

## Chapter Twelve:

### Critique Of Section 7 — The Ritual

#### Leazer's Focus Remains Masonic Critics

When the SBC voted to study Freemasonry, it specifically gave instructions that the question to be answered was "Is Freemasonry compatible with Christianity?" Repeatedly, in the early stages of this study, the question of design was raised, to no avail. Repeatedly, in reviewing A Study Of Freemasonry, it is obvious that the design which Dr. Leazer announced in his July 22, 1992 press release has not changed. At that time, it was reported:

"...The report will compare arguments by Holly and other Mason critics with responses by Mason advocates, Leazer said. After each debate point, Leazer will offer an analysis of both sides, he said."

This is a flawed design, as has been and continues to be shown. With this design, it is not surprising, even though it is disappointing, that Dr. Leazer begins Section 7 on "The Ritual" with the statement:

"The ritual is particularly offensive to Masonry critics." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 30, emphasis added)

The SBC did not ask Dr. Leazer to comment on what is "particularly offensive" to anyone. The SBC instructed Dr. Leazer to examine the compatibility of Freemasonry and Christianity. Why, in a scholarly study, would Dr. Leazer make any subjective comment such as this, until he had established what the ritual of the Lodge is?

#### The Nature Of Freemasonry

Leazer then said, "Given the nature of Freemasonry..." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 30) That is just the point. The nature of Masonry is not a given; it is the point of the controversy. Dr. Leazer's job was to research the nature of the Lodge, instead he gives a superficial characterization, which does not help determine, "Is Freemasonry compatible with Christianity?" After the introductory phrase, "Given the nature of Freemasonry," Dr. Leazer continued:

"...which welcomes men of different faiths and cultures to become members, religious or political discussions could quickly become disruptive to the fellowship. Nothing, though, prevents Christian Masons from developing friendships during this time, which may lead to discussions and witness outside Lodge meetings. Discussion of one's personal faith and church membership is allowed at some Lodge meetings. Invitations to visit one's church may be extended to fellow Masons. Numerous articles appear in Masonic literature, testifying of one's faith in Christ for all to read." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 30)

Why is this apologetic for Lodge membership at the head of a section on "The Ritual" of the Lodge? Why didn't section 7 begin with a description of the Masonic ritual? Or at the very least, why is there not an appendix to this study with the ritual summarized? Why wouldn't Dr. Leazer give the SBC examples of these "numerous articles", so that Southern Baptists might evaluate the content of the witness? The SBC will not be very inclined to accept Dr. Leazer's word after the history of his involvement with the Masonic Lodge, and after the disclosures that "A Report On Freemasonry" gave false and misleading information to the Convention. Dr. Leazer, once again, declares to us that "discussion of one's personal faith...is allowed at some Lodge meetings." It is not impertinent of a scholarly study to ask, "Which ones and where?"

### **The Bloody Oaths Of The Masonic Lodge**

Dr. Leazer finds it absolutely impossible to make a negative statement about anything Masonic. He said:

"The so-called 'bloody oaths' are regularly cited by Masonry critics and non-Masons as objectionable. Masons prefer the word 'obligation' rather than oath to describe what they promise to do. The penalty that follows the obligation is the symbolic consequences of failure to keep the obligation." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 30)

Euphemisms are important tools in polemics. Dr. Leazer has employed such before, when he gave the blasphemous names of the Lodge officers non-Masonic synonyms to make them acceptable to non-Masons. (See A Study Of Freemasonry, pp. 5-6) Now Leazer accepts the substitution of "obligation" for "oath." There

is no biblical prohibition of "obligations", is there? Therefore, if Dr. Leazer can make this switch, he can continue his defense of the Lodge.

