporary Christianity) 1978; p. 13.

ⁱⁱⁱ W.L. Wilmshurst, *The Meaning of Masonry*; (New York: Bell Pub. Co.) 1980, p. 9.

^{iv} *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. 18, p. 952.

^v Shildes Johnson, “Is Masonry a Religion?”, (Oakland, N.J.: Institute of Contemporary Christianity) 1978; pp. 11-13.

^{vi} Ed Decker, *Cassette recording: Mormons, Temples, and Masons*, (ED-120); (EMFJ Ministries, Safety Harbors, FL)

^{vii} The degrees are: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason.

^{viii} Johnson, pp. 15-16.

^{ix} One example of the four groups and the names of the degrees they grant is: (1) the Lodge of Perfection confers the ineffable degrees (numbers 4-14): Secret Master, Perfect Master, Intimate

Secretary, Provost and Judge; Intendent of the Building, Master Elect of Nine; Master Elect of Fifteen; Supreme Knight Elected; Grand Master Architect, Knight of the Ninth Arch, and Grand Elect Perfect and Sublime Mason; (2) the Grand Council of the Princes of Jerusalem grant the ancient and traditional grades or degrees (numbers 15 & 16): Knight of the East or the Sword and the Prince of Jerusalem; (3) the Grand Chapter(s) of Rose-Croix confer the philosophic and doctrinal grades or degrees (numbers 17 & 18): Knight of the East and West and the Sovereign Prince of Rose-Croix, and (4) the Grand Consistories of Sublime Princes of the Royal Secret give the remaining fourteen historical, chivalric and philosophic grades or degrees (numbers 19-32): Grand Pontiff; Grand Master (*ad vitam*), Noachite or Prussian Knight, Knight of the Royal Axe or Prince of Libanus, Chief of The Tabernacle, Prince of the Tabernacle, Knight of the Brazen Serpent, Prince of Mercy or Scotch Trinitarian, Sovereign Commander of the Temple, Knight of the Sun of Prince Adept, Knights of St. Andrew or Patriarch of The Crusades; (Grand Elect) Knight of Kadosh or Knight of Black and White Eagle, Grand Inspector Commander, and Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret. The Supreme Councils also confer an additional or honorary degree (the thirty-third); it is called "the Official Grade." (Johnson, pp. 16-17).

^x Johnson, pp. 25-27.

^{xi} *Ibid.*, p. 17.

^{xii} Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Vol. 1*, (Chicago: Masonic History Co.) 1946; pp. 302-306.

^{xiii} Encyclopedia of Associations, 1980 (Publisher's Information Not Available) (1618 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009)

^{xiv} Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Commission on Organizations, "Order of the Eastern Star", October, 1971, p. 8.

^{xv} Mackey, p. 303.

^{xvi} Rob Morris, quoted in Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 303.

^{xvii} Encyclopedia of Associations, 1980.

^{xviii} Photocopy of an unidentified magazine page dated 1977, headed "Advertisement" provided by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library.

^{xix} *New Ritual of the Eastern Star*, pp. 47-48, quoted in Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, "Order of the Eastern Star", October, 1971, p. 2.

^{xx} *Ibid.*

^{xxi} *Ibid.*, p. 4.

^{xxii} *Ibid.*, p. 3.

^{xxiii} F.A. Bell, *Order of the Eastern Star*, pp. 66-67, quoted in LC-MS, O.E.S., October, 1971, p. 3.

^{xxiv} *New Ritual*, p. 147 in LC-MS, O.E.S., p. 5.

^{xxv} Bell, pp. 99-100, in LC-MS, O.E.S., p. 5.

^{xxvi} *New Ritual*, p. 71; in LC-MS, O.E.S., p. 4.

^{xxvii} Mary Anna Slipper, *The Symbolism of the Order of the Eastern Star*, p. 48; in LC-MS, O.E.S., p. 7.

^{xxviii} *New Ritual*, p. 148 in LC-MS, O.E.S., p. 5.

^{xxix} Slipper, p. 91-92, in LC-MS, O.E.S., p. 6.

