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WHOM CAN WE TRUST?

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

Because the USA is all but saturated with illicit sex in every conceivable form, it is readly understandable to suppose that this is the predominant moral evil of the day. In the catalog of grave sins could there possibly be any more serious than this one in terms of its current extensiveness on the American scene? What about abortion? Several thousand unborn infants are murdered each day in this country alone. Surely, if sexual licentiousness is not the paramount immorality presently contaminating our nation, then it must be abortion. The wholesale liquidation of innocent and defenseless human beings on the part of presumedly civilized people is indeed a vice of overwhelming magnitude.

But, as exceedingly wicked and extremely widespread and utterly abhorrent as are illicit sex and abortion in America today, there is a third evil which is, I submit, every bit as destructive of American society as are the other two. And that evil is the sin of dishonesty. It is, in one form or another, the most common of all offenses against God, so much so that the person is very much the exception who is thoroughly honest in every respect. However morally good an individual may otherwise be, the chances are that he is not beyond an occasional deception (for example, falsehood, hypocrisy, duplicity) in his dealings with his friends and associates.

But, while all dishonesty is at least objectively sinful, it becomes a matter of great concern when the dishonesty is of a serious nature—and how more and more commonplace this seems to be. Because of the widespread rejection of God and His moral law and the consequent prevailing spirit of permissiveness across the land, with ever increasing frequency do we read or hear of gross acts of dishonesty of all kinds being committed in so many areas of our society and in practically all walks of life—infidelity, corruption, betrayal, theft, fraud, etc. That such are violations of the law of God is rarely of any regret to the culprit. His one regret is likely to be his being caught in his wicked act.

There are, however, two places in the USA where dishonesty is a characteristic feature of operation: the American government and the American mass news media. While this is a fact well-known to those who are informed, they are very much of a minority. The overwhelming majority of the people of this country are not informed and so, at least for the most part, they are likely to trust those in positions of leadership in civil government and they more or less instinctively believe what comes their way through the communications media. The stark fact of the matter is that both the American government and those in control of the mass media are as little concerned about truth as they are about the welfare and survival of this nation. They are anti-American and more and more openly pro-Communist.

Over the last several decades, how often have the powers that be in Washington done anything of substance to contain, much less turn back, the diabolical forces of Communism anywhere in the world? When will the American government begin to take action to release the countless millions of people enslaved under Communist tyranny worldwide? How come the American government is forever befriending Communist nations in various ways and betraying the anti-Communist ones, such as South Africa? (The most recent example of the latter is, of course, Nicaragua. Which country in Central America is next for American betrayal? El Salvador likely—and then Honduras and Guatemala.) After the slaughter in China of several thousand freedom-seeking men and women some months ago, why is it that the USA did so little by way of retaliatory action against the Red Chinese butchers?

Questions such as the above could be readily multiplied and scores of examples cited to indicate that the current American government is decidedly a pro-Communist one. But, in line with the subject matter of this article, the point here is the massive and rank dishonesty involved on the part of the American government in its deception of the generality of the citizens of this country. Through lies, hypocrisy and treason the American people are being steadily led by "masters of deceit" along the road to an atheistic, amoral, totalitarian One World Order—and they remain in ignorance of the developing tragedy, naively continuing to imagine that the USA is being run by Americans.

And then there is that other major source of wholesale deception, the mass media of disinformation, where falsehoods, half-truths, innuendoes, slanted reporting are just about the order of the day. This is especially applicable to the national media (radio, TV, the daily paper, mass circulation magazines) and their news presentations. Almost invariably events are described with a subtle, but unmistakable, pro-"liberal" or pro-leftist or pro-Communist twist. In other words, the truth is distorted or ignored so that an overall impression is conveyed which is contrary to the reality. And the same applies to well-known individuals. If they are "liberal" or anti-American or irreligious or subversive in one way or another, it is pretty much of a foregone conclusion that they will be

treated in a favorable fashion; while those whose conservatism or patriotism or honesty is a quality widely identified with them are usually, if not invariably, presented in a derogatory manner. Have you ever heard by way of the mass media the truth about, say, Jesse Jackson or Mikhail Gorbachev or Martin Luther King, Jr.? Or, on the other side of the coin, have you ever known the media to have anything much good to say about Senator Joseph McCarthy or, for that matter, about any staunch anti-Communist?