The difference between an "oath" and an "obligation" is non-existent, if both are taken seriously. In The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume II, the seriousness of the Masonic oaths is discussed from the Heirloom Masonic Bible, which states:

"...The oath of a Mason is administered with solemn rites symbolizing and emphasizing the profound and meaningful character of the obligations being assumed..." (The SBC and Freemasonry, Vol. II, p. 10)

Recall from chapter ten (see pp. 151ff) that Dr. Leazer's source for some of the oaths and penalties of the Craft was Ralph P. Lester's Look To The East: A Ritual of the First Three Degrees of Masonry. Recall that this book is published by Ezra A. Cook, also the publishers of Scotch Rite Masonry Illustrated. Dr. Leazer accepts the former publication and rejects the later, both on the testimony of Masons. Recall also, that the publisher of Look To The East advertises the incompleteness of this book.

Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry has extensive articles on oaths in Volume 2 and in Volume 3. In volume 3, Mackey's states:

"In Speculative Freemasonry the Candidate takes not an oath but an OB., which term means that the tie is binding from both ends: the Lodge is bound to the Candidate, the Candidate is bound to the Lodge..." (Volume 3, p. 1321)

The Lodge does not seem to take its oaths as lightly as Dr. Leazer might suggest.

### **John J. Robinson's Place In Masonry**

On page 20, Leazer determines that modern Masonry can only be traced back to 1717. But now, to accommodate a friendly explanation of the "bloody oaths", Leazer says,

"If John J. Robinson's and other's arguments are correct, the words of these penalties can be traced back to the Middle Ages..." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 31)

Why would a scholarly study establish on page 20 what that study determined to be a fact, and then allow for a theory which

would contradict that fact on page 31? Is this scholarship? Either Masonry started in 1717, or in the Middle Ages, or in the Ancient Mysteries. At one time or another, Dr. Leazer presents arguments for all three.

### John J. Robinson

John J. Robinson authored several books on Freemasonry. On page 21 of A Study Of Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer references Robinson's Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry. The February, 1993, Scottish Rite Journal, which Dr. Leazer proofread in December of 1992 (while he was doing the study on Freemasonry and while he was head of the IFW), included the announcement of John J. Robinson's A Pilgrim's Path: One Man's Road to the Masonic Temple. It was announced that Robinson's book:

"analyzes and refutes Dr. James Holly's and Pat Robertson's books, and answers, point by point, their damaging allegations. This book arms Freemasons with the answers to the attackers; and its message should instill in every reader an even greater pride in Freemasonry." (The Scottish Rite Journal, Volume CL, Number 2, February, 1993, p. 96)

The March issue of The Scottish Rite Journal included excerpts from A Pilgrim's Path: One Man's Road to the Masonic Temple. The comments which Mr. Robinson made, many of which were personal attacks upon this author, were ludicrous. The fact is that Mr. Robinson was not an uninvolved, objective participant in this discussion. Yet, Dr. Leazer quotes him as an objective scholar, and lists his book under the heading of "Scholarly Books on Freemasonry". (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 74) Robinson's words are not subjected to analysis; they are only accepted by Dr. Leazer. Why?

Three days prior to his death September 6, 1993, Robinson was made a 33rd Degree Mason because of his service to the Lodge. His Masonic funeral message, as reported in The Scottish Rite Journal, was entitled, "There Was a Man Sent by God, and His Name Was John". (The Scottish Rite Journal, November, 1993, pp. 34-36)

The Masonic attitude toward Christianity is indicated in Robinson's A Pilgrims's Path: One Man's Road to The Masonic Temple, where he stated:

"...Some of the error in it (The King James version of the Bible) was quite deliberate, including the biblical designation of Lucifer as Satan, along with the concordant story of a fallen angel. It is difficult to anticipate the reactions of some believers on being told that there are gross mistakes in the King James Version...So 'Lucifer' is nothing more than an ancient Latin name for the morning star, the bringer of light....And so there are those who do not ready (Sic) beyond the King James version of the Bible, who say 'Lucifer is Satan: so says the Word of God,' while others with knowledge of the Latin and Hebrew texts say 'No, Lucifer is the classical Roman name for the morning star, and now Jesus is the morning star.'" (pp. 47-48) (emphasis added)

Did Southern Baptists expect Dr. Leazer's scholarly study to quote Robinson in support of one idea, and then ignore such a statement as this, made in 1993? Did Dr. Leazer read Robinson for himself or did he only accept Jim Tresner's assessment of him? Does Dr. Leazer accept Robinson's argument that Isaiah 14 refers to Jesus Christ? Did Dr. Lewis or the Trustees know that Robinson identified Jesus as Lucifer? Why didn't they?