^{xxx} John Kennedy Lacock, *History of the Star Points*, pp. 66-67, quoted in LC-MS, O.E.S., October 1971, p. 7.

^{xxxi} LC-MS, "O.E.S.", p. 8.

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- ^{xxxii} J.W. Acker, *Strange Altars*, (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House) 1959; pp. 19-23.
- ^{xxxiii} Emmett McLoughlin, Introduction to Arthur Edward Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, (New York: Weathervane Books) 1970; p. xxxiv.
- ^{xxxiv} LC-MS; "Masonic College Fraternities", May 8, 1970, p. 1.
- ^{xxxv} Arthur Edward Waite has served as Past Senior Grand Warden of Iowa, Past Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies (Bucks) Past Grand Inner Guard (English Grand Mark) Past Great Captain of the Guards, Past Grand Historiographer, etc. W.L. Wilmhurst, a Past Master, has also served as Past Provincial Grand Registrar. Rev. Phillip Lochhaas of the LC-MS Commission on Organizations has identified Waite as a reliable source, accepted by Masons; Wilmhurst as a reliable source, who may be downplayed by Masonic authorities if his material embarrasses them.
- ^{xxxvi} Arthur Edward Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry, Vol. II*, (New York: Weathervane Books) 1970; p. 329.
- ^{xxxvii} *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 134.
- ^{xxxviii} Wilmhurst, *Meaning of Masonry*, p. 59.
- ^{xxxix} *Ibid.*, p. 66.
- ^{xl} Albert G. Mackey, Past General Grand High Priest and Secretary General of the Supreme Council, 33rd degree, for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, is a universally recognized authority on Freemasonry in the U.S.
- ^{xli} Albert G. Mackey, *Masonic Ritualist*, quoted in Acker, *Strange Altars*, p. 25.
- ^{xlii} Advertised as the "new Masonic Encyclopedia of the century," Henry Wilson Coil's *Masonic Encyclopedia* is published by Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Company, New York, 1961. It consists of 731 pages and sells for \$22.50. Editors are Dr. William Moseley Brown, 33rd degree, Dr. William L. Cummings, 33rd degree, and Harold Van Buren Voorhis, 33rd degree, the latter considered an outstanding interpreter of Freemasonry in America today.
- ^{xliii} Coil, in LC-MS, "Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia", p. 2.
- ^{xliv} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, Intro. VI.
- ^{xlv} Boudrea is the Curator and Librarian of the Grand Lodge of Free and Ancient Masons of the State of New York. His remarks in the introduction to Wilmhurst's book were written in July, 1980.
- ^{xlvi} Wilmhurst, *Masonry*, Foreword, p. 3.
- ^{xlvii} *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- ^{xlviii} *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- ^{xlix} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, II, p. 488.
- ^l Wilmhurst, *Masonry*, p. 35.
- ^{li} *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- ^{lii} *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- ^{liii} Elmer A. Kettner, "What's Behind the Lodge Door?", (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Tract Mission, No. 10-569) (Now out of print)
- ^{liv} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, I, p. 21.
- ^{lv} Coil, in LC-MS, "Ancient Free and Accepted Masons", p. 13.
- ^{lvi} Malcolm C. Duncan, *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor*, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc.) p. 222.
- ^{lvii} Wilmhurst, *Masonry*, p. 13.
- ^{lviii} Wilmhurst, *Masonry*, p. 37.

^{lix} Ibid., pp. 40-41.

^{lx} Ibid., p. 42.

^{lxi} Ibid., p. 62.

^{lxii} Asahel W. Gage, *The Builder*, I, p. 233, quoted in Theodore Graebner, *A Handbook of Organizations*, (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House) 1948, p. 17.

^{lxiii} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, I, p. 27.

^{lxiv} Ibid., II, p. 35.

