

Liberty University School of Divinity

Freemasonry and Evangelical Christianity: Are They Compatible?

A Thesis Submitted to

The Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity

In Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

By

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Lynchburg, Virginia

November 2020

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Liberty University School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT **ABSTRACT**

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Since 1717 there has been a formalized organization known as the Freemasons. Currently, there are over six-million members worldwide, with over 18% of those members residing in the United States. The Freemasons have been controversial since their inception due to their secret nature. There are claims that the organization is anti-Christian as well as claims that support its compatibility with the church, indicating that there are Freemasons on the rolls of our Evangelical Churches. Therefore, using observation and participant research as well as secondary data analysis and archival study, this paper will seek to determine if Freemasonry is compatible with Evangelical Christianity. In order to determine this conclusion, this paper will look to understand the history, religious overtone, and philosophy of Freemasonry. Then, based on the conclusion of these findings, a pastor will be better prepared to provide education and counseling to Freemasons and those contemplating Freemasonry within their churches.

Dedication

It is not possible for me to thank all of the people that have encouraged me at some point along the way to complete this paper. Many have prayed, and verbally supported me, and I do thank you. However, I would like to acknowledge first and foremost Jesus Christ, for who I am eternally grateful. His sacrifice for me made it possible that I am reconciled to God in spite of my shortcomings.

Next, I thank the love of my life, my wife Lisa of 25 years, who has stood beside me, had patience with me, and encouraged me in only the way that a faithful wife could. I am ever thankful for her love and support throughout this entire project.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Ministry Context	1
A Personal Problem Presented	1
Purpose Statement	6
Basic Assumptions	6
Limitations and Delimitations	7
Thesis Statement.....	7
Chapter 2: Conceptual Basis	8
Literature Review	8
Books.....	8
Dissertations	16
Scholarly Journal Articles	19
Other Media	19
Scripture	25
Theological Foundations	28
Theoretical Foundations	29
Chapter 3: Methodology	30
Implementation of the Intervention Design.....	30
Chapter 4: History of Freemasonry	31
Chapter 5: The Religion of Freemasonry	46
Salvation.....	48
Creed	53
Doctrinal Statement.....	54
Theology.....	56
Chapter 6: Rough Ashlar to Perfect Ashlar	61
Initiation (from Darkness to Light)	64
Working Tools.....	65
Objects in the Lodge.....	68
Supports of a Lodge	71
Covering of a Lodge.....	72
Ornaments of a Lodge	73

Lesser Lights of the Lodge.....	73
Jewels of the Lodge.....	74
Obligation.....	75
Lectures/Teachings.....	76
Operative vs. Speculative Masonry.....	77
Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.....	77
Four Perfect Points of Entrance.....	78
Four Cardinal Virtues.....	79
Point Within A Circle.....	79
Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences.....	80
Geometry.....	80
Five Orders of Architecture.....	81
Charges.....	81
Chapter 7: Hiram Legend.....	85
Chapter 8: Conclusion	90
Darkness To Light.....	91
Pelagianism	94
Not Evangelistic	100
Appendix A: Definitions.....	103
Bibliography.....	108

Chapter 1: Introduction

Ministry Context

The researcher for this project will not be conducting this project in the typical ministry setting, as most DMIN projects would be undertaken. Instead, the researcher is requesting that an exception be made to the normal DMIN requirements of conducting applied research and give way to allowing academic research only. The main reason is due to the unique nature of the topic. If required to poll members of the Freemasonry society, it could cause unwanted effects. This study would be an opportunity to make a statement academically on the topic.

A Personal Problem Presented

The conflict, of course, is a deeply personal matter, and thus, the passion for pursuing the truth is at the heart of the research. As the researcher of this paper, I come from a long background of Freemasons. I have in my possession five generations of Masonic Rings worn by my ancestors. These rings symbolize the heritage I have grown up in and, at times, have caused me to question all things religious and philosophical in my life.

As a young boy, I was exposed to Freemasonry through my Christian grandparents. My grandfather was a Freemason and served his fraternity well by being faithful and passionate about it. I was told by my grandfather that there was nothing wrong with Freemasonry and that it did nothing but “take a good man and make him better.” In the town where I lived, many Freemasons displayed the signs of the fraternity at their cars and business places. It was a common organization that most men belonged to. There were many men in my church that were also members of the organization, so when I decided to be one of the guys and join, I saw no

conflict because I respected my grandfather and looked up to the saintly men in the church I attended.

However, it did not take long, that occasionally someone might have questions and make statements about the masonic ring I wore. I was questioned about how I could belong to such an organization and be a Christian at the same time. I was rightfully diligent in seeking answers, but I always came up with the same standard problem: the people making accusations were not Freemasons, and the actual Freemasons were strong, upstanding Christians.

The main issue at hand seemed to be the following question, “Could a man be a true Christian and a true Freemason at the same time?” From my perspective, the obvious answer was yes because I witnessed it day after day through my church and my friends. I watched men who taught Sunday School, were Deacons, were Missionaries, were Pastors, and were just solid members of churches who became and stayed members of the fraternity of Freemasonry.

I remember one encounter that really got me thinking. I was at a Freemasons meeting, and I asked the question to the masses if Freemasonry was religious. Many of the men agreed that it had religious aspects but was not religious or a religious organization. However, one man disagreed. He stated that Freemasonry was a religion and that it was all the religion that he needed. I immediately saw an opportunity to evangelize, and I pushed further. After some discussion, I realized that he had a good argument as to why he thought that Freemasonry was a religion and that why he thought that he would be just fine in his faithful study of Freemasonry.

