

Chapter Fifteen:

The Bible and The Lodge

After months of research, Dr. Leazer still does not understand. His conclusion of "Section 10: The Bible", states:

"The Bible, along with the square and compass, are referred to as the Furniture of the Lodge. Every faith, whether Christianity or non-Christian, holds its scripture as sacred. To compare scripture to a square and compass, even symbolically, is an affront to the faith. **Masons should give the Volume of Sacred Literature the supreme place in the Lodge, rather than on par with symbols such as the square and compass.**" (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 51, emphasis added)

The Bible compares itself to a number of physical objects, i.e., a lamp, a light, and a sword. The Word of God speaks of "rightly dividing the Word of Truth", which means that the Word is to be "cut straight." The contempt which the Masonic Lodge shows for the Word of God is not in its laying beside a square and a compass. These are instruments which could be given scriptural usages for "rightly dividing the Word", and for "setting the direction of a man's life." Recall Robinson's comment about the King James Version of the Bible in chapter twelve (see p. 177). That comment is what should offend a Christian Apologist.

The Bible and Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia

The contempt which the Masonic Lodge shows for the Word of God is reflected by Dr. Leazer's adoption of their phrase, "The Volume of Sacred Literature." In an article entitled, "Bible", Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia comments on this phrase:

"Matters became more complicated as Freemasonry spread into and among Moslems, Hindus, Brahmans, Buddhists, Parsees and other non-Judaic and non-Christian races, none of whom would accept any part of the Bible. This made it impossible for the Bible to be The Great Light of Masonry, and led to the device of the Volume of Sacred Law (V.S.L.), that is the substitution of a Koran, a Veda, the Proverbs of Confucius, or other revered book." (p. 518)

The Volume of Sacred Literature or Law is not the Bible; it is whatever a man chooses to adopt as the guide and rule for his life. The title, Volume of Sacred Literature or Law, is not one of honor; it is the euphemism which is used in order to obscure the condescending attitude which the Masonic Lodge has toward the Bible. The Bible is to be displayed, but it is not to be distinguished from other "great books" of faith in the world.

Volume Of The Sacred Law

The inappropriateness of Leazer's adoption of this term is further demonstrated by Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia's article entitled, "Volume of the Sacred Law (V.S.L.)", which states:

"The various volumes of Sacred Law or Writings are: the Pentateuch or the Old Testament of the Hebrews; the New Testament of the Christians, though some would include the whole Bible; the Koran of the Mohammedans or Islam; the Zend Avesta of the Persians; the Tripitaka of the Buddhists; the Rig Veda and other Vedas of the Brahmins; the Tao Te King of the Taoists of China; the Bhagava-Gita of the Hindus; and Book of Mormon of the Latter Day Saints." (Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, p. 674)

What Christian wishes to affirm these documents as equally worthy of devotion and obedience? Why is the IFW, whose responsibility is to educate Southern Baptists about other faiths, afraid of telling the truth about the Masonic Lodge?

The Bible's Influence Over Freemasonry

Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia's article entitled, "Bible" comments further:

"In this article, the Bible will be discussed as a great book or collection of books, as it really is...and the long and sustained and as yet unended effort to ascertain its true, original text and meaning...it is a book of religion and has had over many centuries a pronounced, though somewhat varying and unsettled connection with, and influence upon Freemasonry..." (Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, pp. 92-93)

The Bible has been used by the Craft; it has not been obeyed nor read for direction. The Bible is to the Craft, what it is to many

homes in America: an ornament to adorn one's home, but not something to be taken too seriously.

The Bible As Unique Truth Chains The Minds Of Men

Liberty is the battle cry of the Mason. But, the liberty which he demands is the liberty from any limitations upon his personal choices. The Mason demands the freedom to do what he wants. The article entitled, "Bible", comments negatively on the use of the Bible to "chain the minds of men":

"...The human mind is a difficult thing to put in chains. The attempt to limit the law, the guidance, or the inspiration which man hopes to receive from the Supreme Being is doomed to failure, and is probably less desirable in the religious field than in any other. Even threats of anathema and Divine vengeance fail, for they can be doubted as well as any other vicarious declaration of Divine Will..." (Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, p. 94)

Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia declares that even "threats of anathema and Divine vengeance fail" to prevent men from looking everywhere and anywhere for truth. The reason is that even the "threats of anathema and Divine vengeance...can be doubted." It is possible for man to subject anything and everything to reason and doubt. The phrase, "vicarious declaration of Divine Will", means that someone else tells you what is the divine will. It means that priests can be ignored, because they cannot impose upon the mind of man "chains...(which) limit the law, the guidance, or the inspiration which man hopes to receive from the Supreme Being." "Vicarious declaration of Divine Will" means the prophets announcing, "Thus saith the Lord." "Vicarious declaration of Divine Will" means the pastor saying, "This is the will of God." "Vicarious declaration of Divine Will" means anything which opposes the absolute self-determination of every man. There can not be a clearer statement of the beliefs and doctrine of secular humanism and of the rebellion against God, which began with Lucifer.