^{lxv} Master Masonry ritual incorporates King Solomon, King Hiram of Tyre, the Holy of Holies, and Noah's Ark. A grand tour of the Royal Arch ritual reveals, in this order, the following biblical phrases and quotes: Tabernacle, holy of holies, high priest, II Thess. 3:6-18, Zerubbabel, Exodus 3:1-6, II Chron. 36:11-20, Cyrus, the building of the second (post exilic) temple, Ezra 1:1-13, Exodus 3:13-14, Ps. 141, 142, 143, the password "I am that I am", the password Shem, Ham, Japheth, Exod. 4:1-2, the password "Shem, Japheth, Adoniram", the sign of a hand thrust into the bosom as Moses did in Exodus 4, the password "Haggai, Joshua, Zerubbabel, Exodus 4:8-9, Haggai 2:23, Zechariah 4:6-10, "Holiness to the Lord", "Go and may the God of our fathers be with you," Ark of the Covenant, Gen. 1:1-3, Deut. 31:24-26, Exodus 25:21, pot of manna, Exodus 16:22-34, Aaron's rod, Numbers 17:10, Hebrews 9:2-5, Exodus 6:2-3, John 1:1-5, cf. Duncan, *Ritual*, p. 217-249.

^{lxvi} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, pp. 69-70.

^{lxvii} Duncan, *Ritual*, p. 249.

^{lxviii} 1. Jah. This name of God is found in the 68th Psalm, v. 4.

2. Baal or Bel. This word signifies a lord, master, or possessor, and hence it was applied by many of the nations of the East to denote the Lord of all things and the Master of the world.

3. On. This was the name by which Jehovah was worshipped among the Egyptians.

I have made these remarks on the three names of God in Chaldaic, Syriac and Egyptian, Baal, Jah, and On, in the expectation that my Royal Arch Companions will readily recognize them in a corrupted form. *Lexicon*. (Duncan, *Ritual*, p. 226)

^{lxix} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, I, p. 21.

^{lxx} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, p. 35.

^{lxxi} Ibid., p. 42.

^{lxxii} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, II, pp. 333-334.

^{lxxiii} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, p. 63.

^{lxxiv} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, I, p. 216-217.

^{lxxv} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, p. 70.

^{lxxvi} Ibid., p. 104.

^{lxxvii} Duncan, *Ritual*, p. 250.

^{lxxviii} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, p. 76.

^{lxxix} Ibid.

^{lxxx} cf. Duncan, *Ritual*, p. 32, 63, 92. The three references to light refer to the goals of the three Craft Degrees.

^{lxxx} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, p. 101.

^{lxxxii} Ibid., p. 115.

^{lxxxiii} Duncan, *Ritual*, p. 230.

^{lxxxiv} Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, p. 161.

^{lxxxv} LC-MS, "Independent Order of Odd Fellows", p. 5.

^{lxxxvi} They are Patriarchal, Golden Rule, and Royal Purple.