Based on all of this, I put it in the back of my mind and moved on with life. Years passed, and mostly all the people I knew in the Masonic Lodge were professing Christians, and the idea just never harshly confronted me again until I was at a Scottish Rite meeting. The Scottish Rite is an additional set of degrees outside of Blue Lodge Freemasonry that builds on the basic tenets of

Freemasonry. Scottish Rite is known officially as the Ancient and Accepted Rite. It is a system of thirty-three degrees that include the three degrees of basic Freemasonry as its first three degrees. These first three degrees are left to the Grand Lodges of Freemasonry to administer so that the Ancient and Accepted Rite is only responsible for administering the fourth through the thirty-third degree to their candidates.¹ I engaged in conversation with one of the senior leaders of the Scottish Rite, and he discussed some ideas that he had about the work we would be doing that night in the meeting. After further investigation, he admitted to me that he was not a regular Christian but a Gnostic Christian and was in the process of becoming a Rosicrucian. Armed with things to look up, I finished the meeting and went home to investigate. I was immediately reminded of the old man who had told me that Freemasonry was all the religion he needed. I knew there was more to this, so I had to look deeper. I did find out later that Rosicrucian was an additional body of Freemasonry. This other body of Freemasonry exists to conduct additional research on Mysticism, Hermetic Science, and Alchemy, which was widely studied in the Middle Ages.² It seems that this man may be basing his religion on the teachings of Freemasonry based on his acknowledgment of his beliefs.

As I continued my journey, I begin to find more and more things that I could question, but in actuality, these questions seemed to have a Biblical answer. I was able to look to the ritual and see nothing but mainline Christianity everywhere I looked. The Freemasons even put a King James Bible in the room where we gathered to conduct our monthly meetings. I was so conflicted, but I wanted to find the answer. Then one day, while visiting another lodge in another

¹ Robert Freke Gould, *The Concise History of Freemasonry*, (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2007), 270-271.

² *Ibid.*, 275-276.

city, this particular Freemasons Lodge had a visitor who was the master of a Freemason's Lodge in Nevada. He was a guest of honor that night, and he gave a lengthy speech; however, something in his speech stuck with me. He stated that Freemasonry was nothing more than Alchemy. He stated it was “nothing more and nothing less.” Well, I did not know what Alchemy was, so I went on an inquisitive research journey and was seemingly confused initially at what I found.

When looking up Alchemy, I found that it was an ancient science that basically took base metals and turned them into gold. At the time, this made no sense to me because I could not see a correlation between the Freemasonry that I knew and the alchemy that turned lead into gold. In fact, I could not see any legitimate way that lead or any other base metal could be turned into gold, so I sort of dismissed the idea.

However, as time went on, I would occasionally look up alchemy to once again see if there is a distinction; and then one day, I found the answer. It seems that there is an idea or a philosophy that alchemy was not a scientific process that converts metals into gold but instead, it was an allegory that meant men were supposed to take their basic selves and turn them into spiritual gold. So actually, the individual would set out on a life journey of making himself perfect through learning and doing. Now it made sense. In Freemasonry, the student is taught that when he is born, he is like a rough stone that was harvested out of the quarry, but through the Master Masons work, he was transformed into that “Perfect Ashlar” or perfect stone that was suitable for the Builders use. In this case, the Builder was the Great Architect Of The Universe, which the Freemasons refer to as God. It seems that I have just discovered what this “Secret” of Masonry is all about.

Now on initial thought, the average man may see this as compatible with Christianity because the Christian has rules to follow in the Old and New Testaments. As Christians, we are taught the “Golden Rule” as well as to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul and to love your neighbor as yourself.

However, on further observance, I took note of the opening prayer of the lodge, which reads,

“Most holy and glorious Lord God, the great Architect of the Universe, the giver of all good gifts and graces; Thou hast promised that ‘where two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt be in the midst of them and bless them.’ In thy name, we assemble, most humbly beseeching thee to bless us in all our undertakings, that we may know and serve thee aright, and that all our actions may tend to thy glory, and to our advancement in knowledge and virtue. And we beseech thee, O Lord God, to bless our present assembling, and to illuminate our minds, that we may walk in the light of thy countenance; and when the trials of our probationary state are over, be admitted into ‘The Temple,’ not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”³

This now is starting to make sense. Freemasonry actually teaches a way of making yourself perfect for the purpose of gaining admission into heaven. Freemasonry uses the idea of being a stonemason to teach men how to build a perfect “Temple” inside themselves. This is noted by one of the first “tools” you receive when you start your journey as a Freemason as illustrated in the Bahnson Manual,

“The common gavel is an instrument made use of by operative masons to break off the corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder’s use; but we as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our hearts and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting our minds as living stones for that spiritual building, ‘that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’”⁴

³ Charles F. Bahnson, *North Carolina Lodge Manual: For the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason*, (Raleigh, North Carolina: The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, 1998), 7-8

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

So, the Freemason will spend his life trying to become perfect enough to earn his way into heaven. Therefore, can a man become a Freemason and find entrance into heaven based on his belief in any singular god, or must he become a Christian? Then if a Freemason becomes a Christian, can he faithfully live what the Lodge and Christianity teach at the same time.

The purpose of this paper will be to discern if Freemasonry is compatible with basic Christianity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project is to determine, through academic research, if the fraternal order of Freemasonry teaches a character-building philosophy that is compatible or possibly different from the fundamental doctrine of the church. If found to be so, this would become an Evangelical work that would assist others in following the teachings of Christ through the church and be warned of being led astray through solid academic research. If this thesis is found to be false, it will dismiss any concerns associated with the church in this matter. Therefore, this would give the researcher closure as to how standard Christians should understand Freemasonry and their relation to the church.

Basic Assumptions

The researcher is committed to producing a scholarly work that will not give way to personal opinion or overwhelming outside influence from any associated group. This will produce an unbiased opinion based on facts that can be reasonably understood by pointing to a clear understanding and conclusion.

Limitations and Delimitations

This thesis is not designed to engage in the study of all the other bodies of Freemasonry. It is only designed to look at the basic tenets of the foundational Blue Degrees of Freemasonry or simply the first three degrees of Freemasonry. It is understood that all of Masonry is designed to be structured in these three degrees and none other. So, in essence, this academic study will only review this area since it is understood that all other areas of Freemasonry are subordinate to the Blue Degrees.