### **Leazer Continues To Discredit "Anti-Masons"**

Dr. Leazer's complete bias for the Lodge is again demonstrated by his comment after referencing William T. Still's New World Order: The Ancient Plan of Secret Societies. Leazer said:

"Still writes, 'Fortunately for humanity, however, several brave souls' have published the obligations, or 'secret works.' He gives thanks to 'these courageous men.' Like most Masonry critics, Still implies that the texts of the obligations would not be available were it not for these 'brave souls' and 'courageous men.' To the contrary, the texts of the obligations have been well-known for decades by anyone taking time to read them..." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 31, footnote number 109)

Why does Dr. Leazer continue to ridicule "anti-Masons" and completely accept without criticism the testimony of Masons. Dr. Leazer has:

1. Implied instability of one "anti-Mason" (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 25),
2. Related the non-Christian beliefs of another (documented by a Masonic writer, A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 16),
3. Accused another "anti-Mason" of distorting the words of Masons. (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 11)
4. And here, without proof, contradicts the statement of an "anti-Mason. Why?

Dr. Leazer ignored the history of the persecution of "anti-Masons" by Lodge members. He ignored the history of pastors who have lost their ministries in a community when they took a stand against the Lodge. He ignored the 19th Century history of the alleged murder of Captain William Morgan. As is typical of the Lodge, it is reported by Masons that William Morgan's exposé of the Lodge was motivated by his anger at the Lodge because he was rejected for membership in a Masonic body, in this case the Royal Arch Chapter. (See History and Evolution of Freemasonry by Delmar Darrah, p. 236) Invariably the arrogance of the Masonic Lodge enables them to condemn "anti-Masons" as disgruntled because they were rejected for Masonic membership. It never seems to occur to them that Christian men, with understanding of the Word of God, would find the fellowship of their Craft blasphemous to the God of the Bible.

### **Scottish Rite Paganism Excused By Dr. Leazer**

If there were any possibility of a rebuke for the Masonic Lodge by Dr. Leazer. it would be here. Yet, there is none! Leazer said:

**"A Christian Mason who takes the higher degrees of the Scottish Rite will be exposed to beliefs and practices quite different from his own. For example, the candidate is introduced to Egyptian deities Osiris, Isis, Horus, and Amun; to Scandinavians deities Odin, Freya, and Thor; to Hindu, Greek, and Persian deities; and to Jewish Kabbalism. Masons state that a person studies how people through the centuries have attempted to understand God and His relationship to mankind in these degrees. It cannot be denied that some of the religions studied in these degrees are pagan and that their teachings are totally incompatible with Christianity." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 32, emphasis added)**

Finally, it is stated: "...their teachings are totally incompatible with Christianity." However, it is only so stated because in Dr. Leazer's own words, "It cannot be denied...". Would he deny it, if he could? One is left to wonder. Leazer said:

"Masons state that a person studies how people through the centuries have attempted to understand God and His relationship to mankind in these degrees." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 32)

That is not what A Bridge To Light says; this is not what Morals and Dogma says. These books argue that the Scottish Rite degrees are an organized system of thought which leads the candidate to perfection. (See p. 107) The explanation of the degrees are to reveal truth, these two books say, not to tell how others have perceived truth. But, then true to his Masonic sympathies, Dr. Leazer hastens to add the statements:

"There is no requirement or expectation of commitment in these higher degrees. Little of the content of the Scottish Rite ritual is learned or retained, given the rapidity in which the degrees are granted." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 32, emphasis added)

How compatible are these two statements? The teaching of the Scottish Rite is incompatible with Christianity, but, Dr. Leazer says, that is not a problem, because they don't really mean it. Who told Leazer, "They don't really mean it?" Why would the faulty memory of Masons excuse the occultism of the Scottish Rite? Are men excused from blasphemy, simply because they cannot remember that they have blasphemed?

