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THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF
AMERICAN FREEMASONRY

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Philosophy
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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June 1955

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Reader

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The power and the influence of American Protestantism

is the subject of this study. To say the least, it is

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and enjoy the full good life now and in eternity.

This study attempts to make visible the features
presenting Dewey's ethical teachings and to assess them
for what they really are—utilitarian. The author attempts
to lay bare the utilitarian ethics of Dewey by
comparing them with the Christian ethics. At the same time
this study will, it is hoped, help the reader to discover
and to realize the great gap that separates the ethics of
American Protestantism from those of Christianity. In this
and the author employs the analytical approach in his
examination of the ethical implications of American Protes-

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The power and the influence of American Freemasonry appears to be on the upsurge. In our day and age it is exerting a continually increasing attraction for man. It appears fashionable and respectable that a man become a Mason in order to attain social stature, economic preferences and professional prestige. And yet beneath this society-sought and society-accepted veneer of Masonic privileges and opportunities lurks an extremely deceiving and dangerous antagonist to the teachings of Jesus Christ, for Masonry presents a complete system of humanistic ethics by which the Mason believes he can discover, exploit, live and enjoy the full good life now and in eternity.

This study endeavors to make visible the darkness permeating Masonry's ethical teachings and to expose them for what they really are--antichristian. The author attempts to lay bare the antichristian ethics of Freemasonry by comparing them with the Christian ethics. At the same time this study will, it is hoped, help the reader to discover and to realize the great gulf that separates the ethics of American Freemasonry from those of Christianity. To this end the author employs the antithetical approach in his examination of the ethical implications of American Freemasonry.

This study presents its findings under the following heads: the foundation of the good life, the essence of the good life, and the goal of the good life.

Though this author utilizes statements from British authors who have exposed British Freemasonry, he is assured that the basic ethical principles and implications of British Freemasonry are similar to those of American Freemasonry.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDATION OF THE GOOD LIFE

American Freemasonry teaches the good life. There are, therefore, very definite ethical implications in Freemasonry. Doctor Mackey, a Mason and a noted American authority on Freemasonry, defines ethics as follows:

The science of morals teaching the theory and practise of all that is good in relation to God and to man, to the state and the individual,--it is, in short, to use the emphatic expression of a German writer, 'the science of the good.'¹

For Mackey, therefore, the good life is a science of the good. Such a science does not merely consist of theories and axioms; it is rather a system which man is to employ in his daily life. The good life is to become evident in man's relationship with his God and with his fellow human beings. Man is to employ this theory and practise of the good life in all walks of life and in all experiences of life.

If such a science of morals is to be put into practise, a basis for this system must obviously first be established from which ethical implications and consequences may derive their power. In order that all within man may be properly channeled to the pursuit of the science of the good, it is highly necessary that the basis of this good life be clearly and properly focused.

¹A. G. Mackey, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (Chicago; Masonic History Company, 1946), I, 340.

Christians establish a system of ethics upon the revelation of God as found in the sacred writings of the Old and New Testament. Christians derive their moral principles and practises from the Bible. Divine revelation culminates in the truth that the incarnate Son of God Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, and that the Christian who in faith accepts Jesus as His Savior is empowered also by the Spirit of God to lead a good life in conformity with God's will. Freemasonry does not rely on a revelation of God to man. A Mason does not base his system of the good life on the teachings of God revealed through prophets, apostles and evangelists. The witness of the Bible to the life and mission of Jesus Christ is, so the Mason is told, not reliable. Doctor Albert Pike, another well known interpreter of Freemasonry, discredits the reliability of Revelation in the statement: "Facts and testimony are not, except in very rare instances, the ground work of faith."² The good life, the life of Christian love which Jesus taught and lived, is not, so Mackey believes, to become the basis of the good life for a Mason, because the good life of a Christian is based upon the revealed facts of the incarnation, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A Mason, therefore, does not conceive of his Supreme Architect of the Universe formulating an ethical system basing the good life on revealed facts.

² Albert Pike, Morals and Dogma (Charleston: L. H. Jenkins, 1921), p. 165.

Furthermore, the limitations of man do not permit a Mason to base the good life on revelation. "Man's views in regard to God will contain only so much positive truth as the human mind is capable of receiving."³ Revelation is inadequate for the Mason because he is a finite being; as such he is incapable of comprehending the infinite. Because he is material, he cannot form a clear, concise conception of the spiritual.⁴ It is true, of course, that Christians cannot fully comprehend all of God's revelation. Their sinful nature makes it impossible for them to understand and apply the full meaning of God's revelation to them and their fellowmen. The Christian sees through a glass, darkly. However, by faith the Christian receives, understands and applies to himself the necessary facts of God's revelation which serve him as a Christ-centered basis for the good life. Though a Christian does not fully understand the entirety of God's revelation, yet the Holy Spirit makes him capable to believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. A new relationship is thus established from the Christian's point of view between God and man and between man and his fellowman. On this God-initiated relationship a Christian bases the good life. A Mason, however, does not trust in revelation, in the Old and New Testament, because, so he

³Ibid. , p. 221.

⁴Ibid. , p. 222.

believes, man must always remember that he is but a mere mortal who cannot comprehend the truths embodied in revelation.

Thus Freemasonry does not base the good life on revelation. For Masonry the facts of revelation are not, except in very rare instances, reliable. Again, man is not capable of understanding the principles of what is morally right and wrong and cannot comprehend the very truth about God and his purposes. A Mason does not grasp the ultimate purpose of God's revelation to man--the salvation of souls. Therefore, he does not realize and utilize the full impact of revelation with its far reaching ethical implications for life. The foundation of the good life for a Mason is not contained in the revelation of God in His Word. It must, so he believes, be sought elsewhere.

A Mason believes that he is not in need of revelation in this life. He can live the good life without recourse to any special revelation by the Creator to the creature. "He considers that if there were no written revelation, he could safely rest the hopes that animate him and the principles that guide him on the deductions of reason and the convictions of instinct and consciousness."⁵ Thus the relevancy of revelation is unimportant for the Mason. He cannot trust the facts of revelation; he is unable to understand it, and he does not have any particular need for it.

⁵Ibid. , p. 226.

However, Freemasonry does utilize Revelation as contained in the Christian Scriptures. The King James Version of the Bible serves as a guide to the search for the good life. It is compared by Masons to the beacon light of a lighthouse which points out the way for a ship in darkness. The Bible shows the Mason the way in which he should conduct himself in this life.⁶

When we are told the Bible is one of the Great Lights of Masonry, and that as such it is the rule and guide to our faith, it can only be speaking symbolically as it certainly is when speaking of the other two Great Lights, the square and compass. It is the rule and guide to our faith because that which it symbolizes, Truth, should rule and guide us in our faith and in all our beliefs, thoughts, words and actions.⁷

Freemasonry uses the Bible symbolically. It is not the power and motivation of the good life. It is only a rule and guide. Even though it is considered as essential furniture in the lodge,⁸ opened on the altars, quoted extensively in lectures and manuals and also sworn upon when oaths are administered, the Bible is only used symbolically.

In American Freemasonry there can be various guides to the good life. The very nature and teachings of Freemasonry makes such a situation possible. This results when Free-

⁶ H. S. Box, The Nature of Freemasonry (London: Augustine Press, 1952), p. 10.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ A. G. Mackey, Masonic Lexicon (New York: Effingham Maynard and Company, 1890), p. 163.

masonry permits the Scriptures of other religions to be used instead of the Holy Bible.