It might be argued that Coil's is simply supporting the priesthood of the believer, and the right of every man to read the Word of God for himself. But, the context of Coil's article on the Bible is clear; it is the Bible as the unique revelation of God to man which is being questioned.

The Authority And Validity Of Scripture

Coil's article on the Bible gives a contemptuous statement of the nature of Scripture:

"The problem of determining the original true text and translating the New Testament MSS. is not much simpler than with those of the Old Testament...The Synoptic Gospels...especially, are the result of century-long growth consisting of continual changing and rewriting. The same chapter and verse often shows layer upon layer of varying or even inconsistent modification. So, with the New Testament, as with the Old, there is no possibility of ascertaining in all respects what the original text of the writings was...." (Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, p. 96)

While this opinion of the Bible is not an "official Grand Lodge" position, it is espoused by one of the authorities which Dr. Leazer relies upon in A Study Of Freemasonry. It is hard to imagine even the most liberal Southern Baptist ascribing to this theory of biblical origins. Why would a Southern Baptist deacon or pastor embrace an organization which has such a contemptuous attitude toward the Bible? The truth is that if such an idea were espoused about the Koran in a Moslem country, the book would be banned.

The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume II dealt extensively with the Lodges' attitude toward the Bible. Only one quote will be repeated:

"The prevailing Masonic opinion is that the Bible is only a symbol of Divine Will, Law, or Revelation, and not that its contents are Divine Law, inspired, or revealed. So far, no responsible authority has held that a Freemason must believe the Bible or any part of it." (Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, p. 520, column two)

This standard Masonic work is quoted by Dr. Leazer in A Study Of Freemasonry on pages 5, 25, 40, 42, and 54. From his use of Coil's Encyclopedia, it is clear that Leazer recognizes it as a reliable source for accurate information about Freemasonry. One is left to wonder why Coil's is only quoted when it seems to support Leazer's defense of the Lodge? One wonders why, when The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume II was made available to Dr. Lewis and his staff, the deficiencies of Dr. Leazer's work continued to be ignored?

The New Age Magazine (Scottish Rite Journal) and the Bible

The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume II concluded the chapter on the Word of God with the following:

"The modern Masonic opinion about the Word of God has not changed. In the February, 1968, New Age Magazine (the official publication of the Scottish Rites of America and recently renamed The Scottish Rite Journal), Leonard Wenz stated:

'The Bible is not today what it once was. Current higher criticism has made obsolete the idea that the Bible is a unique revelation of supernatural truth.' (p. 17)

No one can continue to believe that the Masonic Lodge is founded upon belief in the Bible as the Word of God. The Lodge uses the Bible, but it uses it for its own purposes, which principally is to appear to be a Christian organization." (The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume II, p. 94)

Grand Lodge Of Louisiana And the Word of God

Dr. Leazer's defense of the Masonic Lodge, A Study Of Freemasonry, relied upon a publication called Masonic Lectures, compiled by the Grand lecturers of the Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana in March of 1970. Dr. Leazer states:

"In the lectures for the Entered Apprentice degree in Louisiana, the candidate is reminded:

"This Book [the Bible] contains the Word of God — the state of man, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are Holy, its teachings are binding, is (sic) history (sic) is true, and its decisions are indisputable....Read it, my brother—study it! It is God's plan of life. Live according to the light you find therein and you will indeed become a true Mason and merit the rewards God has promised. It points out the only way to salvation.'" (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 50, emphasis added)

Dr. Leazer's footnote number 184 gratuitously adds the comment: "Most Southern Baptists believe the Bible is the Word of God rather than it 'contains' the Word of God." (A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 50, emphasis in original) Does this reflect an accurate doctrine of the Bible? It does not. Does the Bible teach, does any Baptist believe, that if a man "live(s) according to the light you find therein (that) you will indeed become a true Mason and merit the rewards God has promised"? The goal in life is not to become a Christian, the Louisiana Grand Lodge declares; it is to become a Mason!! The way to life is not the grace of God; it is the works of men. Why is Dr. Leazer consistently insensitive to biblical soteriology? Why does he not recognize the Masonic Lodge's plan of salvation, which is works righteousness?

A Pastor's Experience With Grand Lodge Of Louisiana

Why did Dr. Leazer ignore the letter which he received from Reverend Terry Long, February 25, 1993? More importantly, why did Dr. Lewis ignore Reverend Long's letter? Reverend Long said:

"...last week...I experienced the most significant confrontation with Freemasonry in my ministry...I would like for you and the HMB Trustees to know about it."