### **Symbols In The Masonic Lodge**

Leazer states:

"Critics charge that Freemasonry is a religion because it 'uses symbols just like those found in a church or synagogue.'...Certainly, Freemasonry uses symbolism throughout its various degrees and in its buildings. Symbolism is the heart of Freemasonry. Christians also use symbols to express their faith..." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 33, emphasis added)

Leazer's language sounds particularly Masonic! How scholarly and objective, indeed, how helpful is the statement, "Symbolism is the heart of Freemasonry." This sounds like the confession of a devotee, not the analysis of an investigator. Dr. Leazer's design of this study is so preoccupied with "anti-Masons", and so dominated by Masons, that the two dynamics constantly stumble over one another, as they do here.

The footprints of two articles in the May, 1993, issue of The Scottish Rite Journal are seen here. They seem to have contributed to this statement by Leazer. One is Jim Tresner's (remember this Leazer friend and colleague in defending Masonry) "Riding the Semantic Merry-Go-Round." The other is Rex R. Hutchens' (the author of A Bridge To Light) "Signs, Symbols and Silliness". Why do we not find language in Dr. Leazer's study which sounds like "anti-Masons" being plagiarized? Why do the only phrases used by Leazer which appear to be borrowed, without attribution, come from Masons or Masonic supporters?

Leazer's comments seem gauged to excuse Masons, not examine them. His statement, "Christians also use symbols to express their faith", doesn't address the occultic origins or interpretations of Masonic symbols. It does attempt to relieve Masons of the responsibility for what they do and teach, and it also violates Dr. Leazer's commission, because once again, he presents Southern Baptists with a conclusion without facts or data. (Anyone interested in Masonic symbolism should review The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume I, pp. 16-17.)

### **Nature Of Freemasonry Mentioned But Not Defined**

Leazer concludes his comment on symbolism with the statement:

"Given the nature of Freemasonry, this is a major problem that will not disappear, but Masons can lessen the problem by explaining more clearly the meaning of their symbols to both members and non-members." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 33)

Earlier in this chapter, we observed Dr. Leazer using the phrase "given the nature of Freemasonry..." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 30). Here he uses it again. Dr. Leazer's job was to determine the nature of the Lodge, instead he gives a superficial characterization

of the Lodge, which does not help determine, "Is Freemasonry compatible with Christianity?" If the symbolism of the Lodge is a major problem why didn't it get more attention from Dr. Leazer?

Renouncing occultism would eliminate the problem, not "lessen" it. But, Dr. Leazer counsels that the Masons modify their teaching to make it comfortable with Christian ideas, not to make it compatible.

### **The All-Seeing Eye**

Dr. Leazer's discussion of the "All-Seeing Eye" is particularly difficult to understand in the light of his responsibilities as a Christian apologist. It is one thing to argue that Masonic symbols have different interpretations for different Masons. It is altogether something else to try to excuse the Masonic "symbol for God." Leazer said:

"The 'All-Seeing Eye' is well known as a Masonic symbol for God." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 33)

At this point the Ten Commandments immediately spring to mind. Deuteronomy 5:6-9 states:

"I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me."

To adopt any image, or symbol, as a representation of God, violates one of the most ancient and fundamental prohibitions of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. To dismiss this abomination with the statement, "Symbols can mean different things to different people", violates the trust of the SBC, which paid Dr. Leazer's salary.