The Bible is properly called a greater light of Freemasonry, for from the center of the Lodge it pours forth upon the East, the West, and the South its refulgent rays of Divine truth. The Bible is used among Freemasons as a symbol of the will of God, however it may be expressed. Therefore, whatever to any people expresses that will may be used as a substitute for the Bible in a Masonic Lodge.⁹

What is of paramount importance is that a religious code of some kind, purporting to be an exemplar of the revealed will of God be in each lodge.¹⁰ It does not matter what rule of faith is present, whether it be the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament or the Pentateuch of the Jew or the Vedas of the Hindu or the Koran of Islam, as long as there is one present! Various guides to the good life are possible, because, as Masons believe, within each rule of faith are found the moral principles which are to guide the Mason and to provide the secure scaffolding upon which the good life is to be lived.

For American Freemasonry the foundation of the good life is founded upon truth. "The real object of Freemasonry, in a philosophical and religious sense, is the search for truth."¹¹ The Mason's life is geared to the discovery of truth. Upon truth is based the discovery of virtues which

⁹ Mackey, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, I, 133.

¹⁰ A. G. Mackey, A Text Book of Masonic Jurisprudence (New York: Effingham Maynard and Company, 1890), p. 34.

¹¹ Mackey, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, II, 1057.

constitute the good life. "In the lecture of the First Degree, Truth is called a divine attribute, the foundation of every virtue."¹² For the Entered Apprentice truth has not yet been discovered. As a result the man who desires to become a Mason desires to find truth, and as this truth unfolds itself within him, it serves as a basis for the full good life. As the Initiate proceeds to the Fellow Craft Degree and then to the Master Mason Degree and so onward and up the Masonic ladder of truth, he is brought to the realization that he can discover within himself this basis of the good life.

The Mason does not receive facts and testimonies which convey the full and ultimate truth whereas the Christian knows the truth, for he has the revealed word of God and continues in that word. The Mason must constantly ask himself, "What is truth?" Truth for the Mason is sought in every degree, but never fully grasped, just approached to. If the good life is to become a full good life, that is, a good life which utilizes the full potentialities within man, the Mason must constantly search after truth. Freemasonry does not fully impart truth, irrespective of what degree a Mason has attained. Whether he be a Fellow Craft Mason or a Grand Scottish Knight of St. Andrew, he has no guarantee that he has come into possession of the complete truth. Nor will there ever be such a guarantee. The symbolism of Freemasonry

¹²Ibid.

does not automatically certify that Masonry has fully grasped the truth. As a result Freemasonry does not present to its members a bona fide and final system of ethics, for the virtues of the good life, and the good life itself, are based upon truth and truth is always in the process of being self-realized by the Mason. He must through constant practise and search seek to attain the full good life, the ultimate end of the ethical system established through truth.¹³ A Mason must labor to grasp the meaning of truth. "The great object of pursuit in Masonry--the scope and tendency of all its investigations--is Truth. This is the goal to which all Masonic labor tends."¹⁴

A knowledge of truth is not immediately revealed, neither does man acquire it through a life time of study. Truth--the basis for the good life--is gradually established. "You are in the path that leads up the slope of the mountain of Truth, and it depends upon your secrecy, obedience and fidelity whether you will advance or remain stationary."¹⁵

The good life ultimately has its foundation in man himself. The Mason is the one who determines qualitatively and quantitatively the extent of his ethics. "The final truth cannot be communicated at all from one person to an-

¹³W. L. Wilmsburst, The Masonic Initiation (London: John Watkins, 1948), p. 5.

¹⁴J. Blanchard, Freemasonry Illustrated (Chicago: Ezra A. Cook, 1908), p. 498.

¹⁵Pike, op. cit., p. 106.

other orally. One who is in light cannot reveal the Truth. This Truth already exists within man and needs only to be liberated."¹⁶ A Mason must, therefore, muster all his energies to the pursuit of truth, for as he gradually taps the fountain of truth within his breast, the gushing waters flowing with virtues and the good life slowly seep into his heart and gradually overflow into his life.

¹⁶Wilmshurst, op. cit., p. 102.

CHAPTER III

THE ESSENCE OF THE GOOD LIFE

An ethical system which acknowledges a relationship between man and his creator emphasizes either the predominance of God (Christianity) or of man (humanistic ethics) in the establishment and continuation of this relationship, or it disregards God entirely (Marxian communism). Secular systems of ethics usually emphasize the inherent power and potentiality of man to discover, exploit and live the good life. All ethical systems can, therefore, be classified as God-initiated and motivated, man-initiated and motivated, or else as a combination of the two.

In some ethical systems the role of God determines the basic motivations and principles from which the good life proceeds. Christian ethics in particular teaches that God initiates and empowers the Christian to live the good life, that is, a life in conformity with God's will and to His glory. The good life of a Christian is the fruit of his faith in Jesus Christ as his crucified and resurrected Savior. The motivation and power of the good life are, therefore, the inevitable results of the Christian's faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the spokes of a wheel radiate from the hub, so the Christian's life spreads out from the very center of his life, the crucified

and risen Lord.

How does the ethics of Freemasonry compare with Christian ethics? Freemasonry indeed permits God to play a role in the good life of a Mason. A Mason may not be an atheist.¹ He must believe that there is a God. He even prays to God and asks for His benedictions. However, Masonry disregards the importance of God in the creation, continuation and development of the good life. This becomes evident in Doctor Mackey's description of the Masonic creed:

The creed of a Mason is brief, unentangled with scholastic subtleties, or with theological difficulties. It is a creed which demands and receives the universal consent of all men, which admits of no doubt, and defies schism. It is the belief in God, the supreme architect of heaven and earth, the dispenser of all good gifts, and the judge of the quick and the dead.²

Therefore, a Mason confesses many good things about God. For the Mason such a confession is absolutely imperative.³ Masonry states that it believes in the existence of a God who is the supreme architect of heaven and earth, the giver of all good gifts and judge of the living and the dead. However, Masonry does not specifically define its God!

¹J. Blanchard, Freemasonry Illustrated (Chicago: Ezra A. Cook, 1908), p. 132.

²A. G. Mackey, Masonic Lexicon (New York: Effingham Maynard and Company, 1890), p. 102.

³Blanchard, op. cit., p. 132.

It does not equate its concept of God with the Triune God revealed in the sacred Scriptures.

Moreover, Masonry repudiates the work of the Triune God and does not assign to Him a role in the good life of the Mason, as does Christianity. For a Christian the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, motivate and provide the power for the good life. God the Father is the Creator and Preserver of life. God the Son has redeemed the child of God with His precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. God the Holy Ghost makes the Christian holy-- He calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps the Christian in the one true faith in Christ Jesus. The Triune God thus plays a vital role in the good life of a Christian. Without the continual invasion of the Triune God into the life of a Christian, the Christian is incapable of living the good life acceptable to God. The Mason on the other hand does not acknowledge and rely upon the power which the Christian derives from the operation of the Triune God in his life.

In fact, the God of the Mason is not even intimately connected with the Mason's life. He is not the power behind the good life. The power of the good life for a Mason lies within himself! Masonry, rather, resembles the Deism of the eighteenth century:

The religious outlook of Masonry strongly echoes the Deism of the eighteenth century in stressing the light of nature as a moral guide, in beginning and ending

with man's upward aspirations to God, with man's justifying himself in the eyes of God by his own good works.⁴

As a result, God is a distant God for the Mason. He is not involved in the Mason's life in the sense in which He is involved in the good life of a Christian. He is not a God who has made man's heart His temple. Freemasonry espouses a natural religion which is inherent in all men. "God has implanted in men such a faculty that man can grasp the essential elements of this religion and on the basis of it formulate an ethical system."⁵

But Masonry being found in all Nations, even of divers Religions, they are now only charged to adhere to that Religion in which all Men agree (leaving each Brother to his own particular Opinions) that is, to be Good Men and True, Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Names, Religions or Persuasions they may be distinguished.⁶

A Mason can, therefore, live the good life by adhering to the religion inherent in himself.