Perhaps the best single current example of the dishonesty of the American news media is the propaganda it has been so brazenly spreading for some time now to the effect that Communism is mellowing and that Mikhail Gorbachev is really a pretty decent fellow. But Communism remains today what it has ever been: an international, criminal, militant, atheistic conspiracy whose ultimate aim is to control the world—and it will never of its own accord abandon the pursuit of that objective, not even, I submit, in Poland. (Is Lech Walesa for real?) As for Gorbachev, his record in years past belies the "good guy" impression of him which has been created by the controlled media. Despite all appearances to the contrary, he is a hard-core Communist. And—as others have observed—given the nature of Communism, it is preposterous to suppose that Mikhail Gorbachev was chosen for the supreme position he occupies in the Red regime in order to preside over the dissolution of the Communist empire.

As with the dishonorable American government, the preceding is but a skimming of the surface on the subject of the exceeding dishonesty of the mass media. Its biased coverage of current events and personalities is manifest in many ways and on numerous subjects, (to say nothing, of course, of the contribution it is making to the moral decadence of America in its glamorization and glorification of illicit sex). The mass media of this country is a prime force in the ongoing destruction of the USA. It is one of the most powerful and influential allies the Communist conspiracy could possibly have on the American scene.

For dishonesty practiced on a massive scale, the American government and the American mass media would appear to have no rival in this country or perhaps even worldwide. Not so, in my opinion. The Conciliar Church, I really believe, must also be included. All manner of deceit (duplicity, dissimulation, hypocrisy) is rampant in myriad ways in that Church among so many of its leadership from the Vatican on down (wolves in sheep's clothing), a fact well known by those who have made it their business to be informed on the subject. Apart from the principal deception that John Paul II is a true Pope, the most comprehensive dishonesty is obviously the admittedly hard-to-believe fact that millions of people in this country alone are still under the delusion that the Conciliar Church to which they belong is the Roman Catholic Church.

Come to think of it, any—even partial—list of major organizations or operations in the USA in which dishonesty abounds would have to include the National Education Association which, under the pretext of education, is destroying multitudes of American youth.

Was there ever a time in this nation's history when the qualities of truth and honor and integrity were more rare than they are today both among the rank and file of the populace of America and among its leadership? Dishonesty of every kind and description is rampant, much of it in the highest echelons of power and influence of our national life. But surely the days of any free nation are limited wherein vast numbers of its citizens are men and women without integrity, without principle, without character—and especially when such men and women are in positions of leadership. Indeed, the destiny of America is, and has long been, largely in the hands of people without honor, people who—if they believe in God at all—pay Him but lip service while holding His moral law in disregard or even contempt.

The vice of dishonesty is today at what must certainly be an all-time high on the American scene. How long more, pray tell, before the USA reaches the point of no return as a consequence of the flagrant immorality which is profoundly corrupting this nation and of which dishonesty is so prominent a part? †

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THE RELIGION OF FREEMASONRY

John Kenneth Weiskittel

What is Freemasonry? Ask a hundred people this simple question and you are likely to receive almost as many different answers: a secret society, a fraternal order, a benevolent group, a descendant of medieval guilds, a "male chauvinist" stronghold, an organization of mutual assistance, a school of the "mystic arts," a patriotic association, a chance for husbands to spend "a night out with the boys," an interfaith group, a Christian group, an *anti*-Christian group, a fast track to career or business advancement, a club of political conservatives, a band of political revolutionaries, a fellowship promoting world unity and progress, a...well, you get the idea.

Such confusion is by no means confined to non-Masons. Since most members of the Craft do not go beyond the Third (or *Master Mason*) Degree and since many are inactive, it is likely that the perceptions of Masonry held by them would vary as much as their motives for entering its ranks. As British journalist Stephen Knight writes:

> There is... no authoritative statement of what Masons believe or what the Brotherhood stands for in the first, second and third degrees, to which the vast majority of members restrict themselves. Even a 33° Mason who has persevered to attain all enlightenment that Freemasonry claims to offer could not—even if he were freed from his oath of secrecy—provide more than a purely personal view of the masonic message and the meaning to be attached to masonic symbolism, since this remains essentially subjective. (*The Brotherhood: The Secret World of the Freemasons*, Stein & Day, p. 16)

Knight may be overly generous to the high-ranking Masons, since a perusal of the writings of such indicates that they consistently share the same "personal view" of the Lodge—and it is a view, frankly, that would shock more than a few of their nominal "brothers."