Thesis Statement

Freemasonry is a centuries-old fraternity around the world that found its beginnings in England in 1717. The fraternity claims many members among its roles, and among these members, many identify themselves as Christian. This paper will investigate the tenets of Freemasonry to determine if Evangelical Christianity is compatible with Freemasonry. It will examine if a man can be a true Evangelical Christian and Freemason at the same time.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Basis

Literature Review

Books

Bahnon, Charles F., *North Carolina Lodge Manual: For the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason*. Raleigh, North Carolina., The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, 1998

This book is the basic manual for all Masonic Lodge work in North Carolina. In it, the reader will find the prayers, odes, help, and definitions for many of the parts of the degree work for all three degrees of Masonry. There is also a section for help on the Masonic Funeral. This book has provided very valuable information for this thesis due to its comprehensive overview of the North Carolina Freemason Ritual. It is used as a companion for quick reference by North Carolina Freemasons and is considered one of the few resources that can be openly shared as writings of the Lodge with non-members.

Barton, David, *The Question of Freemasonry and the Founding Fathers: Was America Founded by Freemasons?*, Aledo, Texas., Wallbuilder Press. 2005.

This book gives a good explanation of the presence of Freemasonry in the early part of the building of the United States. It shows the link to the founding fathers as being Freemasons. It discusses whether Freemasonry is compatible with Christianity as well as the specific discussion of George Washington being a Freemason and a Christian at the same time and whether or not this was true.

Claudy, Carl H., *Introduction To Freemasonry*. 3 vols. Washington, D.C., The Temple Publishers, 1931.

This three-volume set is a basic introduction that many masons receive as they are inducted into Freemasonry in North Carolina. According to the writings in the set, “they have a simple manner of presentation, a plain statement of facts, a spiritual interpretation of Masonic teachings and visualize the vital reality behind the allegory and the symbol.” Therefore, these are a go-to guide for the average Freemason trying to walk his Masonic journey. They have been extremely beneficial in writing this paper due to their plain language explanation of the rituals performed in the Blue Lodges of North Carolina.

Cole, Neil. *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.

This book is exceptional in explaining the work of the church and how it is accomplished through the Gospel. It goes into depth about how Christianity is spread and furthers the idea that salvation is preceded by grace, and that is the essence of the gospel message. This book was instrumental in understanding the evangelical nature of the church in an organic setting.

Coleman, Robert E., *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids, MI. Fleming H. Revell: A Division of Baker Book House, 1993.

In this widely read book, Coleman has given a solid background to the evangelistic mission given to Christians by Jesus Christ. He explains the work of evangelists and the saving grace required to be saved and spend eternity in Heaven with God. This thesis benefited from the author’s straightforward approach to Christ’s mission for the church in the Great Commission.

Criswell, W. A. *Criswell's Guidebook For Pastors*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980.

This guidebook assists the pastor with ministering to the body of the church on a daily basis. It explains the basis of salvation and how to work within grace to achieve a wonderful Christian life. It is in opposition to any legal or works based religion. The benefit of this book to this thesis was its basic layout of salvation through grace and not of works.

Devore & Sons Inc., *The Holy Bible: Master Mason Edition*. Wichita, Kansas., Heirloom Bible Publishers, 1991.

This, too, is a Masonic Specific Bible with study help. The average Mason will own this type of Bible as a Masonic heirloom and a go-to manual for all things Masonic as concerned with scripture. This book was of great value in preparing this Thesis. The book has associated with it a section that explains all the levels of Freemasonry and specific links to associations of the Bible to Freemasonry.

Gonzalez, Justo L., *The Story of Christianity: Volume One-The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, New York, NY., Harper Collins Publishers, 1984.

This book was useful because it tells the story of Christianity from its inception. The book's benefit was especially pertinent in its story of grace as the basis for Christianity.

Greear, J. D. *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary*. Nashville, TN. B&H Publishing Group, 2011.

This book goes into good detail about how moralism and legalism have often overshadowed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It seems that this has been a common issue within the life of the church. It was very beneficial to show contrast to the moral teaching in Freemasonry.

Gould, Robert Freke, *The Concise History of Freemasonry*, Mineola, New York., Dover Publications, Inc., 2007.

This book is an unabridged republication of the Second (Revised) Edition of the work originally published in 1920 by Gale & Polden Limited out of London. This book gives a solid background to the history of Masonry by explaining the timeline associated with the craft of Freemasonry. This book was very beneficial in its overview of the last 300 years of Freemasonry. Its chronological listing of events was a key to the understanding of the history of Freemasonry.

Haggard, Forrest D., *The Clergy and the Craft*, Missouri., Missouri Lodge of Research, 1970.

Written by a Protestant minister who was also a Freemason, he wrote this book to assist those who struggle with the conflict between Freemasonry and organized religion. The book's benefit to this Thesis comes from the point of the minister. This minister was a Freemason himself, so his perspective was positive to Freemasonry in general.

Hall, Manly P., *The Lost Keys Of Freemasonry*. New York, NY., The Penguin Group, 2006.

Originally written in 1923, this book gives the reader a strong understanding of the moral training that a Freemason must go through. The book also explains the character traits that a Freemason must “build” within himself. This writing provides the philosophy behind the Freemasons and their quest to become good enough to enter heaven.

Hall, Manly P., *Freemasonry of the Ancient Egyptians*. New York, NY., The Penguin Group, 2006.

Originally written in 1937, this book gives the reader an understanding of the genesis of Freemasonry as related to the ancient initiatory temple rights of ancient Egypt. Hall

explains why the initiatory rights are there and support the idea of the Freemason building within himself the temple of a better person that can be accepted into heaven.