On the basis of the religion which, according to Masonry, all men possess, Masonry establishes a moral system.

Freemasonry is a moral institution, established by virtuous men, with praiseworthy design of recalling to our remembrance the most sublime truths, in the midst of the most innocent and social pleasure, founded on Liberality, Brotherly Love and Charity.⁷

⁴W. Hannah, Darkness Visible (London: Augustine Press, 1952), p. 40.

⁵F. Tennant, Encyclopedia Britannica (Chicago, London, Toronto: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1763), VII, 144-45.

⁶H. Box, The Nature of Freemasonry (London: Augustine Press, 1952), p. 20.

⁷Blanchard, op. cit., p. 34.

Freemasonry, therefore, teaches a system of ethics by helping the Mason to recall the moral truths inherent in the Mason's mind. Masonry does make it imperative that a candidate must be in the possession of a strict code of morals. This is a pre-requisite for joining the organization. Masonry makes great use of moral virtues inherent in man. It emphasizes, however, a closer cultivation of certain virtues which it considers essential in helping the candidate to seek the secrets of Freemasonry.⁸

Masonry, therefore, is an ethical system based upon the natural religion inherent in all men. It does not attempt to conceal the fact that it is such an ethical system. Nor can it ever successfully hope to accomplish this. Doctor Mackey states that Freemasonry can be defined as "a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."⁹ Thus Freemasonry is a course of moral instruction which uses types, emblems and allegorical figures to guide the Mason to realize his potentialities for the good life. For example, Masonry utilizes the emblem of the All-seeing eye to remind the Mason of that superintending Providence who pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward all Masons according

⁸W. Wilmshurst, The Masonic Initiation (London: John Watkins, 1948), p. 4.

⁹Mackey, op. cit., p. 10.

to their merits.¹⁰

Masonry also utilizes allegory, a narrative which allows besides a literal also a figurative sense. The literal sense intends by its analogy or comparison to indicate the figurative sense. An example of a legend used allegorically is the legend of Hiram Abiff in the Third Degree. Its concealed meaning teaches a restoration to life.¹¹ Freemasonry is an institution which offers to its followers the means by which a Mason can discover and live the full good life.

The Christian on the other hand does not base the good life on a system founded on what people regard to be natural religion. For the Christian God has revealed through Jesus Christ the basis of and the motivation for the good life. Freemasonry, however, states that the principles and power of the good life already lie within all men. Doctor Hannah, who lays bare the anti-Christian character of Freemasonry, correctly observes: "On reading the ritual carefully Masonry will be found to present itself as a complete and self-sufficient system of moral and spiritual guidance through this world and the next."¹²

¹⁰Standard Ahiman Rezon (New York: Redding and Co., 1921), p. 77.

¹¹A. G. Mackey, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (Chicago: The Masonic History Company, 1946), I, 51.

¹²Hannah, op. cit., p. 40.

Therefore, so Masons believe, the inherent moral principles enable every Mason to discover and attain the full good life. One who is not a Mason remains in darkness. Apart from Masonry men do not realize the potentialities within them of the good life. Even though the mind of every man is an inexhaustible mine filled with the power to live the good life, a man cannot, so Masons are told, tap the precious resources within him and utilize them until he becomes a Mason and employs its teaching to exploit the power of the good life which is within him. Thus, to remain outside the fellowship of Freemasonry means to be in a helpless and hopeless situation. It is a helpless predicament because man without the aid of Masonry cannot by his own efforts realize his moral potentialities. It is a hopeless predicament because man can never obtain the knowledge of his inherent moral power unless he becomes a Mason. Doctor Mackey graphically portrays the condition of the man who has not yet been brought to the discovery of his inherent power:

There he stands without our portals, on the threshold of this new Masonic life, in darkness, helplessness and ignorance. Having been wandering amid the errors and covered over with the pollutions of the outer and profane world, he comes inquiringly to our doors seeking the new birth and asking a withdrawal of the veil which conceals divine truth from his uninitiated sight. . . . There is to be not simply a change for the future, but also an extinction of the past; for initiation is, as it were, a death to the world and a resurrection to a new life.¹³

¹³Blanchard, op. cit., p. 95.

Freemasonry is a moral system which claims to enable a Mason to save himself from his hopeless situation.

Masonry offers to the candidate for initiation into the Entered Apprentice Degree the means by which he can gradually discover and live the full good life.

"Freemasonry claims to impart and convey to its initiates a spiritual and esoteric light."¹⁴ The candidate for initiation is "stripped of money and valuables at his initiation to symbolise his poverty, his blindfold typifies a state of spiritual as well as material darkness, his cable-tow is a sign of humility."¹⁵ The Senior Deacon then addresses the Worshipful Master and says that the initiate has long been in darkness, and now seeks to be brought to light. The initiate is asked, "In your present blind condition what do you most desire?" The answer is: "Light in Masonry."¹⁶

This is the most dramatic moment of the ceremony; coinciding with a thunderous hand-clap from the assembled brethren his hoodwink is removed, and for the first time he beholds the Lodge. The emblematic Masonic lights are now indicated to him, being six in number: the Volume of the Sacred Law, the square, the compasses, the 'sun to rule the day, the moon to rule the night, and the Worshipful Master to rule the Lodge.'¹⁷

¹⁴Hannah, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Blanchard, op. cit., p. 109.

¹⁷Hannah, op. cit., p. 32.

Thus Masonry teaches that the moral blindness of man's mind prevents him from grasping the principles of the good life which lie dormant in his mind.

Therefore, W. L. Wilmshurst can write that the initiation ceremony in the Entered Apprentice Degree is designed to introduce the candidate "to the first stage of a system of knowledge and self-discipline which, if faithfully followed up and lived out in his personal life, will clarify and transform his mind from its natural state of darkness to one of Light."¹⁸

Freemasonry, thus, claims to impart a moral light to man who is by nature in moral darkness. Through the teachings of Masonry man can discover the moral light which is shining within him. He can utilize this light and dissipate the darkness which had kept him in ignorance with respect to living the full good life. The Mason can through introspection enter into himself and discover for himself that which is morally right. Thus from his self-evaluations he can strive and succeed in living the full good life.¹⁹

Discovery of this knowledge depends ultimately on the mind of the Mason himself.²⁰ Masonry employs the

¹⁸Box, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁹Wilmshurst, op. cit., p. 48.

²⁰Blanchard, op. cit., p. 198.

Socratic method. Socrates, the first great Athenian philosopher, taught that once a man knows what is good and right, he can also perform it. Socrates stated that a universal law of right and wrong is common to all men. Therefore, it is man's duty to know himself and to discover the principles and the power of the good life within him. The better he knows himself, the more he will be enabled to live the good life. Masonry follows in the footsteps of Socrates when it teaches that the full good life can be lived when a Mason grasps and utilizes the knowledge of himself. For example, if a Mason realizes for himself that drunkenness is morally wrong, he will not become a drunkard or he will discontinue to become drunk. In like manner knowledge of the good will also promote doing what is good.

The Christian on the other hand does not depend on his mind to tell him what is good. The sacred Scriptures declare that everything in man, also his reason, is sinful. The Bible teaches the total depravity of man. Therefore, the Christian cannot rely on his mind to convey to him true knowledge of the good life. He learns this from Scripture, and he relies solely on the operation of the Holy Spirit to energize him to lead a God-pleasing life.