The following article will examine some of the claims made by key Masonic figures such as Albert Pike, W. L. Wilmshurst and Manly P. Hall. It will demonstrate that, however valid some of the responses opening this study may be, Freemasonry is, above all, a religious body that preaches a kind of *surrogate and counterfeit Christianity*.

Is Masonry A Religion?

In its most general sense, a religion may be said to be any system of organized worship of one or more deities, which also teaches its adherents a moral code and advances explanations concerning creation, the soul, man's purpose and destiny, etc. Does Freemasonry fit such a description?

If we are to take the words of Masonic scholars seriously—words usually addressed primarily to other Masons—we must answer in the affirmative. According to Albert Pike, the nineteenth-century Scottish Rite Grand Commander known by his fellow Masons as "the Sovereign Pontiff of Freemasonry," it is his Rite that "raises a corner of the veil, even in the Degree of Apprentice; for it there declares that Masonry is a *worship.*" This assertion appears in his 1871 tome, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, a work that the publisher targeted specifically at members of that Rite in his native America and in Canada. In the same place, Pike elaborates on this theme:

> It (Masonry—JKW) is the universal, eternal, immutable religion, such as God planted it in the heart of universal humanity. No creed has ever been long-lived that was not built on this foundation. It is the base, and they are the superstructure...The ministers of this religion are all Masons who comprehend it and are devoted to it; its sacrifices to God are good works, the sacrifices of the base and disorderly passions, the offering up of self-interest on the altar of humanity, and perpetual efforts to attain to all the moral perfection of which man is capable. (*Morals & Dogma*, Supreme Council [Mother Council of the World] 33° of the A.&A.S.R. of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, 1960 ed., p. 219)

What is evident here is that Pike not only presents Masonry as a religion but as *the* religion upon which all other religions are based. And he is not alone in such a pronouncement.

Manly P. Hall, a prolific author of occult Masonic lore, takes the same position in a work dedicated to Scottish Rite Masons:

> The *sanctum sanctorum* of Freemasonry is ornamented with the gnostic jewels of a thousand ages; its rituals ring with the divinely inspired words of seers and sages. A hundred religions have brought their gifts of wisdom to its altar...Freemasonry is a worldwide university, teaching the liberal arts and sciences of the soul to all who will hearken to its words. Its chairs are seats of learning and its pillars uphold an arch of universal education. Its trestleboards are inscribed with the eternal verities of all ages and upon those who comprehend its sacred depths has dawned the realization that within the Freemasonic Mysteries lie hidden the long-lost arcana (that is *secrets*—JKW) sought by all peoples since the genesis of human reason. (*The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, Philosophical Research Society, 1977 ed. of 1928 work, p. 176)

Here Hall actually expands on Pike's thoughts by fashioning the Brotherhood into a theological school. This is reasonable, of course, as every faith needs it own seminary. And, given its claim to be the father of all religions, a faith whose roots stretch back to time immemorial, Masonry believes it posesses the wisdom it can pass on to its members, no matter what their religious preferences.

When we cross the Atlantic, we find British Masons making precisely the same sort of statements. One periodical, *The Freemason*, boasted in its August 1926 issue: "Freemasonry can stand and watch all religions as they pass in review." (Cited, Fathers L. Rumble, M.S.C., and C. M. Carty, *Radio Replies*, Radio Replies Press, 1938, p. 228) Sir John Cockburn (Past Grand Deacon of England and Past Deputy Grand Master of Australia), in a book entitled *Freemasonry: What, Whence, Why, Whither*, treats this subject at length:

> The question whether Masonry is a religion has been keenly debated. But the contest appears merely as a war of words. Perhaps the best way of arriving at a conclusion would be first to enumerate the points which are common to most religions and then to enquire in what respect Masonry differs from them. Religion deals with the relationship between man and his Maker and instills a reverence for the Creator as first cause. Religions abound in observances of worship by prayer and praise. They inculcate rules of holding up a God or Hero as a pattern of imitation...It would be difficult to say in which of these characteristics Freemasonry is lacking. Surely it abounds in them all. Its ceremonies are elaborate and are unsurpassed for beauty and depth of meaning (*sic*). They are interspersed with prayer and thanksgiving...If the title of religion be denied to Freemasonry it may well claim the higher ground of being a Federation of Religions. It is a form of worship in which all religions can unite without sacrificing a jot of their respective creeds. (Cited, Walton Hannah, *Darkness Visible: A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry*, Augustine, 1980 ed. of 1952 work, p. 31. The title, incidentally, comes from the Masonic rite for raising to the Third Degree: "The light of a Master Mason is darkness visible." See p. 140)

This notion of the Lodge as an "ecumenical" superreligion, an umbrella faith beneath which Christians can jointly worship with Jews, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists and others, is one of the reasons that Masonry has ever been opposed by the Roman Catholic Church for, despite Cockburn's claims to the contrary, there is no way that such religious indifferentism can leave the views of the Christian Mason unaffected.

This conflict came out in the open in 1952 when the Reverend Walton Hannah, a 38-year-old Anglican clergyman, challenged his Church to investigate what he saw rightly to be the incompatibility of Masonry and Christianity. His book, *Darkness Visible*, caused a furor in Anglican circles but, when the Church of England's hierarchy (many of whom were Masons) silenced debate on the issue, Hannah became disillusioned, converted to Roman Catholicism and moved to Canada. His study was so damaging to Masonry that an "answer" was forthcoming. *Light Invisible*, which also appeared in 1952, was written by another Anglican vicar, but one who belonged to the Craft and identified himself only as "Vindex." The defense offered by Vindex turns out to confirm much of Hannah's stance. For example, he writes:

> *It* (Masonry—JKW) *is the oldest of all religious systems dating back to time immemorial (italics—Stephen Knight).* It has never been a separate religion, and has never claimed to be one, but it embodies in itself the fundamental truths and ancient mysteries on which every religion is based. Taunts that it worships a "common denominator" God are rather wide of the mark if the phrase indicates any inadequacy or limitation in nature or title of the God we worship, for we worship and believe as a first principle in the fulness of the Godhead of which other religions see only in part. (Cited, Knight, p. 233)

This, of course, is patently heretical, as it denies the fullness of Christian revelation and claims the same exclusively for Masonry. Vindex is even clearer on this when he states: "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." (*Ibid.*, p. 234) Here we have a frank admission that the Christian, in order to embrace the Masonic faith, must, in effect, deny Our Lord's exclusive status as the only-begotten Son of God. Although Vindex would seem to retreat from such a stand in the following passage, careful reading reveals otherwise.

> As Masons, we believe in God, the Father, Almighty. As Christian Masons we may believe in a symbolical triune essence, and that Jesus Christ is His Son, Our Lord. As Moslem Masons we are equally entitled to believe that Mahomet (Mohammed—JKW) is his prophet. With these subsidiary and secondary beliefs Masonry has nothing to do, giving the members a perfect liberty to interpret the Godhead as they please. (*Ibid.*)

There is so much error in these four brief sentences it is difficult to know where to begin. The Holy Trinity is not a dogma that Christians may call a symbol, but is God's very essence. In turn, to deny the Trinity is to deny Our Lord's true nature and His relationship with His Father. Moslems are invited by the Brotherhood to continue in their darkness that Mohammed is a true prophet of God and that Christ, though a minor prophet, is not the Savior. Finally, Vindex tells us that Masonry views these teachings as "subsidiary and secondary beliefs," while it is impossible to embrace an orthodox Christian faith without affirming the revealed truths about God and His Son. By attacking such central doctrines, Masonry has contributed greatly to the ongoing destruction of Christian tradition and has demonstrated that it represents

a false worship.

The Masonic "Sacraments"

Masonry has ever coveted the Catholic Church's status as the universal religion and has ever desired to usurp her crown. As Satan apes God, the Lodge imitates His Church. So we find that it has concocted its own version of the sacraments.