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- ^{lxxxvii} Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, p. 103. L.M. McCauley, “The Origin and Nature of Freemasonry”, (Chicago, IL: National Christian Association) pp. 45-52.
- ^{lxxxviii} Grosh, *The New Oddfellows’ Manual*, (New York: Maynard, Merrill & Co.) 1895, p. 105.
- ^{lxxxix} Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, p. 162.
- ^{xc} Grosh, *Oddfellows’ Manual*, p. 108.
- ^{xc i} *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- ^{xc ii} *Ibid.*, p. 364.
- ^{xc iii} *Ibid.*, p. 348.
- ^{xc iv} Rev. Claude Enoch Sayre, Ph.D., Past Grand, Elliot Lodge, No. 359, I.O.O.F., *The Religion of Odd Fellowship*, p. 16 quoted in Graebner, p. 166.
- ^{xc v} *Ibid.*, p. 21, p. 167.
- ^{xc vi} Grosh, *Oddfellows’ Manual*, p. 184.
- ^{xc vii} *Ibid.*, p. 364.
- ^{xc viii} Paschal Donaldson, *Odd Fellows Pocket Companion*, p. 128 & 130, quoted in “Secret Societies Incompatible with Christianity” L.J. Rosenberger, (Chicago, IL: National Christian Association) p. 4.
- ^{xc ix} Odd Fellow Correspondence, Report of 1889, quoted in “Secret Fraternal Societies and Unitarianism” C.E. Putnam, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1927 (Reprinted by National Christian Association) p. 12.
- ^c Grosh, *Oddfellows’ Manual*, p. 297.
- ^{ci} *Ibid.*, p. 408.
- ^{cii} *Ibid.*
- ^{ciii} Rev. Phillip Lochhaas, I.O.O.F., LC-MS, Nov. 1973, p. 5.
- ^{civ} James R. Nicholson, *History of the Order of Elks*, p. 13, quoted in LC-MS, “Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks”, p. 7.
- ^{cv} Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, pp. 85 and 90.
- ^{cvi} *What it Means to Be an Elk*, p. 11, quoted in LC-MS, p. 1.
- ^{cvi i} LC-MS, Brotherly Protective Order of the Elks, p. 6-7.
- ^{cvi ii} *The National Observer*, Feb. 21, 1966, p. 22, quoted in LC-MS, p. 1.
- ^{cix} Constitution and Statues of the BPOE, Centennial Edition, 1868-1968, p. 7.
- ^{cx} *Ritual of the Subordinate Lodges*, p. 22, in LC-MS, p. 2.
- ^{cx i} *Ibid.*, p. 31, in LC-MS, p. 3.
- ^{cx ii} Ritual of Special Services, p. 23-26, in LC-MS, p. 4.
- ^{cx iii} *To Be An Elk*, p. 5, LC-MS, p. 1.
- ^{cx iv} Rituals of Special Services, p. 24, in Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, p. 94.
- ^{cx v} Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, p. 90.
- ^{cx vi} “Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks”, LC-MS, p. 2, 3, 4.
- ^{cx vii} Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, p. 86.
- ^{cx viii} Ritual of the Subordinate Lodges, p. 23, in LC-MS, p. 2.
- ^{cx ix} Ritual of Special Services, p. 24, in Graebner, *Hand. of Or.*, p. 94.
- ^{cx x} *Ibid.*, p. 6, in Graebner, *Hand. of Or.*, p. 91.
- ^{cx xi} *Ibid.*, p. 15, in Graebner, *Hand. of Or.*, p. 93.
- ^{cx xii} *Ibid.*, p. 26, in LC-MS, p. 4.
- ^{cx xiii} Conts. & Stat., Title 3, Chapters 6, 8, 11, and 12. Quoted in Christian Cynosure, Aug. 1977, p. 17f.
- ^{cx xiv} Rituals of Special Services, p. 23, LC-MS, p. 4.