Freemasonry also teaches that all men are endowed with an inner capacity for self-development. The leitmotiv of a Mason's life, therefore, is fundamentally based on

faith in man. The Mason believes that he will get better as he discovers the potentialities inherent in him. The power of self-development becomes a tremendous force within man, so the Mason believes. Therefore his duty in this world is to acknowledge this force and utilize it for the discovery of the full good life. Albert Pike defines this capacity for self-development as "the magnetic attraction of the heart toward Truth and Virtue."²¹ The potentiality of living the good life lies within all men. When the Mason through self-knowledge discovers that the power of morality lies within him, this self-knowledge becomes a magnetic attraction toward his achieving the good life. Upon discovering this inherent moral power, the Mason is continually attracted to that which is good. The Mason must only know the good to do it.

Albert Pike further describes the Mason's capacity for self-development as a moral spark within man which enables him to channel his actions toward the attainment of the full good life. This moral spark not only guides and directs the Mason to the right conduct, but also prevents him from committing crimes.²²

In the thinking of a Mason, the ancient mysteries

²¹Albert Pike, Morals and Dogma (Charleston: L. H. Jenkins, 1921), p. 89.

²²Ibid., p. 533.

had the task of making imperfect beings whole and perfect by helping them realize the undeveloped life-force which is divine and lies fallow in man. Their primary function was to help candidates actualize their evolutionary potentialities.²³ Freemasonry fully subscribes to this facet of the teachings of the ancient mysteries.

In order that the Mason might realize the goal of the good life, every system of initiation in Freemasonry is according to W. L. Wilmshurst divided into three clear-cut stages:

1. Non-conformity to the attractions of the outer world and the subdual of sensual tendencies.
2. Self-discipline and the obtaining of one's inner world.
3. Surrender of the will so that it may become united with the Universal Will.

When a Mason achieves the third stage, he has subjugated his lower nature and has, therefore, developed a higher order of life.²⁴ Freemasonry claims to make it possible that the inherent principles of man's nature can be realized. Such a realization comes only through the denial of the base tendencies in man. As man through Masonry seeks to be led from darkness to light, he can through much persistent self-denial attain the way, the truth and the life supernatural itself.

²³Wilmshurst, op. cit., p. 28.

²⁴Ibid., p. 19.

Freemasonry employs many symbols in its teaching of the latent powers in man. Some of these are the crow, pickax, spade, chisel and gavel, the first three being those of the Royal Arch Mason:

By them he is reminded that it is his sacred duty to lift from his mind the heavy weight of passions and prejudices which encumber his progress towards virtue, loosening the hold which long habits of sin and folly have had upon his disposition, and removing the rubbish of vice and ignorance, which prevents him from beholding that eternal foundation of truth and wisdom upon which he is to erect the spiritual and moral temple of his second life.²⁵

The chisel morally demonstrates the advantages of discipline and education. The mind . . . is rude and unpolished but as the effect of the chisel on the external coat soon presents to view the latent beauties of the diamond, so education discovers the latent virtues of the mind, and draws them forth to range the large field of matter and space, to display the summit of human knowledge, our duty to God and man.²⁶

In the Entered Apprentice Degree Masonry utilizes the Common Gavel as a symbol of man's inherent power:

One of the three tools given to an Apprentice is the Common Gavel. This represents the force of conscience, which should subjugate all improper and vain thoughts so that all our words and actions might appear unpolled and unstained before the throne of grace.²⁷

Therefore, throughout the teachings of Freemasonry the emphasis is on the ability of man to live the good life.

²⁵Blanchard, op. cit., p. 535.

²⁶Ibid., p. 392.

²⁷Box, op. cit., p. 42.

Man has this ability, can develop it, and, therefore, lead the full good life. It is a matter of indifference to a Mason whether he accepts God's plan for the restoration of life through the Lord Jesus Christ or not. This is not the determining factor in the ethical life of a Mason. Neither is there room in Masonry's teaching for such a Christian view. Masonry proclaims that a man can be a good man and a true man while remaining completely indifferent to the unique source of grace, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In Masonry the good life begins when man discovers and exploits the inherent impulse to do good. Following this discovery, the Mason can lead the full good life.

In its attempt to guide the Mason to the discovery of the full good life, Freemasonry together with Christianity acknowledges that man is a fallen creature.²⁸ However, it teaches little of the Biblical concept of sin. W. L.

Wilmshurst says:

Wages of sin are death--death in sense of being spiritually unconscious, however vigorously alive in other ways. 'Sin' in all or any of its forms is, in its final analysis, disharmony induced by the assertion of the unreal personal self in unalignment with the impersonal Universal Self, the Holy Spirit. The just and perfect man and Mason is therefore one who is utterly selfless; being selfless he is sinless, and being sinless he stands in, consciously shares and becomes the instrument of the divine Kingdom, Power and Glory.²⁹

²⁸Wilmshurst, op. cit., p. 71.

²⁹Ibid., p. 110.

Accordingly sin is, for the Mason, simply disharmony with the impersonal Universal Self, the Holy Spirit. He can eradicate sin in his life as he learns to become selfless. Through his own efforts the Mason can resolve the condition of disharmony and thus live the full good life. The revamping and reorganizing of man's moral condition lies inherent in man. The Mason must learn to cultivate and utilize this dormant power.

The Christian on the other hand recognizes that sin is not simply a disharmony or a discord with a vague impersonal Universal Self. For the Christian sin is not only a negative concept, that is, man's lack of conformity with the divine law, but also a positive concept, and as such it denotes opposition to, or transgression of the law. Men without the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their hearts are in constant, active rebellion against God. The Christian can lead the good life only through the help of God. He must daily petition God to grant him strength that he may do all things unto the glory of God. He realizes that he very frequently falls short of this goal. The Christian leads the good life by daily drowning the Old Adam and putting on the new man which God has created in righteousness and true holiness. The power to live the full good life can alone come from God. It is God who works in the Christian both to do and to will His good will. He is not sufficient of himself, but his sufficiency is of God.

A strict obedience to the precepts of Freemasonry is all that is necessary to free man from sin.³⁰ Freemasonry teaches a decalogue, which is a law to the candidate for initiation into the Entered Apprentice Degree. For a Mason the fulfillment of the Masonic decalogue results through the Mason's own efforts. For a Christian the fulfillment of all commandments flows from the fear and love of God. God bestows this power to the Christian through the Word and sacraments. The Christian motives of fear and love of God play no part in the Masonic decalogue, as is evident from Doctor Albert Pike's statement of the Ten Commandments of Freemasonry:

1. God is the Eternal, Omnipotent, Immutable Wisdom and Supreme Intelligence and Exhaustless Love.
Thou shalt adore, revere, and love Him!
Thou shalt honor Him by practising the virtues!
2. Thy religion shall be to do good because it is a pleasure to thee, and not merely because it is a duty.
That thou mayest become the friend of the wise man, thou shalt obey his precepts!
Thy soul is immortal! Thou shalt do nothing to degrade it!
3. Thou shalt unceasingly war against vice!
Thou shalt not do unto others that which thou wouldst not wish them to do unto thee!
Thou shalt be submissive to thy fortunes, and keep burning the light of wisdom!
4. Thou shalt honor thy parents!
Thou shalt pay respect and homage to the aged!
Thou shalt instruct the young!
Thou shalt protect and defend infancy and innocence!

³⁰Edmond Ronayne, The Master's Carpet (Chicago: Ezra A. Cook, 1917), p. 7.