Dr. Leazer's dereliction is compounded by his reciting of Masonic propaganda as an un-attributed part of his study; he said:

"The psalmist writes, 'The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him' (Ps. 33:18, NASB). Proverbs 15:3 (NASB) states, 'The eyes of the Lord [YHWH] are in every

place, Watching the evil and the good.' This reminds the Mason that his actions do not go unnoticed by God." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 33)

To take God's inerrant Word and imply that it supports the occultism of the Masonic Lodge is offensive. Why would Dr. Leazer do that? Why would a Christian apologist imply that the Psalmist had in mind the "All-Seeing Eye" of the occultist when he affirmed his accountability to his omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent Creator, Deliverer and Judge, indeed, his Lord God Almighty? This explanation of the Masonic use of the All-Seeing Eye is almost a direct quote from page seventy-two of Masonic author, Jim Tresner's unpublished manuscript, Perspectives, Responses & Reflections. The influence of this 102-page document in A Study of Freemasonry is significant.

### Signs and Symbols

But, Dr. Leazer is not through; he said:

"It is uncertain when the All-Seeing Eye became a Masonic symbol. The meaning behind the All-Seeing Eye is analogous to the rainbow today. Followers of the New Age Movement have begun using the rainbow as one of their symbols. The Bible also points to the rainbow as a sign of God's covenant with Noah after the flood (Gen. 9:8-17)." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 33)

The rainbow is one of the signs of the covenant which God gave to man. There is a remarkable distinction between signs and symbols. Signs are invested with definition and meaning by their giver. Signs can have no other significance than that which was intended and declared by its giver. God gave the sign of the rainbow to Noah, as he gave the sign of circumcision to Abraham, as a seal of the faith which Abraham had before he was circumcised. For the occultist to take God's sign and try to use it for a foreign purpose is wrong, but it doesn't change the nature of God's declaration about that sign. Likewise, for a Christian to take an occultic symbol, i.e., the All-Seeing Eye, and try to make it a symbol for the One true God, doesn't change the nature of what it was to begin with. Neither does the pretended devotion to God of the membership of the pagan organization called Freemasonry, change the idolatry of representing the Lord God Almighty by the occultic symbol.

## **The Lambskin Apron**

In chapter eight of The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume II, the plan of salvation of the Masonic Lodge is dealt with in detail. That will not be repeated here. What is important is to look at Dr. Leazer's words; he said:

"Masons insist they use the lambskin apron as an emblem of innocence, a symbol of the purity of life and moral conduct demanded of all Masons. They insist the lambskin does not bring salvation, but rather, 'the purity of life' it symbolizes brings salvation." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 34)

Can this be? Is a Christian theologian affirming the Masonic plan of salvation, which is works righteousness? Read carefully Dr. Leazer's own words; he said: "the lambskin...symbolizes...the purity of life...which brings salvation." (This concept is dealt with again in chapter sixteen.) There is no Arminian or Calvinist who would accept that soteriology! No man can achieve purity of life. No man can earn his own salvation! Salvation does not come by purity of life; it comes by grace through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ plus nothing. Is Dr. Leazer's commitment to the Lodge so total that he is insensitive to their distortion of Christian doctrine? Is an employee of the HMB, indeed, a department head, and especially the head of IFW, unclear on salvation doctrine?

## **Master Mason Degree Portrays Resurrection**

Continuing his defense of the Masonic Lodge, Dr. Leazer said:

"The legend of Hiram Abif in the ritual for the Master Mason's degree is criticized by Masonry critics. According to I Kings 7:13-47, Hiram Abif was a bronze worker in Solomon's Temple." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 35)

Why would Dr. Leazer adopt the Masonic name for Hiram? The Bible calls him "Hiram of Tyre." Masons call him "Hiram Abif". Leazer adopts the Masonic vocabulary without explanation. Recall that he did the same thing over so-called regular and clandestine Freemasonry. Why? Leazer explains the Master-Mason degree:

"The ritual for the Master Mason's degree says that three workers in the Temple attempted to learn the

secret Master's Word from Hiram. When he refused to reveal it, they killed Hiram and buried his body secretly. The body was discovered after King Solomon ordered a search for it. Only 'the strong grip of a Master Mason' by King Solomon could raise Hiram's body from the grave." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 35)

In A Study Of Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer becomes an advocate for the Masonic Lodge when he said:

"Contrary to what critics say, Masons insist Hiram was not resurrected from the dead; his body was removed from one grave and reburied in another." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 36)

It is interesting that Dr. Leazer would make this statement just after saying:

"Only 'the strong grip of a Master Mason' by King Solomon could raise Hiram's body from the grave." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 35)

Part of this statement is in quotes, but it is not footnoted. One is left to assume that the concept of "the strong grip of a Master Mason" is of such a generally accepted nature among Masons, and those who understand things about the Lodge, as not to need documentation. If you are going to re-bury someone, you don't say that the body is "raised from the grave." The problem for Dr. Leazer is, "Either the Master Mason degree is or it isn't a symbolization of resurrection." On page 35, Dr. Leazer says that Hiram's body was raised from the grave. The clear implication is resurrection.

### **Look To The East Published By Ezra A. Cook**

On page 36 of A Study Of Freemasonry, Leazer gives one Mason's interpretation to deny that this is a symbol of resurrection. Dr. Leazer's single source for this authoritative Masonic opinion is Look To The East: A Ritual of the First Three Degrees of Masonry by Ralph P. Lester. This book was published by Ezra A. Cook Publishers, Inc., with a 1975 publication date. It is noteworthy to recall that on page 15 of A Study Of Freemasonry, Dr. Leazer attempts to discredit Ezra A. Cook as an "anti-Mason." In chapter eight, the history of Ezra A. Cook as an "anti-Mason", and yet now,

the name of a company which publishes Masonic materials, is reviewed by the Charles T. Powner Co. of Chicago, Illinois. I would remind you again, The Powner Co. and Ezra A. Cook are the same company.

### **Leazer's Masonic Source Says Master Mason Degree Not Portraying Resurrection**

Look to the East states that when Hiram Abif's body was found it was reburied. A passage from A Bridge To Light which was quoted in chapter eleven (see p. 160) said:

**"(The 25th Degree) is also devoted to an explanation of the symbols of Masonry; and especially to those which are connected with the ancient and universal legend, of which that of Khir-Om Abi [Hiram Abif] is but a variation; that legend which, representing a murder or a death, and a restoration to life..." (A Bridge To Light, p. 220, emphasis added)**

"A restoration to life" is not a Masonic metaphor for burial; it is a confession of what every Mason knows. The Master Mason degree depicts death, burial and resurrection. That is why every Mason in the world, when asked when he became a Mason, says, "I was raised....". "I was raised" would be a peculiar phrase to identify the day a man was buried as a Mason!

In his attempt to deny the resurrection motif of the Master Mason degree, Dr. Leazer quotes from Albert Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Volume 1, p. 332. I was unable to find the quote in any edition of Mackey's Encyclopedia which I own, although I do not doubt that Dr. Leazer has an edition which states what he reports. However, in Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry an article appears entitled, "Resurrection"; it states:

**"The doctrine of a resurrection to a future and eternal life constitutes an indispensable portion of the religious faith of Freemasonry. It is not authoritatively inculcated as a point of dogmatic creed, but is impressively taught by the symbolism of the Third (Master Mason) Degree. This dogma has existed among almost all nations from a very early period...In Freemasonry, a particular Degree, the Master's, has been appropriated to teach it by an impressive symbolism." (Volume 2, p. 851, emphasis added)**

It is clear from this statement that Mackey and Masonry teach that the Master Mason degree symbolizes resurrection. Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia's article on resurrection also states:

“...No one, however, who carefully examines the mode in which the resurrection or restoration to life was taught by a symbol and a ceremony in the Ancient Mysteries, and how the same dogma is now taught in the Masonic initiation...” (Volume 2, p. 851, emphasis added)

No Masonic authority denies the “resurrection motif” of the Master Mason degree; why does Dr. Leazer accept the solitary testimony of one Mason, and then partially and selectively quote Mackey's to obscure one of the critical concerns about the Lodge?

When one reads section 8, entitled “The Question of Salvation”, in Jim Tresner's Perspectives, Responses & Reflections, it will be seen that Dr. Leazer simply accepted his friend's conclusions about the Lodge.