For a man to seek entry into a Masonic lodge is, whether he realizes it or not, equivalent to his seeking membership in a Church. Another major author of the Craft was Walter Leslie Wilmshurst. In his 1927 book, *The Meaning of Masonry* (dedicated to the United Grand Lodge of England), he states: "Theoretically, every man upon reception into the Craft acknowledges himself as within the category of the spiritually poor, and is content to renounce all temporal riches if haply by that sacrifice his hungry heart may be filled with those good things which money cannot purchase, but to which the truly initiated can help him." (p. 15) Thus the claim is made that Masonry consists of a priesthood able to minister to the needs of "the spiritually poor." This alleged function of the Lodge can also be seen in the following definition from a standard American Masonic reference work:

> *Darkness*...Applied to Masonic symbolism, it is intended to remind the candidate of his ignorance which Masonry is to enlighten; of his evil nature, which Masonry is to purify; of the world, in whose obscurity he has been wandering and from which Masonry is to rescue him. (E. R. Johnston, *Masonry Defined*, National Masonic Press, 1930, p. 186)

As one author who has investigated the Lodge writes, "(At his initiation) the Masonic candidate—Christian, Jew, Moslem, Buddhist, or Hindu—beseeches the lodge to deliver him from darkness." (William Whalen, *Separated Brethren*, Bruce, 1958, p. 226)

So Masonry tells its aspirants that it will provide them with spiritual wisdom and salvation. To do this it claims to have rites that confer grace, that is, *sacraments*. The First (or *Entered Apprentice*) Degree, Wilmshurst writes: "...is eminently the degree of preparation, of self-discipline and purification. It corresponds with that symbolical (*sic*) cleansing accorded in the sacrament of baptism..." (*Op. cit.*, p. 35) The Second (or *Fellow-Craft)* Degree, he writes, "is equivalent to the rite of Confirmation in the Christian Churches." (p. 40) The next degree, known as *Master Mason*, signifies nothing short of *resurrection* itself. Wilmshurst has no trouble in sacrilegiously citing Sacred Scripture while discussing this:

> All that has happened in the third degree is that he (the initiate—JKW) has passed symbolically through a great and striking change: a rebirth, or regeneration of his whole nature. He has been "sown a corruptible body"; and in virtue of the self-discipline and self-development he has undergone, there has been raised in him "an incorruptible body," and death has been swallowed up in the victory he has attained over himself. (p. 42)

Now this passage is nothing but a distortion of the Christian teachings on the Resurrection, specifically as set forth by Saint Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. When the Apostle writes: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (15:54), he is referring to the fruits of Our Lord's atoning death—"the victory through Our Lord Jesus Christ." (15:57) But Wilmshurst is twisting this to fit the Masonic belief in a self-deliverance. True, some Masons may delude themselves into thinking that he is somehow in agreement with Saint Paul but this ignores two plain facts: (1) Far from upholding Christian doctrines, the Lodge avoids mention of the most blessed name of Our Savior in its prayers, and (2) Such a dogma as Christ's saving death must, by definition, be excluded from Masonry since it is seen as offensive to Jews, Moslems, Hindus and other non-Christian members.

A strong attraction to the Brotherhood for some is its claim of being able to impart secret "spiritual" knowledge. They see it— with its place of worship, elaborate symbolism, "priesthood," rituals and "sacraments"—as an acceptable substitute for or addition to their Church. Wilmshurst, writing on the influx of new members into Masonry earlier this century, observes:

> The growth synchronizes with a corresponding defection of interest in orthodox religion and public worship. It need not now be enquired whether or to what extent the simple principles of faith and the humanitarian ideals of Masonry are with some men taking the place of the theology offered in the various Churches; it is probable that to some extent they do so. (p. 15)

It is not unusual to read obituaries stating that the deceased will be given a Masonic funeral service (at which those officiating ask that his soul be admitted to "the Grand Lodge Above") in addition to one said by a Church minister. But for many Christian Masons, trying to juggle the beliefs of their Church with those of the lodge can get confusing. Stephen Knight writes that "hundreds of members of the Brotherhood have spoken to me of the turmoil they experience in attempting to reconcile their religious views with the demands of masonic ritual." (p. 231)

The Mysteries of Iniquity

What we've seen so far should be enough to convince any honest Christian in the Masons to sever those ties, but what follows should turn him into an active opponent of the Craft. In his great encyclical on Freemasonry, *Humanum Genus*, Pope Leo XIII accused the Lodge of wishing "to bring back after eighteen centuries the manners and customs of the pagans." And in 1933, some forty-nine years after Leo's pronouncement, bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church issued an excellent report that found, among other things, "a link between Freemasonry and the ancient idolatrous mysteries..." (Cited, Hannah, p. 71)

These are serious charges indeed. How can they be substantiated? Simply by returning to the Masonic writers. Before seeing what they have to say, a brief definition of "mysteries" or "mystery religions" is in order. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* includes the following under *mystery:* "5. *Class. Relig.* a A secret religious rite to which none but duly initiated worshippers were admitted. b *(often cap.)* A cult characterized by such rites..."