5. Thou shalt cherish thy wife and thy children!
Thou shalt love thy country, and obey its laws!
6. Thy friend shall be to thee a second self!
Misfortune shall not estrange thee from him!
Thou shalt do for his memory whatever thou wouldst
do for him, if he were living!
7. Thou shalt avoid and flee from insincere friendships!
Thou shalt in everything refrain from excess.
Thou shalt fear to be the cause of a stain on thy
memory!
8. Thou shalt allow no passions to become thy master!
Thou shalt make the passions of others profitable
lessons to thyself!
Thou shalt be indulgent to error!
9. Thou shalt hear much: Thou shalt speak little:
Thou shalt act well!
Thou shalt forget injuries!
Thou shalt render good for evil!
Thou shalt not misuse either thy strength or thy
superiority!
10. Thou shalt study to know men; that thereby thou
mayest learn to know thyself!
Thou shalt ever seek after virtue!
Thou shalt be just!
Thou shalt avoid idleness!³¹

These are the moral duties of a Mason. If he obeys these precepts, a Mason frees himself from sin or disharmony and is able to live the full good life. Man, so the Mason believes, must only learn to know himself and his potentialities. However, a Christian can not accept the Masonic decalogue because its God is not the God of Creation, Redemption and Sanctification, but rather a composite of abstractions.

³¹Pike, op. cit., p. 17.

The apron, which is bestowed upon the initiate, is symbolic of the conquest of sin in the Mason's life:

By the whiteness of its colour, and the innocence of the animal from which it is obtained, we are admonished to preserve the blameless purity of life and conduct, which will alone enable us hereafter to present ourselves before the Grand Master of the Universe, unstained with sin and unsullied with vice.³²

Thus for the Mason the struggle against sin and the conquest of sin is accomplished by the Mason himself without any divine aid.

Having overcome the disharmony in his life, the Mason can, so he is told, channel all his efforts to the pursuit of the full good life. The Mason has unlimited power within himself. He has the potential to become godlike:

Man also contains within him a life-force, a 'vital and immortal principle' as Masonry calls it, which has not yet expanded to full development in him, and indeed in many men is scarcely active at all. Man, too, has that in him enabling him to evolve from the stage of the mortal animal to a being immortal, superhuman, godlike.³³

Masonry teaches that every man possesses such a spiritual force which eventually enables him to identify himself with the Supreme Architect of the Universe. With such a spiritual value in man the Mason can learn to become a moral perfectionist in his life. He has such great moral power that he can through his own efforts assert and attain his

³²Mackoy, Masonic Lexicon, p. 41.

³³Wilmshurst, op. cit., p. 27.

oneness with God. This pantheistic approach of Masonry assures the Mason of the certainty of establishing a relationship with God. For example, a Mason can achieve this identification with God through prayer: "Prayer is conceived of as a spiritual magnetism lying in man that connects the human soul with the Deity."³⁴ Thus, through prayer, an action initiated by the Mason toward God, a Mason can unite himself with his God.

Moreover, the cultivated inherent powers of a Mason make it possible for him to offer up his life, the good life, as a perfect sacrifice unto God. Doctor Mackey defines the altar of sacrifice in a lodge: "On it the candidate is directed to place his passions and vices as an oblation to the Deity, while he offers up the thoughts of a pure heart as a fitting incense to the Grand Architect."³⁵ The Christian on the other hand knows that he cannot of himself offer up his works, his life, to God. It is only through the mercies of God that a child of God presents his works and life as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. This is possible because God has seized the Christian and invaded his heart and life. The good life he now leads he lives by the faith of the Son of God who loved him and gave himself for him.

³⁴Pike, op . cit., p. 6.

³⁵Mackey, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, I, 56.

The goal of the Mason is the attainment of the full good life. To this end Freemasonry presents a progressive moral system. Each Masonic Degree is meant to be a step toward perfection.³⁶ As the Mason discovers the potentialities within himself, he advances step by step toward moral perfection, toward the full good life. The Christian, on the other hand, realizes that he will never become morally perfect in this life. The Christian must daily start anew to live his life to the glory of God and for the welfare of his fellowmen. Daily he must drown the Old Adam with all his sins and evil lusts and daily he must clothe himself with the new man, created by God in true righteousness and holiness. Christianity does not offer an ethical system with perfection as a goal on this earth. In this life the Christian does not achieve the full good life. He knows that the ultimate goal is perfection, but he is well aware that he will not attain that goal on earth. The image of God in him will be fully restored only in heaven. In this life the Christian strives to live the good life looking solely unto Jesus Christ, who is the Author and the Finisher of his faith.

The heart of the Masonic progressive moral system are the four Platonic virtues: temperance, fortitude, prudence

³⁶Pike, op. cit., p. 136.

and justice. They form the basis of the good life of the Mason because of which he is acceptable to the Great Architect of the Universe.³⁷ For a Christian the good life is not based on inherent virtues in man. The good life of a child of God depends solely upon what God has done in Jesus Christ. By grace through faith which is in Christ Jesus the Christian receives the power to live the good life. It is solely by the undeserved love of God that a Christian can live the good life.

However, Freemasonry teaches that as the Mason develops the four cardinal virtues, he will be able to lead the good life. For the Mason, the virtues for which he strives and the means he employs to attain these virtues through the teachings of Freemasonry do not in any way conflict with the duties the Mason owes to his God, his country, his religion or to himself.³⁸ Thus Freemasonry claims that its ethical system does not in any way clash with the moral principles of the Christ-centered life. However, Freemasonry reveals that it clashes with the Christian life not only in its teachings, but also in its practises. For example, the Mason in the Royal Arch degree swears that he will help a fellow Mason, even though his fellow Mason is wrong:

³⁷Blanchard, op. cit., p. 144.

³⁸Ibid., p. 106.

I furthermore promise and swear, that I will not strike a Royal Arch Mason, or draw his blood in anger, nor suffer it to be done by others. . . . I furthermore promise and swear that I will assist a companion Royal Arch Mason, when engaged in any difficulty, and will espouse his cause so far as to extricate him from the same, whether he be right or wrong.³⁹

Thus Freemasonry discards the law of God and establishes the law of the lodge as binding upon the conscience of the Mason. A Christian on the other hand is ready to give aid to all men; however, the Christian is never to espouse the wrong cause of a fellowman.

Again, a Mason is obligated to conceal the crimes of a fellow Mason. The oath of a Master Mason declares "that he will keep all the crimes and misdemeanors of a brother Master Mason a secret, except two--murder and treason, and these only at his own option."⁴⁰

Secrecy is indispensable in Freemasonry. The Masonic emphasis on secrecy vitiates the Masonic love to his fellow man. Freemasonry thus practices a selective love. For example, when a Mason gives the signal of distress, a fellow Mason is expected without inquiry to do all within his power to help his brother in distress.⁴¹ Masonry seems

³⁹Ibid., p. 511.

⁴⁰Edmond Ronayne, Reminiscences (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1900), p. 260.

⁴¹Pike, op. cit., p. 109.

to teach that a Mason should practice love only to his fellow Mason who happens to be in distress. Such love is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Christian shows love to all men, irrespective of race, color or creed. A Christian out of love helps all who are in distress, nor does he need a secret signal to render aid.

Masonry limits its love through the five points of fellowship in the Master Mason's Degree:

The five points of fellowship are: Foot to foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back, cheek to cheek or mouth to ear.

Foot to foot, that you will not hesitate to go on foot, and out of your way, to aid and serve a needy brother.