Holman Company, A. J., *The Holy Bible: Masonic Edition*. Philadelphia, PA., 1952.

This particular King James Version Bible makes reference to the many Masonic topics in the appendices located in the reference material. It has many foundational facts that are specific to the craft, which cannot be found in other places. The average Freemason uses this type of Bible to research his Freemasonry craft.

Hull, Bill. *The Disciple-Making Church*. Grand Rapids, MI. 1990.

This book gives the reader insight into what becoming a disciple is and how the church performs this. This book explains the process of moving from the point of salvation to actual disciplined actions as a living Christian. The emphasis on work done after becoming a Christian is essential to shed light on the works of grace to secure salvation.

Hutchens, Rex R., *A Bridge to Light*. Washington, DC., The Supreme Council, Thirty-third Degree Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, 1995.

This book is of great importance because it replaced *Morals and Dogma* as an easier read to the initiates of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. It was perceived by many that this book's predecessor was too complicated and challenging to understand for the average Mason. Therefore, Hutchens wrote this in response to each degree to give an easier understanding of the higher tenets of Freemasonry. The book provides an overview of the higher degrees of Freemasonry and how the individual Freemason builds on the teachings of the Blue Lodge to proceed with the higher degrees. This book helped the researcher gain an overall understanding of Freemasonry.

Lutzer, Erwin. *The Doctrines That Divide: A Fresh Look At The Historic Doctrines That Separate Christians*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998.

In this work, Lutzer addresses many of the issues that divide Christians. The one that is most important to this study is the question of whether justification is by faith or works. This thesis argues the idea that Freemasonry encourages works-based salvation, and this book gives background as to that idea being a doctrine that causes issues within the church and being categorized as personal heresy.

MacArthur, John. *Pastoral Ministry: How To Shepherd Biblically*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. 2005.

MacArthur gives excellent lessons to those who are soon to be pastors or are now even pastors. He explains the idea of shepherding and what is involved. He gives evidence that this can only be done once the conversion is accomplished. Therefore, the spiritual shepherding done by pastors is not for the purposes of gaining admission into heaven. This supports the idea in the thesis that salvation is by grace and not through works.

Pike, Albert., *“Esoterika”: The Symbolism of the Blue Degrees of Freemasonry*. Washington, D.C., The Scottish Rite Research Society, 2008.

This particular book was written by Albert Pike as a manuscript between 1886 and 1888. It was considered too esoteric to be printed, and it was studied by only a small number of Freemasons during the 120 years it was kept in the private archives of the Supreme Council until it was published in 2005. It contains within its covers the Masonic Symbolism that many would understand to be the key to understanding the esoteric side of Freemasonry. The author is arguably the most notable character in the history of Freemasonry. He was explicitly responsible for revising and updating the constitutions

and rituals of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. Therefore, his thoughts and ideas on the symbolism and meaning of Freemasonry are essential to its overall understanding.

Pike, Albert., *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*.

Charleston, SC, Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree of the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, 1871.

This book is of great importance because it was the philosophical book to higher-level Freemasonry. It contains the lectures of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States. Freemasons read and study its contents in giving obedience to the Rituals in the degrees of the craft. It is considered “The Guide” to Freemasonry. The benefit of this book to the understanding of Freemasonry was overwhelmingly significant.

Pirtle, Henry., *The Lost Word Of Freemasonry*. Louisville, KY., The Standard Printing Company, 1951.

This work is very religious in nature and connects to the Mason and his search for the Lost Word of God. It relates to the research because it pushes the Freemason to think religiously in his walk, although not necessarily on a Christian walk. The author borrows many passages of Scripture and then relates to the pre-Moses era in his relation to God. He makes the case that all religions worship the same god. This was beneficial in the understanding of Freemasonry in that not all Freemasons are Christians.

Thiessen, Henry C., *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979.

This textbook is an introductory academic text on theology that explains the foundational principle of Systematic Theology. Thiessen goes to great length to explain the different

areas of fundamental theology, which give precedent to the theological concept of grace, which is the functional area of this paper.

Towns, Elmer L., *Theology For Today*, Belmont, CA, Wadsworth/Thomas Learning, 2002.

This book is a staple for the theology of many evangelical Christians. An evangelical Christian has a theology that is very specific concerning the Great Commission and the child of God's requirement to fulfill that calling and requirement. This book was a staple to the theological development of the researcher, and it gave the background to the conclusion of Freemasonry.

Towns, Elmer L., *Concise Bible Doctrines: Clear, Simple, and Easy-To-Understand Explanations of Bible Doctrines*, Chattanooga, TN, AMG Publishers, 2006.

In this wonderful book for lay readers, Dr. Towns explains the doctrinal areas of the Christian faith simplistically. This introductory book gives the basis of salvation through grace. This book further supported the idea that works based salvation was not just a clergy idea but was something that individual Christians should be aware of. This supports the thesis idea that Christians should know of salvation by grace only.

Viola, Frank. *Reimagining Church: Pursuing The Dream Of Organic Christianity*. Colorado Springs: Davis C. Cook, 2008.

Viola believes that many have turned their backs on God's original intent for the church. In this book, he furthers the idea that Salvation proceeds any church involvement and that character development is not part of the salvation process. This is very important to the idea of this thesis. It supports the notion that many live by a works-based idea of Christianity. It gives further reason to understand that salvation is by grace alone.

Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

In this widely read book, Rick Warren explains a strategy that is a disciple-building process and not a church building program. It is added to the list of references because it shows that the disciple building process is conducted after individuals became Christians. Therefore, they have a secure relationship with God first, and then they build Christian lives. This book is anti-legalistic, and that supports the research of this thesis.

Wright, Tom. *Simply Christian*. London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2006.

In this book, Bishop Wright explains the fundamentals of Christianity. He goes into detail about what it means to be converted and how important that concept is. He also explains the claims of justice, beauty, and love in the daily lives of Christians once they believe. Therefore, this book shows the need for grace and faith to become a Christian and not works specifically.