W. L. Wilmshurst states that Masonry "reproduces for the modern world the main features of the Ancient Mysteries..." (*Op. cit.*, p. 14) Henry C. Clausen, 33° Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, in discussing the works of his predecessor, Albert Pike, writes:

> Our teachings and symbols preceded our formal organization by thousands of years. They go deep into ancient ages. The signs, symbols and inscription come to us from across long, drifting centuries and will be found in the tombs and temples of India to those of Nubia, through the Valley of the Nile in Egypt down to its Delta, as what was then known as Chaldea, Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, and even in Mexico and Yucatan...(*Clausen's Commentaries On Morals & Dogma,* Supreme Council 33° A.&A.S.R. of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, 1974, p. 2)

Clausen evokes ancient cultures from four continents. What do these nations, which vary as greatly in their civilizations as they do in their geography, have as a common thread? The answer, of course, is that they all were cradles for what became thriving pagan religions—religions, we might add, that practiced what were often obscene or bloodthirsty rituals.

The early Church Fathers taught that at the time of Satan's greatest defeat—the Crucifixion—pagans in Rome moaned, "The Great God Pan is dead!" It is interesting in this context to read Manly P. Hall's somewhat fanciful description of Masonry's background:

> Masonry came to Northern Africa and Asia Minor from the lost continent of Atlantis, not under its present name but rather under the general designation of Sun and Fire Worship. The ancient mysteries did not cease when Christianity became the world's most powerful religion. Great Pan did not die! Freemasonry is the proof of his survival...(p. 176)

Pan, whose modern cult Hall finds in Masonry, was the hideous fertility god, half man and half ram, who represented, "through his rather bestial appearance and unsated love, the unconquered and diffuse force of all nature." (Joel Schmidt, *Larousse Greek and Roman Mythology,* McGraw-Hill, 1980, p. 206) This is but one example from many to indicate why some scholars have suggested that the "deity" worshipped by occultists in Masonry, beneath layers of symbols, is nothing but the act of human reproduction. (Similarly, when Clausen talks about how Masonry uses symbols from ancient India, Hall alludes favorably to two such "sacred" Hindu forms, the *lingam* and *yoni,* which are stylized representations of the male and female genitals.)

The mystery religions included the Isis-Osiris cult in Egypt, those dedicated in Greece to Demeter and Persephone, the Persian sect of the sun-god Mithra and the Bacchus rites in Rome. It was in Imperial Rome that these and other mysteries met and mingled, so much so that "beginning with Augustus Caesar many Roman Emperors were initiated into them." (Horace L. Friess, editor, *Non-Christian Religions,* Grosset & Dunlap, 1963, p. 101) Mithraism has been called the "Freemasonry of Antiquity," since "the initiates were bound by an oath of secrecy; there were various degrees of initiation; the members were known to one another by certain signs; and membership was restricted to men." (John Heron Lepper, *Famous Secret Societies,* Gryphon Books, 1971 ed. of 1932 work, p. 34) Emperors who supported this cult included Nero, Trajan, Constantine (he wavered between it and Christianity until choosing the latter on his deathbed), Julian the Apostate and Commodus, who "is reported to have soiled his hands by a murder during the ceremonies of his admission." (*Ibid.*, pp. 33-34) Perhaps this is why foes of Mithraism charged it with ritual murder. Recent archaeological excavations of the sect's temples have unearthed human bones and would seem to confirm the allegations. (p. 34) In any case, the era of the mysteries were brought to a decisive end in the fourth century by the Catholic Emperor Theodosius the Great. (*Ibid.*, p. 12)