Reverend Long's letter to Dr. Larry Lewis was sent to the HMB Trustees, Dr. Gary Leazer, Dr. Morris Chapman, Dr. Mark Coppinger, Dr. Ed Young, Dr. Roger Freeman, then President of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and to Mr. Art Toalston of Baptist Press.

Reverend Long related his conducting of the funeral of a man whose brother had just been elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the state of Louisiana. At the funeral home, the Grand Master's wife said, "Freemasonry is the most wonderful Christian organization on the face of the earth." Later the Grand Master's wife brought the Reverend Long several booklets, and said: "You're going to be sorry you ever met me. I want you to read these booklets, and maybe they will help straighten you out on Freemasonry."

Reverend Long's Conclusions After Reading Grand Lodge Of Louisiana Publications

The publication date on one of these booklets is 1967 and on the others is 1978. These are official publications of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana. Remember, Dr. Leazer and the Masonic Lodge affirm that official publications of Grand Lodges are authoritative in studying the Lodge. (See A Study Of Freemasonry, p. 14) Also, recall that the publication date on the material used by Dr. Leazer from the Louisiana Grand Lodge was 1970.

In his letter, Reverend Long said:

"Dr. Lewis, if ever there had been a doubt in my mind that the masonic lodge is not a Christian organization and that Freemasonry is absolutely incompatible with Christianity, those four little booklets given to me by the wife of the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana (with his permission) absolutely confirmed it! One would have to be blind and totally ignorant of biblical Christianity not to see the blatant universalism and unadulterated humanism that permeates nearly every page. I was shocked and disgusted that any Southern Baptist could ever support such unscriptural and unchristian teachings."

Grand Lodge Of Louisiana And Sectarianism

Reverend Long included in his letter numerous lengthy quotes from these four booklets. One of those quotes addresses the Grand Lodge of Louisiana's attitude toward the Word of God. It states:

"The Holy Bible represents that which is sacred, which is holy, which is central in a man's spiritual life and in the experiences of his own soul with his God. It is for this reason that the Craft makes no attempt to interpret the Book in a theological sense or to bind a Mason to this creed rather than to that, but leaves each man free to read it according to his own insight and in the light of his own conscience..." (Your Search For Masonic Light: Entered Apprentice Degree, p. 21)

So far, this sounds fine. The soul competence of the believer seems to be being affirmed by the Grand Lodge, and no Southern Baptist would object to that. But, read on to find the truth. The booklet continues:

"Since it is religion in this sense, rather than religion in a merely sectarian sense, that lies at the foundation of Freemasonry, it inevitably follows that religious tolerance is required of every Mason and possesses the power and value of a Landmark." (Your Search For Masonic Light: Entered Apprentice Degree, p. 21)

Ah, it is sectarianism which the Lodge will not abide. It is the narrow-minded idea that one can say, "This is the truth and all else is false", which is anathema to the Lodge. Yet, this is exactly the claim of the Christian faith! The Grand Lodge of Louisiana continues:

"...And just as it would be short-sighted and vain to quarrel with the rain because the cistern in which we catch it differs from a neighbor's cistern, so also is it an act of bigotry to quarrel with the fact that religion takes the shape of the habits and modes of thought of the men to whom it comes. If another differs from us in the form of his faith, it is not the difference that should impress us, rather we should rejoice that he also has found faith." (Your Search For Masonic Light: Entered Apprentice Degree, pp. 21-22)

This sounds so good. But, at its root, it is saying the same thing that A Bridge To Light and Morals and Dogma has said, i.e., individual religions, stemming from the same Masonic plant, only appear different because of the customs and habits of the people to which the truth came.

Religions Are To Be Tolerated Because They Are Man's Imposition Upon Original Masonic Truth

In chapter eleven (see pp. 162ff), this critique deals with Leazer's quoting of Pike in Section 6 of A Study Of Freemasonry entitled, "Is Freemasonry A Religion Or A Fraternity?". On page 25 of A Study Of Freemasonry, Leazer quotes Pike's statement, "He who makes of (Freemasonry) a religious belief, falsifies and denaturalizes it." We reviewed the context of Pike's statement which states:

"...The Brahmin, the Jew, the Mahometan, the Catholic, the Protestant, each professing his peculiar religion, sanctioned by the laws, by time, and by climate, must needs retain it, and cannot have two religions; for the social and sacred laws adapted to the usages, manners, and prejudices of particular countries, are the work of men." (Morals and Dogma, p. 161, emphasis added)

This same concept is taught by A Bridge To Light. (See p. 67) Even the weather affects the religions created by men, Pike declares. Pike further said:

"But Masonry teaches, and has preserved in their purity, the cardinal tenets of the old primitive faith, which underlie and are the foundation of all religions. All that ever existed have had a basis of truth; and all have overlaid that truth with errors....Masonry is the universal morality which is suitable to the inhabitants of every clime, to the man of every creed..." (Morals and Dogma, p. 161, emphasis added)

This same concept is also taught by A Bridge To Light. (see p. 67) Whereas other religions are subject to the weather, Freemasonry, being the true and original faith of man, is independent of "clime", and therefore, is suitable for every man regardless of the rain fall his country experiences. Pike declares that Masonry preserves the original truth, and that it is from Masonic truth that all other religions spring. He said: "Masonry teaches, and has preserved in their purity, the cardinal tenets of the old primitive faith, which underlie and are the foundation of all religions."

Dr. Leazer quoted a 1970 Louisiana Grand Lodge publication to suggest that Masons honor the Bible. But, these subsequent publications of the Louisiana Grand Lodge demonstrate that the true Masonic concept is that the Bible is simply one of the cisterns which has caught the "rain of truth", and that the Bible is not superior to any other book of faith.

The Variety Of Religious Experiences Necessary Because Of Cultural, Social, Environmental Needs Of Man

If anyone doubts Pike's influence over the Masonic Order, read

the following statement from the Louisiana Grand Lodge, which states:.

"Toleration...is built on the fact that in this world religion is so great and so necessary that it must take many forms to satisfy the many needs of the multi-form life of mankind." (Your Search For Masonic Light: Entered Apprentice Degree, Grand Lodge of Louisiana, 1978, p. 23, emphasis added)

The Grand Lodge of Louisiana agrees with Pike; no religion is true; all are only an accommodation of Masonic truth to culture and environment. This is consistent with The SBC and Freemasonry, Volume I, which reports that one edition of the Louisiana Grand Lodge Monitor states:

"There never was a false god, nor was there ever a really false religion, unless you call a child a false man....Every age has had a religion suited to its capacity." (Monitor of The Grand Lodge of Louisiana, p. 7)

Reverend Long continued in his letter to Dr. Lewis commenting on the Louisiana Grand Lodge's "tolerant" view of faith; he said:

"And lest you think they are referring to the differences between 'Christian' religions, listen to this quote taken from the first page of Your Search For Masonic Light: Preparation:

'So you asked a friend, whom you know to be a Freemason, how to proceed. He gave you a petition to fill out and sign. You were asked to declare your belief in God, and probably your friend explained to you that 'God' here means the Supreme Architect of the Universe, call Him by what name you will. He may be to you God or Jehovah or Adonai or Buddha or Allah...it makes no difference to Freemasons by what Name you call Him, so there is within you the humble knowledge that you are a creature of His, and that He reigns over the heavens and the earth.'" (Grand Lodge Of Louisiana, 1978, p. 1, emphasis added)

The only way that a Christian can not understand the incompatibility of Freemasonry with the Christian faith is to do as Dr.

Leazer did, ignore what the Lodge teaches and practices. The Louisiana Grand Lodge's statement is not unlike that of occultist and Masonic writer, Manly P. Hall, who wrote the Lost Keys Of Freemasonry. He said that the Mason has forever given up the worship of personalities; the name means nothing, for the Mason honors the light and not the bearer. That book and the other writings of Hall will be reviewed in chapter seventeen. (See pp. 264ff)

Louisiana Grand Lodge Admits The Royal Secret

The booklet, Your Search For Masonic Light: Fellowship Degree, declares the following:

"Freemasonry's position is that Brotherhood rests on a religious basis; we are all Brothers...because God is the Father of us all; therefore religion is one of the foundations of Masonry...But this religion of Masonry, like all else in its teaching, is not set forth in written creeds, nor in any form of words; the Mason must come upon it for himself, and put it in such form as will satisfy his own mind, leaving others to do likewise. This is Masonic tolerance...that forbids all sectarian discussion in our assemblies... (Grand Lodge of Louisiana, 1978, p. 18)

...Through all the teachings of Masonry run these principles which lead back, each and every one, to its conception and practice of Brotherhood; from that conception all things come in the end. Gain a clear understanding of that and you will have that Royal Secret by which all else is made plain." (Grand Lodge of Louisiana, p. 20, emphasis added)

Remember, the "Royal Secret" is resurrection. In the 26th Degree, when the candidate is felt to be worthy, this "Royal Secret" is revealed to him. But, resurrection requires a salvation. That salvation comes through Masonic Brotherhood, which if pursued with all of one's heart, results in his entry into the Celestial Grand Lodge. Why would Dr. Leazer introduce a publication by the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, trying to prove fidelity to the Word of God, and ignore the clear occultism of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana? It is our hope that this represents poor research and poor scholarship, rather than a determination to ignore negative information about the Lodge.