Knee to knee, that you will ever remember a brother's welfare as well as your own, in all your addresses to the Deity.

Breast to breast, that you will ever keep in your breast a brother's secret, when communicated to and received by you as such, murder and treason excepted.

Hand to back, that you will ever be ready to stretch forth your hands to assist and support a fallen brother, and that you will vindicate his character behind his back as well as before his face.

Cheek to cheek or mouth to ear, that you will ever caution, and will give counsel in the ear of a brother, and in the most friendly manner remind him of his errors, and aid his reformation, giving him due and timely notice that he may ward off approaching danger.⁴²

⁴²Blanchard, op. cit., p. 294.

By the five points of fellowship Masons are linked together in one indivisible chain of sincere affection, brotherly love, relief and truth.⁴⁵ That such love exists between Masons is not to be condemned. However, Freemasonry teaches that this love is not to be extended to all men. The Christian on the other hand shows love to all men, even as God showed His great love for all mankind.

Thus we see that the good life of a Mason is not motivated by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Masonic love is selective and limited. The power for the Masonic good life dwells within the Mason himself. For the Christian the good life is a gift bestowed by God. The Mason is obligated to love his fellow Mason. The Christian voluntarily shows mercy to all men. For a Mason the good life is of man; the Christian good life is initiated and furthered only through the operation of God the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 293.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOAL OF THE GOOD LIFE

Not only every religion but also every moral system has a goal toward which it strives. It has eschatological overtones. The foundation and essence of an ethical system presuppose a final state or condition that man will attain.

Christianity proclaims a definite goal. It is the heavenly mansions which God through His Son, Jesus Christ, has prepared for the Christian. Heaven, a state of eternal communion with God, has already been won for all mankind through the precious blood of Jesus Christ shed for man on Calvary's cross. As a result, the soul of the Christian will be reunited on Judgment Day with the Christian's glorified body, so that the Christian can serve God in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. Therefore, in this life the child of God looks only unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith. The Christian is able to reach the goal and complete the race of life because God has provided that goal and richly bestows upon the child of God the strength needed to run with patience toward it.

Thus, the Christian knows that death is but the beginning of everlasting life. Death for a Christian occurs when God calls his soul out of this vale of tears to Himself in heaven. He is assured by God's sacred Scriptures that

he need not fear death--it is only a sleep. The Christian can close his eyelids in peace, knowing that he belongs to God and will possess in full the heavenly blessings which Jesus Christ has made possible for him by His death and resurrection.

Death, however, for the Mason--and Masonry claims to be a moral system--is not received with the calm assurance with which a Christian faces death. Masonry does not place any emphasis on the Mason's relationship to the God revealed in the Scriptures. It does not concern itself with the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier of the world. Therefore, the Mason at death does not receive for himself the blessings which blood-bought souls of Christians receive: eternal life with God. Thus, the Mason excludes himself from the blessing of everlasting life.

When death's cold sullen stream comes upon a Mason, one question is asked: Has he lived well? The paramount concern of a Mason is the extent to which he has responded to duty.¹ This is of supreme importance for a Mason not only throughout his entire life, but especially at death. It is the most important consideration not only for the Mason's happiness and welfare throughout his mortal earthly existence, but also for his immortal heavenly life.

Thus, the Mason's conformity to duty and his compulsion

¹Albert Pike, Morals and Dogma (Charleston: L. H. Jenkins, 1921), p. 184.

to do good are the primary requisites for reaching the goal. Doctor Albert Pike puts it this way: "Duty is the moral magnetism which controls and guides the true Mason's course over the tumultuous seas of life."² Conformity to duty is a categorical imperative for the Mason. It not only empowers him to live the good life, but also assures him that he will obtain definite rewards for his labors.

The Mason is able to navigate the stormy seas of life to the extent that he conforms his life to the doing of the good. This is for the Mason the abundant life. It becomes the more abundant life by the Mason's greater compliance to moral duty.

Therefore, the Mason attains the goal through his own efforts. If he adheres to the teachings of Freemasonry and exploits the latent moral powers inherent within him, the Mason, so he believes, will be able to ascend to heaven and pass through the portals of everlasting life. Such a belief of Masonry is diametrically and unequivocally opposed to the teachings of Holy Writ. The Sacred Scriptures not only teach that God--and God alone--initiates the good life and empowers the Christian to lead the good life, but also that heaven is entirely a gift of God, which the Christian receives through faith in Christ Jesus.

In order to get a clearer picture of the goal toward which a Mason strives, the objectives and purposes of a

²Ibid., p. 119.

Mason's life ought to be briefly examined. The paramount virtue of a Freemason's heart is charity.³ Albert Pike states that Masonry through its teachings endeavors to restrain men from the commission of injustices and acts of wrong.⁴ Masonry has as its objective to improve, inform and protect all men in this world. The basic tenets of Masonry as delineated in the Entered Apprentice Degree are brotherly love, relief and truth.⁵ As the Mason cultivates these Masonic aims in his life, the deeds issuing from these Masonic precepts form the basis of the good life which is acceptable to the Supreme Architect of the Universe and will be rewarded by him.

Thus, the underlying motivation of the good life stems from moral duty, a force compelling the Mason to do good. The moral emphasis permeating Freemasonry seems to be that God holds a Mason responsible if good works are not performed. Conversely, God will, therefore, reward the good works of a Mason. A Christian on the other hand does not perform good works solely out of moral duty. God has seized his heart and he, therefore, brings forth good fruit out of the abundant treasures of his heart. The love of

³H. S. Box, The Nature of Freemasonry (London: Augustine Press, 1952), p. 41.

⁴Pike, op. cit., p. 129.

⁵Ibid., p. 21.

God is the motivating power which controls the heart and life of a Christian so that he can do all things unto the glory of God.

This moral duty firmly encourages Masons to live the good life as law-abiding citizens. The Lutheran Confessions state that the human will of man is free in a measure to perform works of civil righteousness. The free human will of man can to a certain extent render civil righteousness or the righteousness of works. It can speak of God, offer to God a certain service by outward works and can restrain the hands from murder and adultery.

Since there is left in human reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, and the liberty and power to render civil righteousness, are also left. For Scripture calls this the righteousness of the flesh which the carnal nature, that is, reason, renders by itself, without the Holy Ghost.⁶

Although the free will of man has the liberty and power to perform the outward works of the Law, yet, this same free will cannot truly believe in God, it cannot truly fear and love God. And thus, its outward works are not the results of God's Holy Spirit working in the heart of man.

Since the basic motivation of the Masonic good life stems from moral duty, the Mason believes that his soul will receive eternal rewards. Freemasonry believes in the

⁶"Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Concordia Triclotte (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 335.

immortality of the soul. "To every Mason, the soul of man is immortal."⁷ Albert Pike further defines the soul:

The Soul of Man is Immortal; not the result of organization, nor an aggregate of modes of action of matter, nor a succession of phenomena and perceptions; but an Existence, one and identical, a living spirit, a spark of the Great Central Light, that hath entered into and dwells in the body; to be separated therefrom at death, and return unto God who gave it; that doth not disperse nor vanish at death, like breath or a smoke, nor can be annihilated; but still exists and possesses activity and intelligence, even as it existed in God, before it was enveloped in the body.⁸

For the Mason a symbol of the immortality of the soul is the acacia. At a Masonic funeral the Worshipful Master says:

But this evergreen, representing that which once designated the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead, is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny beyond the grave; and that there dwell in these frail tenements of clay, deathless, immortal spirits, over which death hath no power and the grave no victory.⁹

The teaching of the immortality of the soul plays a vital role in the ethical implications of American Freemasonry. Doctor Mackey states:

The teaching of this doctrine was one of the most important of the Ancient Mysteries. They symbolized the resurrection and new birth of the spirit by that

⁷ Pike, op. cit., p. 524.