Apart from their different origins, the mysteries all shared certain traits: the secrecy, all-male membership (excepting the Demeter cult, which was for women only) and a myth cycle that involved a "resurrection" of a pagan god. The last point is significant. Christian writer Julius Firmicus Maternus in 345 exposed the Osiris cult so that "all may see the law ordained by God has been perversely imitated and corrupted by Satan." (Cited, Lepper, p. 10) He relates how an image of the dead Osiris is placed before the initiates in a darkened chamber. They pretend to mourn until a light is brought into the room. "Thereafter," Firmicus states, "the faces of all the mourners are annointed by the priest, and he whispers in a low murmur, 'Take cheer, ye initiated, the god being saved, for we shall have out of toils deliverance.'" (Cited, *ibid.*) A century before that Tertullian (in his "De Praescriptione Haereticorum") similarly castigated the Mithra mystery cult, to which he had once belonged, as a Satanic parody of the Church. The points he mentioned include parallels of Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, virgins, and that it "introduceth a representation of the resurrection." (Cited, *ibid.*, p. 40) Lepper notes: "It was a common feature in all the mysteries for the candidate to die symbolically and be born anew." (p. 40) As we've seen, this is also a feature of the *new* mystery cult, as is the mourning of the death of a mythical hero (in Masonry's case, this involves a reenactment of the murder of Hiram Abiff, a supposed

builder of Solomon's Temple).

Masonry's Ultimate Goal

When stripped of its mask of respectability, Freemasonry is seen to have a pagan face. Yet its ability to stay hidden behind the mask continues to fool most non-Masons and most Lodge members. How many Masons would know, for example, that Christ has been called a "solar deity," brother of Apollo, Osiris, Orpheus, Mithras and Bacchus. (Hall, pp. 50-51); that Simon Magus, the sorcerer condemned by Saint Peter (Acts 8:9-24), is praised as the founder of the secret heretical sect of the Gnostics. (*Ibid.*, p. 25); that the "secret name of God," *Jah-Bul-On*, mentioned in the Scottish Rite's Fourth (or *Perfect Master—Royal Arch* in England) Degree, is an unholy combining of the names *Jah* (Jehovah), *Bul* (Baal, a Canaanite fertility god associated with magic) and *On* (Osiris, the Egyptian god of the underworld) (Knight, pp. 236-240); or that occultism and demonism are practiced by some high degree Masons. (See "Devil Cults: A Growing Menace" in the July 15, 1989 issue of this newsletter.) The answer to all these questions is the same: few Masons and even fewer outsiders are aware of just how deeply go the Craft's pagan roots.

Those Masons who profess belief in Christ must ask themselves *which* faith it is that they truly seek to embrace—one or the other, you can't have both. Walton Hannah has shown the utter incompatibility of the two, writing:

> ...if Freemasonry had been practised in the primitive Church of Rome to the same extent as in the present-day Church of England many quite unnecessary martyrdoms would have been spared. Christians in those days were willing to face death rather than cast a few grains of incense to the Emperor or other deities. But had their pagan brethren from Numa Pompilia Lodge claimed the right to visit the Lodge Roma Ecclesia the latter would doubtless have discovered that the Great Architect of the Universe to whom they prayed together...could be equated with Nero and Jupiter quite as legitimately as with the Holy Trinity. Why then deny to the point of death in the Colosseum outside the Lodge what was so inevitably true inside? (*Op. cit.*, p. 39)

But such adulteration of Christianity with beliefs hateful to God is precisely what Masonry's hidden leadership desires. According to Wilmshurst the final aim of the Brotherhood is the reestablishment of paganism. He writes: "Carried to its fullness, that achievement would involve the revival, in a form adapted to modern conditions, of the ancient Wisdom teaching and the practice of those Mysteries which became proscribed fifteen centuries ago, but of which modern Masonry is the direct and representative descendent..." (*Op. cit.*, p. 17)

How far is Freemasonry in fulfilling this wish? To arrive at the answer one need only consider the subversion in the Church, the similar Modernist inroads in "mainstream" Protestant Churches and the rapid growth of the pagan New Age movement. We must, then, continue to tear away Masonry's disguise of righteousness. If we do not, it is undeniable that the spiritual warfare that is sweeping like fire through the world will leave it in ashes. †