Dissertations

Bonner, Alison Clare. "The Scale, Context, and Implications, of the Manuscript Transmission of Pelagius' Ad Demetriadem." U605939, University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), 2012.

This dissertation gives insight into the thoughts of Pelagius on asceticism and how that became the alleged basis for his writings and his theology. This thesis makes the argument that Freemasonry is Pelaginic in nature due to its requirement of man to make himself better. This was expressly rejected by the early church as correct theology and even went so far as to call it heresy. Therefore, it cannot be the position of the evangelical Christian.

Burnett, Carole C. "God's Self-Revelation in the Theology of Pelagius." 9900147, The Catholic University of America, 1998.

This dissertation indicates the theology of Pelagius on scriptural exegesis, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and epistemology. These were areas he was not associated with well. This led to his rejection by the church. This dissertation gives insight into the background of this heresy and supports its rejection by evangelical Christians.

Johnson, David W. "Purging the Poison: The Revision of Pelagius' Pauline Commentaries by Cassiodorus and His Students." 8923108, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1989.

This dissertation gives insight into what Pelagius' understanding of the church was as he gave insight into the books written by Paul. Therefore, this dissertation complements the understanding of Pelagius and his theology as an issue that Freemasons can get caught up in, and its usefulness as a research item for this Thesis is important.

Lavender, Earl Dale. "The Development of Pelagius' Thought within a Late Fourth Century Ascetic Movement in Rome." 9131009, Saint Louis University, 1991.

This dissertation gives an understanding of the influence of Pelagius from the ascetic movement from the 4th Century AD in Rome. This work shows that Pelagius had a strong influence and required a direct opponent to counter his theology for the benefit of the church. It supports his work as a theologian and gives credit to the church's requirement to respond to his heresy. It shows that self-moral development can be detrimental to a Christian who must understand the reality of grace.

Opalinski, Brett M. "Pelagius and Galatians: An Ascetic Approach to Grace and Human effort." 3310974, The Iliff School of Theology and University of Denver, 2008.

This dissertation gives insight into the thoughts of Pelagius on the idea of grace and human effort. This was truly a big controversy surrounding his life and ministry. This

work supports this thesis by showing how Pelagius had a view of human effort being required for a Christian to be true, thus supporting the works-based theology that is widely promoted in Freemasonry.

Roberts, James W. "An Assessment of the Changes in the Early Church as seen in the Condemnations of the Heretics Arius and Pelagius." 3363704, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009.

This dissertation gives insight into the understanding of the Pelagius controversy during the 4th and 5th centuries. It shows the controversy around the Pelaginic theology of the day and how it was incompatible with Christian Orthodoxy through the church. It gives insight into the wrong view associated with the prayers in Freemasonry seeking to gain admittance into heaven.

Schuchard, Marsha Keith Manatt. "FREEMASONRY, SECRET SOCIETIES, AND THE CONTINUITY OF THE OCCULT TRADITIONS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE." Order No. 7524957, The University of Texas at Austin, 1975.

This dissertation provides information that ties Freemasonry to non-Christian influences of individuals. These non-Christian influences seem to be growing in the organization and make it easy for heretical ideas to be promoted within the organization when orthodox Christian fundamentals are not supported within the organization.

Squires, Stuart. "Reassessing Pelagianism: Augustine, Cassian, and Jerome on the Possibility of a Sinless Life."3553538, The Catholic University of America, 2013.

This dissertation provides information about those men (Augustine, Cassian, and Jerome) that were opposite of Pelagius on ideas of possible sin-free life. This Dissertation researches these figures and how the church supported them over Pelagius. This further

supports the idea that the Pelaginic tendencies within Freemasonry are not in line with evangelical Christianity.

Scholarly Journal Articles

Gross, Robert A., "Lodges and Lyceums, Freemasonry and Free Grace," *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, vol 19 (2017), pp1-22.

This article explains the environment in which the lodges of early America were created as well as the political climate that was involved in their making. It is useful in the Thesis to understand the atmosphere and the climate of people when the country was being founded. This article supports the idea that Freemasons were in fact Christians but seemed to support the idea of good works as a way to ensure entrance into heaven.

Other Media

Beede, Thomas, *A sermon, preached at Lexington, Massachusetts, June 24, 1803: before the Hiram, Corinthian, Middlesex, & Meridian Lodges of Free and Accepted Masons, at their festival of St. John the Baptist. By Brother Thomas Beede, pastor of the church in Wilton, N.H.*

This sermon was full of useful value to this Thesis because it showed that the average citizen was exposed to Freemasonry as a Christian as part of life in colonial times. This links the idea of Freemasonic works as a requirement for salvation as Freemasons work their way to heaven. The average non-Freemason would not know much about the organization, but they would hear these sermons as part of the church and be encouraged to find themselves inside of the fraternity.

Blakslee, Solomon, *A Sermon, Delivered before the Honorable Fraternity of Free Masons By Solomon Blakslee, B.A. East Haddam, January 8, 1794.*

This sermon is an example of sermons being preached towards Freemasons at a Lodge gathering as part of the fraternity. Many of that time would not have seen a distinction between Freemasonry and the church and would nevertheless be exposed to a works-based plan of salvation as part of Freemasonry.

Brown, Clark, *Christian charity, the perfection of every moral system: illustrated in a sermon, delivered at Northfield, Massachusetts, before the officers and brethren of the Harmony Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in that town, jointed by the Republican Lodge from Greenfield: on the festival of St. John, the Baptist; June 24th. 1799. By Clark Brown, A.M. Minister of the Christian Congregational Church and Society in Brimfield.*

This sermon supports this thesis by being another example of Freemasons having Christian sermons in their lodges. Because of the lack of proper Christian education, some Freemason preachers preach the idea of self-moral discipline as the staple of being a good Christian. However, these sermons made Freemasonry and church the same in the eyes of many Freemasons.