⁸ Ibid., p. 533.

⁹ J. S. Murrow and W. M. Anderson, Masonic Monitor (Oklahoma City: W. M. Anderson, 1912), p. 185.

final part of the ceremonies of their legend which celebrated the restoration of their hero to life. . . . Such was the groping in darkness after truth among the disciples of the Master's degree, but aided by a better light.¹⁰

In the ancient mysteries a legend was prevalent in which the teachings of the soul's immortality and the resurrection were symbolically illustrated by a dramatic representation of the violent death and subsequent restoration to life of some distinguished person.

Freemasonry has incorporated a similar legend into its teachings. A resurrection from the grave and a future immortality were the great lessons which the ancient mysteries inculcated upon their followers. In like manner the same truths by a symbolic ceremony of great dignity and impressiveness are made to constitute the object of Freemasonry in the third degree, the Master Mason Degree.¹¹ This ancient legend and the truth it teaches are now transferred to the death and raising of Hiram Abiff.

Hiram Abiff, Grand Master, was slain before the completion of King Solomon's temple by three Fellow Craft Masons, who desired to obtain the secrets of a Master Mason. Hiram suffered martyrdom, so Masonry believes, because he refused to divulge indiscriminately Masonic secrets to those who were not prepared to receive them. The three conspiring

¹⁰A. Mackey, Masonic Lexicon (New York: Effingham Maynard and Company, 1890), p. 210.

¹¹Ibid., p. 408.

murderers first buried his body in the rubbish of the temple and then transferred it to the brow of a hill west of Mount Moriah. The next day King Solomon ordered a systematic search to be made for Hiram Abiff. The body then was accidentally discovered.

They proceeded to the grave, where King Solomon ordered one of the Fellow Crafts to take the body by the Entered Apprentice's grip and see if it could be raised; but owing to the high state of putrefaction, the body having been dead already fifteen days, the skin slipped, and it could not be raised.

King Solomon then requested the King of Tyre to take it by the Fellow Craft's grip, and see if it could be so raised; but owing to the reason before given, the flesh cleaved from the bones, and it could not be so raised.

King Solomon then exclaimed: 'O Lord, my God! O Lord, my God! O Lord, my God! I fear the Master's word is forever lost, and my worthy brother of Tyre, what shall we do?' 'Let us pray.' After prayer King Solomon took the body by the strong grip of a Master Mason, or a lion's paw, and raised it on the five points of fellowship, which have already been explained to you.¹²

As the Mason proceeds through this ceremony, the hope of immortality is impressed upon him. This hope is re-enacted by the candidate through the example of Hiram Abiff. "The candidate impersonates Hiram, and is 'slain' during the recitation by the two Wardens and by the Master. Later he is 'raised' by these same three officers."¹³

¹²J. Blanchard, Freemasonry Illustrated (Chicago: Ezra A. Cook, 1908), p. 299.

¹³W. Hannah, Christian By Degrees (London: Augustine Press, 1954), p. 61.

Such a rite, however, is not only a highly dramatic ceremony.

It is presented in the ritual however symbolically as a religious rite; not only as a moral example but as a quasi-sacramental experience with an ex opere operato significance, raising the Candidate, as one of the Lectures expresses it, 'from a dead level to a living perpendicular.' 'It is thus,' says the Traditional History, 'all Master Masons are raised from a figurative death to a reunion with the former companions of their toils.'¹⁴

A Mason, therefore, through participating in the highly impressive and symbolic ceremony of the Master Mason Degree, receives for himself the assurance of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection for the new life. The prayer at the beginning of the ceremony of raising to the Master Mason Degree contains these words:

Especially, we beseech Thee, to impart Thy grace to this Thy servant, who offers himself a Candidate to partake with us the mysterious secrets of a Master Mason. Endue him with such fortitude that in the hour of trial he fail not, but that, passing safely under Thy protection through the valley of the shadow of death, he may finally rise from the tomb of transgression, to shine as the stars for ever and ever.¹⁵

The symbolic death of the candidate has a specific reference to the candidate's temporal death and resurrection to the eternal heavenly abode. Therefore, by learning the secrets of a Master Mason, the candidate can most assuredly hope for a future eternal life. This is possible because he has learned the deep secrets of a Master Mason. The symbolism

¹⁴W. Hannah, Darkness Visible (London: Augustine Press, 1952), p. 33.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 132.

of the death of Hiram Abiff and the candidate's symbolic death and resurrection symbolize his own death and resurrection in the future.

Doctor Walton Hannah states that the death of Hiram is a type of the experience which the candidate himself, representing Hiram, must undergo by his own efforts in his quest for the moral life.¹⁶ Even though the candidate only impersonates Hiram Abiff and only symbolically portrays the death and the raising of Hiram, yet it is a symbolism which prefigures the resurrection on the last day. Therefore, through the prefigurative death of the Mason, the Mason is in a position to discover that resurrection and life everlasting are within his grasp. The candidate is told:

It is thus all Master Masons are raised from a figurative death to a reunion with the former companions of their toils. Let me now beg you to observe that the light of a Master Mason is darkness visible, serving only to express that gloom which rests on the prospect of futurity. It is that mysterious veil which the eye of human reason cannot penetrate unless assisted by that light which is from above. Yet even by this glimmering ray, you may perceive that you stand on the very brink of the grave into which you have just figuratively descended, and which, when this transitory life shall have passed away, will again receive you into its cold bosom. Let the emblems of mortality which lie before you lead you to contemplate on your inevitable destiny, and guide your reflections to that most interesting of all human studies, the knowledge of yourself. Be careful to perform your allotted task while it is yet day; continue to listen to the voice of Nature, which bears witness, that even in this perishable frame resides a vital and immortal

¹⁶Hannah, Christian By Degrees, p. 63.

principle, which inspires a holy confidence that the Lord of Life will enable us to trample the King of Terrors beneath our feet, and lift our eyes to that bright Morning Star, whose rising brings peace and salvation to the faithful and obedient of the human race.¹⁷

Therefore, through reflecting on the symbols of mortality which have been dramatically symbolized for him through the slaying and raising of Hiram Abiff, the Mason is empowered to know the great potentialities of his own nature. He can discover and decide for himself his own destiny. Thus, until a Mason becomes a Master Mason, he is not considered a full Mason and will not be given a Masonic funeral.¹⁸

Redemption, resurrection and life eternal for the Christian come alone through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The certainty of our redemption and the consummation of this redemption, everlasting life, centers in Jesus Christ. We have a sure hope of the resurrection of life because Jesus Christ has become the first fruits of them that slept. Even as Christ arose from the dead, so will the Christian. However, the Christian will not accomplish this through his own efforts. The resurrection and life everlasting of the Christian derive their source, power and hope from the death and resurrection of Jesus

¹⁷Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁸Murrow and Anderson, op. cit., p. 172.

Christ. The Mason on the other hand receives the assurance and hope of the resurrection when he participates in a dramatic re-enactment of a legend. The Christian derives his sure hope through faith in the Savior of the world, the crucified and resurrected Lord. The Mason bases his hope of life everlasting on a mortal man, Hiram Abiff, whom Masons call perhaps the greatest man the world ever knew.¹⁹ The Christian establishes his sure hope on Jesus Christ, true God and true man. For the Mason the emphasis remains entirely on man. He, therefore, through his own efforts in living the full good life can obtain the resurrection and the life everlasting. Thus Freemasonry takes the sting from death and robs the grave of its victory. It substitutes a moral system through which the Mason can overcome death and the grave by his own efforts. This it accomplishes by completely bypassing Calvary.