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- ^{cxxv} William J. Whalen, *Handbook of Secret Organizations*, (Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co.) 1966, p. 105.
- ^{cxxvi} *Ibid.*, p. 108.
- ^{cxxvii} “Loyal Order of Moose”, LC-MS November 1973, p. 1.
- ^{cxxviii} *Ibid.*
- ^{cxxix} Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, p. 202.
- ^{cxix} J.O. Rondthaler, (Dean of Mooseheart), “The Moose Religion”, in Graebner, *Handbook of Organizations*, p. 203-204.
- ^{cxixi} Whalen, *Handbook of Sec. Or.*, p. 107.
- ^{cxixii} “Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in *brother’s* love” (“Christian love” maybe offensive to some!)
- ^{cxixiii} WELS Information Packet, p. 10.
- ^{cxixiv} *Enrollment Ceremony*, p. 36, in LC-MS, p. 2.
- ^{cxixv} *Burial and Memorial Services*, p. 6, in LC-MS, p. 3.
- ^{cxixvi} *Ibid.*, p. 14, in LC-MS, p. 4.
- ^{cxixvii} Rev. Phillip Lochhaas, LC-MS, p. 4-5.
- ^{cxixviii} Acker, *Strange Altars*, p. 15.
- ^{cxixix} Erwin L. Lueker, Editor, *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House), Rev. 1975, p. 337.
- ^{cxli} *Ibid.*
- ^{cxlii} Schaff, *History of Christian Church, Vol. II*, p. 450.
- ^{cxliii} *Ibid.*, p. 458.
- ^{cxliiii} *Ibid.*, p. 451.
- ^{cxliiv} Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press), Rev., 1974, p. 226.
- ^{cxliiv} *Ibid.*, p. 159.
- ^{cxliiv} Schaff, Vol. II, p. 448.
- ^{cxliiv} One says it was Jau, another thinks it was Jaoth, a third, Java; others Juba, Jao, Jah, Jehovah, and Jove. In a word, the letters of the name are perishable, and the pronunciation of little moment; but the Being himself is ineffable, incomprehensible, and worthy of our utmost veneration. He was called by the Romans Jove, or Jah; by the Chaldeans, the Phoenicians, and the Celtae, Bel or Bul; and by the Indians, Egyptians, and Greeks, Om or On.” (Duncan, *Ritual*, p. 250.)
- ^{cxliiii} Grosh, *Oddfellows’ Manual*, p. 297.
- ^{cxlix} Schaff, Vol. II, p. 456.
- ^{cl} Charles Van Cott, *Masonic Inspiration*, Vol. 1, No. 9, in “Ancient Free and Accepted Masons”, LC-MS, p. 13.
- ^{cli} In spite of a pledge to require nothing that conflicts with a man’s religious beliefs, the Lodge will not waive portions of the ritual that conflict with prospective members’ beliefs. (BPOE, LC-MS, p. 1.) “Before you can be permitted to advance any farther in Masonry, it becomes my duty to inform you, that you must take upon yourself a solemn oath or obligation, appertaining to this degree, which I, as Master of this Lodge, assure you will not materially interfere with the duty that you owe to your God, yourself, family, country, or neighbor.” (Duncan, *Ritual*, p. 33.)
- ^{clii} Schaff, Vol. II, p. 457.
- ^{cliii} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, p. 97.
- ^{cliv} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free., II*, pp. 333-334.

^{clv} Martin H. Franzmann, *The Word of the Lord Grows*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House) 1961, p. 123.

^{clvi} Ibid.

^{clvii} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, p. 143.

^{clviii} Franzmann, *Word of the Lord*, p. 123.

^{clix} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, pp. 115-116.

^{clx} Franzmann, *Word of the Lord Grows*, pp. 123-124.

^{clxi} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, pp. 100-101.

^{clxii} Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, I, p. 28.

^{clxiii} 1) *Adarel*, the Splendour of God, is the Angel of Fire, according to the 28th Degree of the Scottish Rite, being that of Knight of the Sun. There seems no authority for the attribution, and in late Kabalism the archangel Michael presides over that element. The speculative derivation of the word is from אדרר = Splendour, and אל = a title of Divinity. 2) *Arelim*, more correctly *Aralim* = אר אל ים in Hebrew, correspond to the Thrones and the Sephira Binah on the Tree of Libe in Kabalism. The name occurs in Isaiah xxxiii, 7, and is translated *angeli pacis* in the Vulgate or “valiant ones,” according to the Authorised Version and “mighty ones” in the usual Kabalistic understanding. 3) *Ariel* is the spirit of air and in High Grade Masonry appears connected with the idea of innocence for which there seems to be no authority. According to debased Kabalism, *Ariel* reveals treasures, discovers secrets of Nature and shows desired objects in dream. 4) *Azrael* is the angel of death, and is now a familiar name in the angelology of literature. 5) *Casmaran* is the angel of air, according to the 29th Degree of the Scottish Rite, being that of Knight of St. Andrew. But according to late Kabalism the archangel of air is Raphael. *Casmaran* appears to be a nonsense word, or name without meaning. 6) *Gabriel* is Kabalistically the archangel who presides over water, but in Talmudic literature he is connected with fire and thunder. (Waite, *Encyclo. of Free.*, I, p. 28.) This is only a partial listing of Masonic angelology.

^{clxiv} See part I, p. 14.

^{clxv} Franzmann, *Word of the Lord*, p. 124.

^{clxvi} Ibid.

^{clxvii} LC-MS, “The Fraternal Order of Eagles”, 1971.

^{clxviii} Wilmshurst, *Masonry*, p. 65.