Brown, Clark, *The moral and benevolent design of Christianity and Free-Masonry, discussed: [electronic resource]: a sermon, preached June 24th, 1808, At the celebration of the festival of St. John, the Baptist, in Danville, (Vt.) By Clark Brown, A.M. a few years since minister in Brimfield, Massachusetts.*

This sermon is another example of the Lodge and the church becoming one and the same through the eyes of Freemasons. During the lodge, they would hear Christian teaching, and it would be associated with the ideas of personal discipline associated with the moral

aspects of Freemasonry. This gave support to the thesis that works based salvation was being supported in and through the lodge.

Burhans, Daniel, *A sermon, delivered at Lanesborough, on the festival of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 1807: at the request, and in the presence of the free and accepted Masons of Friendship, Franklin and Sincerity Lodges. By the Rev. Daniel Burhans, A.M. Rector of Trinity Church, Newtown.*

This sermon shows that Freemasonry and the church are synonymous in the minds of some. Since sermons are preached at the lodge, many see this as being just like or equal to the church. This sermon has validity to the research of this thesis due to its relational nature of showing Christianity and the church as being synonymous with Freemasonry.

Carter, Abiel, *A sermon, on Freemasonry: preached before the lodges, no. 45 and 113, of the city of Pittsburgh, on Tuesday, June 24, 1817, being the festival of St. John Baptist. / By the Rev. Abiel Carter, A.M. Rector of Trinity Church, in that city. ; Published at the request of the lodges.*

This sermon furthermore supports the idea that in the early 19th century, the Freemasons lived a life in America that was tied to Christianity and the church. These sermons were preached in lodges and teach Christian principles to members of the lodge. However, they were frequently entwined with moral goodness being a requirement of Christianity, thus linking it to the lodge.

Chase, Philander, *Christianity and masonry reconciled: a sermon preached before the right worshipful grandmaster, officers and members of the Grand Lodge of Ohio, in Chillicothe ... and also before the most excellent Grand Chapter of the same state, in Columbus ... by Philander Chase.*

This sermon was another preached by local clergy to a lodge during its proceedings. This further supports the link to Christianity and Freemasonry being tied together, but theologically wrong in requiring the Freemason to practice a works-based religion.

Harris, Thaddeus Mason, *A discourse, delivered at Bridgewater November 3, 1797: at the request of the members of Fellowship Lodge, on occasion of the consecration of the lodge and installation of the officers. By the Reverend Brother Thaddeus Mason Harris, Chaplain to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.*

This sermon was preached at the consecration of a lodge. The sermon at this formal and important event reveals the relationship between the church and Freemasons in the late 18th century. It further supports the works-based salvation indicated in this thesis.

Harris, Thaddeus Mason, *Masonic emblems explained: In a sermon, preached before the members of King Solomon's Lodge, of Free and Accepted Masons, in Charlestown, June 24, 1796, Being the festival of St. John the Baptist. By Thaddeus Mason Harris, M.A. F.H.S.*

This sermon was preached at a lodge in the late 18th century. It gives credence to the relationship of the lodge as a partner to the church. Even though it shows works as a requirement for salvation, it ties the two organizations together.

Hart, William, *A sermon preached before the masonic societies of Richmond and Manchester, on St. John's Day, December 27, 1819, by Wm. H. Hart.*

Another instance of a Christian sermon being preached at a lodge. This furthermore shows that the church was supporting Freemasonry during this time period. For some, this may be all the church they ever received. This sermon was preached at a

Freemasonry lodge and showed the relationship of Freemasonry to the church during that period.

M'Clure, David, *A sermon, delivered at the installation of the Morning-Star Lodge, of Free Masons: in East-Windsor, Connecticut, August 21, 1794. By David M'Clure, A.M. Minister of the First Church in East-Windsor.*

This sermon indicates that the relationship between the Christian church and Freemasonry was mostly synonomous during the time period.

Morse, Jedidiah, *A sermon delivered before the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: at a public installation of the officers of the Corinthian Lodge, at Concord, in the county of Middlesex, June 25th, 1798. By Jedidiah Morse, D.D. Minister of the congregation in Charlestown.*

This sermon shows that Freemasonry supported the Christian church during this time with overlapping instances of teaching.

Payson, Seth, *A sermon, at the consecration of the Social Lodge in Ashby, and the installation of its officers, June 24, A.D. 1799, By Seth Payson, A.M. Pastor of the church in Rindge.*

This sermon shows a strong relationship of the body of the local church being supportive of Freemasonry.

Ripley, Ezra, *A Masonic sermon, preached at Greenfield, Massachusetts, on 14th June ... 1802: before the members of the Republican, Harmony and Pacific lodges, commemorative of St. John, the Baptist by the Rev. Ezra Ripley.*

This sermon shows that teachings in Freemasonry were very similar to those ideas preached in churches during this time period.

Sinclair, William, *An address, part of which only, was delivered upon the opening of Baltimore College: but agreeably to promise, the whole is now submitted to the public : to which is annexed a funeral masonic sermon, upon the happiness of the righteous after death by William Sinclair.*

This address shows the relationship of the local people in their educational setting supporting Freemasonry and using the Masonic standards in the Funeral services for the people of the local area.

Smith, Michael, *A sermon, preached in Christ-Church, in Newbern, in North-Carolina, December the 27th, 1755, area of masonry: before the Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons: Published at the request of the master, wardens, and brethren of the lodge. By Michael Smith, A.B.*

This sermon shows the influence that Freemasons had on society in their ability to present their Masonic Philosophy within the Church setting.

Spencer, Oliver, *A masonic sermon delivered by Brother O.M. Spencer on the anniversary of St. John the Baptist, June 24th, A.L. 5813, A.D. 1813.*

This sermon shows the presence that Freemasonry had inside of the church in that Freemasonic Holy Days are supported in the church.