DO WE HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

The history of the Church is replete with accounts of the extraordinary lives of personal sanctity of the saints and of the heroism of the martyrs. All down through the Christian centuries multitudes of men and women, both young and old and from all levels of society, have willingly and joyfully made the supreme sacrifice of their lives in martyrdom in testimony to their love for God and for His Church. Undergoing every imaginable kind of suffering and torture, they sealed with their blood their proclamations of loyalty to Christ and fidelity to the Faith, even as they prayed for their prosecutors to their dying breath. To them (and their ranks included kings and queens) life literally meant nothing if, to preserve it, they had to deny or compromise the Faith by word or deed. Truly this legion of martyrs is one of the greatest glories of our beloved Church. And the Faith which they professed and for which they lived and died is the very same Faith which we traditional Roman Catholics possess today.

But, if the day should ever dawn when open and bloody persecution would confront us in this country, would we do what so many of our heroic predecessors in the Faith have done? Is our love for Christ and our loyalty to His Church of such a caliber that we too would be willing to make the supreme sacrifice of our lives in martyrdom? If or when the day comes when we are faced with torture and death because we are Roman Catholics, will we too put our lives on the line in testimony to our God-given Faith? Are we at this moment spiritually prepared and unreservedly willing to do so if we were today confronted with that prospect? In a word, do we have what it takes?

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Fr. Oswald Baker (England)

Why do Catholics cherish devotion to Mary, our Blessed Lady? They do so by reason of their love for her Son. And they revere and worship her Son because He is God. God became Mary's Child. Her God, and ours, the Creator of the universe, was her Son. The divinity of Jesus Christ means that Mary gave human existence to Him Who had created her. For some months God lived physically within her life. In a unique sense Mary could say with Saint Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Galatians II: 20) The truth that Jesus is God and man in one Person involves the other truth that Mary is the Mother of God.

Of all Christian practices the two most tender and most characteristically Catholic are the adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. A faithful Catholic, with childlike simplicity and trust, has recourse to Mary as a true and precious mother in all his needs. In temptations, to be sustained; in falls, to be uplifted; in crosses and adversities, to be consoled and fortified. True devotion to Mary will of its nature inspire and dispose a soul to desire holiness, to avoid sin, to seek God rather than self. True devotion to Mary will lead souls to the love and observance of the virtues, of chastity in particular. Sin is infinitely hateful to Our Lord. It is the direct contrary of God. There could be no possible association of Jesus Christ with sin. It is inconceivable that God the Son could be born of an ordinary sinful mother, that He could unite His divinity with flesh and blood which had been infected with the putrefaction of sin. For the glory of God, Who was to become her Child, Mary was full of grace the moment she came from His creative hand.

Mary was herself not blind to the unexampled favours she had received from God and the exalted position to which she had been raised. It is not humility to deny honour and eminence. Mary proclaimed: "He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His Name." Mary knew that upon no other had God bestowed such honour and nobility. "Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." The prophecy has been fulfilled. All ages and all nations have acknowledged her regal glory and splendour, and have rendered homage to Mary, the Mother of God.

At the beginning of Our Lord's life, the Gospel assigns an important position to Mary. Then follows the long obscurity of the thirty years at Nazareth. For thirty years Jesus was Mary's own, their hearts joined in a divinely perfect union, culminating in a joint suffering for our salvation. When Our Lord's "hour" came, on Calvary, when ordinary maternal instinct would have kept her aloof from the fearful tragedy or have shown itself in hysteria, tears and fainting, Mary "stood" by the Cross, silent, outwardly impassive, fulfilling a part providentially appointed to her. She alone knew what was really taking place. To others, the Crucifixion was, variously, either the execution of a disturber of the peace, or the martyrdom of a holy prophet, or the failure of another noble enterprise. Mary was aware that the sufferer was God and that this was the accomplishment of the divine plan for the salvation of mankind.

When Mary's own hour came, death was in no sense a penalty, not an object of anxiety and dread, but of hope and delight. The aspiration of Mary's ardent love for Jesus was a force ever drawing her away from this life towards Heaven, ever gradually gaining in intensity, to unite it forever with Him Whom with her whole heart she had loved and served. By her status and her course on earth she had ennobled not only her own family and nation, but all her sex and all humanity. Mary's influence gave to women in our civilisation a position of dignity unknown elsewhere, a position which declines wherever the honour due to Christ's Mother is neglected. †

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