### **Master Mason Ritual Does Symbolize Resurrection**

In a section entitled, “Questions and Answers”, in the Masonic Altar Bible (Kelchner, 1968, A. J. Holman Company) question number 110 asks, “What is the symbolism of a Master Mason, and how represented?” The answer is:

“The Master Mason represents man, when youth, manhood, old age, and life itself, have passed away as fleeting shadows, yet raised from the grave of iniquity, and quickened into another a better existence. By its legend and all its ritual, it is implied that we have been redeemed from the death of sin and the sepulchre of pollution; and the conclusion we arrive at is, that youth, properly directed, leads us to honorable and virtuous maturity, and that the life of man, regulated by morality, faith and justice, will be rewarded at its closing hour by the prospect of eternal bliss...” (p. 84, column three, emphasis added)

If this is not resurrection, then what do the emphasized words mean? Also, the “plan of salvation” of the Lodge is clearly spelled out in the phrase, “...and that the life of man, regulated by morality,

faith and justice, will be rewarded at its closing hour by the prospect of eternal bliss...". This is works righteousness, and is not consistent with biblical soteriology.

In this same section, question number 127 asks, "What does the term Raised signify?" The following answer is given:

"The expressive term used to designate the reception of the candidate into the third or sublime degree of a Master mason, and alludes both to a part of the ceremony and to our faith in the glorious morn of the resurrection, when our bodies will rise, and become as incorruptible as our souls." (p. 85, column three)

What is the basis of that hope by the Master Mason?

Chapter thirteen will deal with the Ancient Mystery religions and the symbolism of resurrection in their initiation ceremonies. (See this volume, pp. 196ff) Albert Mackey will relate there that the Master Mason degree is in type and content exactly like the Ancient Mystery religions' initiations, and that it is symbolic of resurrection. The symbolism of the Master Mason degree is resurrection. That is clear to everyone except Dr. Leazer. Why? One could suspect because of the inordinate influence of Jim Tresner on this study.

### **Holman Bible Company**

Note that the Masonic Altar Bible is published by Holman Bible Company. When the Baptist Sunday School Board of the SBC purchased the Holman Bible Company, the first thing they did was to sell the rights and the plates for the printing of Masonic Bibles. At the time the BSSB bought Holman, almost all Masonic Bibles were being printed by Holman. If there is nothing wrong with Masonry, why did the BSSB move quickly to divest itself of this activity?

### **Who Was Hiram Abiff?**

Another book published by Powne Co. is Who Was Hiram Abiff? by J. S. M. Ward. In the Preface, Ward states:

"In this book I have endeavored to solve the problem which has puzzled Freemasons for many years. It seems to me strange that many anthropologists, who are Masons, have missed the opportunity of applying

the principles they have learned to use, when studying the customs of primitive races, to our own ceremonies and traditions.

The Dying God has for many years been a subject of study, and yet in the very heart of London, on almost every day of the week, His tragic story, only thinly humanized, is being enacted. If I have read the facts aright, Hiram Abiff is one of the Priest-kings of Tyre, the living incarnation of Adonis, who was offered up as a Consecration Sacrifice at the completion of the great Temple of Jerusalem...

In conclusion I sincerely hope that my readers will find this book as interesting to read as it was for me to write, and that it will lead them to have an even higher veneration for our great Masonic Hero." (p. vii)

Once again the great deficiency of Section 7, "The Ritual" is as much in what is not there, as in what is. After finishing this section, the SBC still does not have a clear, concise characterization of the teachings and practices of the Masonic Lodge upon the basis of which to judge if the Masonic Lodge is compatible with Christianity. Why? What it does have is a study which was greatly influenced by Masonic leaders respected by and listened to by Dr. Gary Leazer. What it has is A Study of Freemasonry which at every conclusion agrees with Jim Tresner's Perspectives, Responses & Reflections. This agreement is so total as to exceed the probability of coincidence!