Turner, Edward, *The divine agency, in the removal of lover, and friend: with some of the most important uses of afflictive dispensations: a sermon, delivered November 30, 1804, at the funeral of Doct. Seth Smith of Western by Edward Turner.*

This sermon shows the strong influence that Freemasonry had on this society by presenting the tenets of Freemasonry in the church setting.

Wheeler, Elijah, *Benevolence, or love to God and our neighbor: illustrated in a sermon delivered at Stockbridge at the dedication of the Masonic Hall in said town, December 27th, 1815 by Elijah Wheeler.*

This sermon https shows the relationship of Christianity and the Lodge during this time period as being on equal ground. It gives indication that the philosophy of Freemasonry was rooted strongly in Christianity.

Scripture

John 1:29 (ESV) reminds us that John saw the purpose of Jesus. “The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” Jesus did what we need for salvation. Salvation from Jesus requires no task from people. Instead, they must only believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that his death on Calvary is the propitiation for the sins of all mankind.

Romans 1:17 (ESV) tells us that “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” Therefore Paul explains to his readers that God has a sovereign plan for everyone that involved salvation for humanity. It requires faith and nothing else. It requires no works from the individual.

Romans 3:25 (ESV) explains that it was Jesus “whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over ‘former sins.’” This passage of scripture further explains by Paul that it was Jesus who was the propitiation for sins of the world and that it was faith by the individual in Jesus that made this possible. It is not gained from any task done by the sinner.

Romans 4:17-21 (ESV) explains the basis that Abraham was the father of all nations through Faith. In other words, it was the faith of the gentiles that gave them membership in the family of Abraham. Because of their faith, God has accepted these gentiles as His own.

Romans 5:1 (ESV) gives further evidence of the relationship of the sinner to God through faith. Paul states that “since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This justification makes reference to the salvation of man through the work of Jesus Christ on Calvary.

Romans 6 (ESV) is a very important passage of scriptures for this thesis. In this passage of scripture, Paul explains the idea of sin leading to death, but faith leading to salvation. It is this faith that leads to salvation that puts aside the requirement of man having to accomplish any feats or do any works for his salvation. Paul also explains that sinners should not go on sinning just so that they can receive grace. Paul also discusses being slaves to righteousness; however, that does not indicate that it becomes a requirement for salvation. It is the fruit you get from being a slave to God that provides the fruit that allows man to gain sanctification, which ends in eternal life.

Romans 8:17 (ESV) tells its readers that if man is a child of God, then he is an heir of God and Christ. This means that one is an actual member of the family of God. Therefore, he will not need to do good deeds to maintain or hope to obtain a place in heaven because it is already secured. As an adopted child of God, man will maintain all of the rights and benefits of being in the family.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (ESV) explains to the readers that everyone in Christ is a new creation. That everything that was old is passed away, and everything has become new. This is because God reconciled man to him through Jesus Christ. God will not hold the trespasses of man against him. This leads the sinner to understand that there is nothing he can do to stay in

God's grace or to get into God's grace. It points back to faith, and that faith is in Jesus Christ. This is because Jesus knew no sin, as stated in verse 21.

2 Corinthians 6:1 (ESV) reminds the reader that man should not receive the "grace of God in vain." In essence, the Bible is saying nothing new to the people by Paul at this point. However, some modern Freemasons misunderstand this and relate the metaphor speaking later on the passage, to be equal to the requirement of building a spiritual temple to gain admittance into heaven. Nevertheless, here he was just using the metaphor to signify that God is in control and not his children.

Galatians 3:11 (ESV) is a very important passage of scripture that shows that "it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith." Here Paul is reminding his readers that it is only faith that leads to salvation and not works. There is no other way that anyone can or would be justified before God.

Ephesians 2:5-10 (ESV) further supports the idea that it is by grace that man is saved. Paul actually tells his readers that it is "by grace you have been saved through faith." Man has no other way of making himself right with God. There is no moral equivalent of faith in Christ.

Philippians 1:6 (ESV) states that "I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." This further supports the idea that it is through faith that God will bring you to completion in the future, and that is with him in glory. Paul goes on to indicate in verse 7 that all of the listeners are "partakers with me in grace."

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (ESV) explains that it was God's destination for man to find salvation through Jesus Christ. This would mean that it would not be through personal deeds and self-discipline. The passage explains that no matter what state of being a man is in, whether he be awake or asleep that his people will live with him.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV) reminds the readers that “all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” This teaches Christians that the Holy Bible is the standard for the basis of Christianity. Its pages are filled with truth that can be used to determine that faith is required for salvation. It explains over its entirety that faith in Jesus is the only way to heaven.

Hebrews 3:1-6 (ESV) teaches its readers that Jesus is greater than Moses. “Moses was faithful in all of God’s house as a servant” however, “Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son.” All man has to do is “hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope” that we may be in good with Jesus Christ, who is the one considered faithful. It is not through actions but confidence and hope.

1 John 3:2 (ESV) gives its readers assurance that they are children of God and that they will appear in glory with him in the future. This gives assurance to the Christian that their reward is based on faith and not on any other merit.

Theological Foundations

The theological foundations of this thesis are related to the salvation journey that every man faces in life. Will he or will he not be found to be acceptable in God’s eyes. In the Christian world man must come to a realization that sin separates him from God. God in response gives man the ability to make himself right with God based on the Gospel message given to all in the Bible. In essence the question will be does Freemasonry support or detract from the Gospel message in such a way that man may be taken in the wrong direction based on Christian doctrine.