Joseph Murrow, who has compiled a Masonic monitor, epitomizes Freemasonry's teaching of the resurrection of the dead:

My brother:--The great question of all ages has been,
'If a man die, shall he live again?'

Is there a resurrection of the dead?

But you may say, 'How are the dead raised up?'

Oh, thou of little faith. That which thou sowest,
is not quickened, except it die. So also is the

¹⁹Blanchard, op. cit., p. 295.

resurrection of the dead. Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; and when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O, death! where is thy sting? Oh, grave! where is thy victory.'²⁰

Although Masonry quotes from sacred Scripture with respect to the resurrection, it refuses to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the basis and hope of man's resurrection. It completely overlooks the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Masonry's emphasis completely excludes the significance of Christ's resurrection for all mankind.

A fundamental tenet of Masonry is that every Mason reaches the goal of heaven. He will arrive there through his own good works:

The way by which Masons hope to arrive there is by the aid of a Ladder, known as Jacob's Ladder. It is composed of many staves or rounds, which indicate as many moral virtues, but it has three principle ones, namely, Faith, Hope and Charity: Faith in the Great Architect of the Universe,²¹ Hope in salvation, and Charity towards all men.

A Mason need only follow the inherent moral principles within him, and he will save himself.

The volume of the Sacred Law may be regarded as the spiritual Tracing Board of the Great Architect of the Universe, in which are laid down such divine laws and moral designs, that were one conversant therein and obedient thereto, they would bring one to an

²⁰Murrow and Anderson, op. cit., p. 57.

²¹Box, op. cit., p. 12.

Ethereal Mansion, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.²²

Freemasonry teaches that God is infinitely good. Pike puts it this way: "What motive, what reason, and, morally speaking, what possibility can there be to Infinite Power and Infinite Wisdom, to be anything but good?"²³ Masons believe that in due time evil will be overcome due to the Infinite Justice and benevolence of God.²⁴ Therefore, Masonry teaches that God will bountifully reward the good lives of men with eternal life. The good life will be rewarded by everlasting life. The Supreme Architect of the Universe by his very nature of love and goodness must, so Masons believe, reward the good Masonic life.

As a result, death has no fear for the Mason. Since he has lived his life in conformity with his inherent moral principles, he need not fear when death comes. Only an everlasting reward awaits him:

And lastly, as it is the business of the operative mason, when his work is done, to prove everything 'true and trusty,' so is it the object of the speculative mason, by a uniform tenor of virtuous conduct, to receive, when his allotted course of life has passed, the inappreciable reward from his Celestial Grand Master, of 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'²⁵

²²Ibid., p. 13.

²³Pike, op. cit., p. 717.

²⁴Ibid., p. 525.

²⁵Mackey, Masonic Lexicon, p. 314.

The Masonic good life and the reward for this good life can be summarized in the words of the closing charge after a raising in the Master Mason's Degree:

And now, my brethren, let us see to it, and so regulate our lives by the plumb-line of justice, ever squaring our actions by the rule of virtue, that when the Grand Warden of heaven shall call for us, we may be found ready. Let us cultivate assiduously the noble tenets of our profession, brotherly love, relief and truth; and from the square learn morality, from the level equality and from the plumb rectitude of life. Let us imitate in all his varied perfections, him, who when assailed by the murderous hands of rebellious craftsmen, maintained his integrity even unto death, and sealed his principles with his vital blood. Let us emulate his amiable and virtuous conduct, his unfeigned piety to his God and his inflexible fidelity to his trust. And as the evergreen, which bloomed in the head of his grave, betrayed the place of his interment, so may virtue, by its ever blooming loveliness, designate us as Free and Accepted Masons. With the trowel spread liberally the cement of brotherly love and friendship, circumscribed by the compass. Let us ponder well our words and actions, and let all the energies of our minds, and the affections of our souls, be employed in the attainment of our Supreme Grand Master's approbation. Then, when our dissolution draws nigh, and the cold winds of death come sighing around us, and his chill dew already glistens on our brow, with joy shall we obey the summons of our Grand Warden in heaven, and go from our labors on earth to everlasting refreshment in the Paradise of God. Then, by the benefit of a pass, a pure and blameless life, shall we gain ready admission into that Celestial lodge above, where the Supreme Grand Architect of the Universe presides; where, seated at the right hand of our Supreme Grand Master, he will be pleased to pronounce us just and upright Masons. Then shall we be fitly prepared as living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; where no discordant voice shall be heard, but all the soul shall experience shall be perfect bliss, and all it shall express shall be perfect praise, and love divine shall ennoble every heart, and hosannas exalted employ every tongue.²⁶

²⁶Blanchard, op. cit., p. 314.

Jesus Christ fits nowhere into the Masonic picture. His death and resurrection provide no hope for the Mason. They are meaningless to the Mason. The hope of immortality and the resurrection and the eternal heavenly reward is found within the Mason, exploited by the Mason, and thus will be earned and enjoyed by him. The Mason needs no Redeemer. He himself is capable of passing through the portals of heaven. The ethical system of Freemasonry is based on salvation by works alone and entirely excludes salvation by grace through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The ethics of American Freemasonry are in violent opposition to Christian ethics. There can be no compromise between the two ethical systems. Neither is there hope for a future compromise, for American Freemasonry seems determined to perpetuate its interpretation of the nature of the good life.

Freemasonry is unequivocally opposed to the Scriptural doctrines of sin and grace. Masonry refuses to acknowledge sin for what it really is--a violent, active rebellion and revolt against God. Masonry completely disregards the total depravity of man. It casts aside the soul-destroying impact of sin upon each individual who does not through faith accept Jesus Christ as his Savior. Rather, it overlooks sin and endows man with a moral excellency which enables him to discover within him the power to possess peace of soul and peace of mind. Masonry's answer to the Biblical doctrine of sin is the innate moral power within all men. Through the teachings of Masonry man can discover his tremendous moral potentialities. This inherent power strengthens the Mason against the storms of life. It paves his way to both inward and outward peace. It allows the Mason through his own efforts to establish a vertical relationship with his God, the Supreme Architect

of the Universe, and also a horizontal relationship with his fellow man. 'Thus, the Mason's prime duty is to exploit and unleash his uncultivated moral powers and in this way live the full good life.'

The redemptive act of God through Jesus Christ does not play a role in Masonry's ethics. Masonry repudiates the grace of God. The Christian Church stands upon and derives its power from the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ. For God's work of redemption in Christ Jesus Masonry substitutes a system of work righteousness which completely excludes God's plan of salvation.

The foundation of the Masonic good life rests solely upon the Mason himself. The latent power to lead the full good life lies dormant in all men. For a Mason the essence of the good life depends upon the utilization of his inherent moral powers. The goal of the Masonic good life is assured for the Mason because the Supreme Architect of the Universe must and does reward the Mason for his good life.

In contrast to this the foundation of the Christian good life rests solely upon God who has saved the Christian from the damnable shackles of sin, death and the devil. The Christian can live the good life only because God's Holy Spirit empowers him to do all things unto the glory of God. Only through the means of grace, the Word of God and the sacraments, can the Christian grow in grace, faith

and in the knowledge of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has secured for the Christian the goal of eternal communion with God.

Freemasonry begins and depends upon the power of man for achieving the good life. Christianity depends upon the power of God alone for achieving the good life now and in eternity. Freemasonry and Christianity are, therefore, diametrically opposed to each other.

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