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundation of this paper will be in the biblical, historical, and theological understanding of the Freemason's fraternity. Can a Man truly be an Evangelical Christian and a Freemason at the same time? This paper will research the thoughts and lives of those founders who started the United States and what their rationale was on the understanding of Freemasonry. This paper will discover the substance of those Freemason sermons that were biblical in nature and were preached in the Masonic Lodges and churches of early America. What influence did they have, and were they correct in their theology towards salvation?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Implementation of the Intervention Design

In this paper, the researcher will engage in a study of Freemasonry from the theological perspective as related to Evangelical Christianity. The study will seek to answer the questions if an Evangelical Christian can be a Freemason and if a Freemason can be an Evangelical Christian. The tenets of Freemasonry will be examined to see if they are compatible with Evangelical Christianity in such a way that the average Christian could proudly claim both as a primary relationship. Any personal opinions which are unsupported by the academic facts will not be used to conclude whether Freemasonry supports the basis of Evangelical Christianity or not.

Chapter 4: History of Freemasonry

There are approximately six million Freemasons around the world. This includes 200,000 in Wales and England, as well as 30,000 in Scotland, and 25,000 in Ireland.⁵ In the United States, Freemasons number in the neighborhood of 2 million.⁶ In fact, in America, Freemasonry owns a large infrastructure full of degree rituals that invoke religious and philosophical teachings. This organization is the oldest and largest secret society in America. It traces its local origins to around 1730 in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. The American organization reached its peak membership in 1959 when its membership topped out at over four million men. Today there are still over 26,500 lodges in operation in the United States; however, their membership has dwindled, and their structure is on the decline.⁷

At one time, there was a racial divide in the United States with Freemasonry. There existed Prince Hall Masonry and the AF&AM (Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.) Each organization believed that the other was not the true form of the craft. This was not until Friday, November 21, 2008, when Prince Hall Masons and the Masons of the NC Grand Lodge of AF&AM voted to acknowledge each other as being legitimate. This new partnership stopped the

⁵ “Integrity or influence? Inside the world of modern Freemasons,” The Guardian, 4th February 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/feb/04/integrity-or-influence-peering-into-the-world-of-modern-freemasons>

⁶ Hodapp, Christopher, *Freemasons for Dummies* (Indianapolis: Wiley, 2005), 52

⁷ David Barton, *The Question of Freemasonry and the Founding Fathers: Was America Founded by Freemasons?* (Aledo, Texas, Wallbuilder Press. 2005), 7-8

138-year-old divide between the two organizations. In prior years, each organization acted and carried on as if the other did not exist and referred to it as a “clandestine” organization.⁸

Men who become Freemasons join what is called a Blue or Symbolic Lodge. It is this foundational lodge that this paper will be most focused on since it is foundational to all levels of Freemasonry. No Freemason exists without being initiated and educated in the Blue (Symbolic) Lodge. The reason that this foundational lodge is called Blue is that it is related to the color of the sky or, more accurately, the color of heaven.⁹ Therefore, inside the lodge room where the meetings take place, the actual color of the ceiling is blue to represent the sky or heavenly color. Also, the Masonic Bible states that the color blue is the “distinctive color of craft masonry-denotes Friendship, which is the peculiar characteristic of a Master Mason.”¹⁰

The Blue Lodge is made up of the following principal officers and its members. The primary officer is the Worshipful Master, who acts as the president or chairman. At the next level is the Senior Warden, who acts as the first vice president or vice-chairman. Below that is the principal officer, the Junior Warden, who is the second vice president or vice-chairman. Following those are the Senior and Junior Deacons. They serve as messengers during the ritual work. After the Deacons are the Junior and Senior Stewards, these are there to assist the candidate during the ritual work of initiation, passing, and raising of a candidate performed in the lodge. There is also a secretary who keeps the minutes and handles any paperwork associated with records and correspondence associated with the lodge. Then, there is the Treasurer, who is

⁸ “Masonic groups in N.C. - one white, one black - acknowledge brotherhood,” The Herald, 22th November, 2008, <https://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article12242276.html>.

⁹ Henry Wilson Coil, *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia* (New York: Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Company, Inc., 1961), p. 99.

¹⁰ DeVore & Sons, Inc., *Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments*. Master Mason Edition (Wichita: Heirloom Bible Publishers, 1991), p.12.

responsible for keeping the money and pays the bills that are voted on by the lodge members. There is also a Chaplain assigned who conducts ritual prayers with the workings of the lodge. Finally, there is a Tyler, who sits outside the door of the lodge while it is in session and arranges the introduction of guests and visitors.¹¹

There are three requirements that are needed to join a Blue Lodge and become a Freemason. First, the individual must not be a female but a male person. This male individual must have a good reputation in the community and also believe in a god. However, there is no specific definition of who or what that god is. As long as the individual acknowledges that he puts his trust in a singular god, it meets that portion of the requirement.¹²

Many Freemasons stop their masonic journey with the Degree of Master Mason (or better known as the third degree.) Master Mason is the highest degree that someone can obtain in the Blue Lodge. In the Blue Lodge, there are only three degrees that the Freemason can obtain. The three degrees are as follows, the Entered Apprentice degree, the Fellowcraft degree, and the Master Mason Degree.¹³

Freemasonry does indeed include and take a very religious stance, but the stance is extremely universalist and deistic in nature. As stated above, the god that is recognized in Freemasonry is actually whatever individual god that each particular member associates as his one and only god. This could be the Judeo-Christian God, or it could be any singular pantheistic or singular pagan god. So, to avoid causing confusion or controversy on a religious level, the deity recognized in Freemasonry carries the deistic name of the Great Architect Of The Universe

¹¹ Knowledge gained by Researcher from being a member.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

(G.A.O.T.U).¹⁴ This name is obviously associated with the highly construction-oriented or building nature of the organization. Since the fraternity uses the analogy of its members being skilled masons and working on construction sites, it refers to this deity as an idea of a supreme architect. It only makes sense in its logic that this is so.

In the United States, there are three levels above the Blue Lodge: the Scottish Rite, the York Rite, and the Shrine. The Scottish Rite and the York Rite are a continuation of the Blue Lodge's philosophical masonic teachings. The Scottish Rite originated in France and not in Scotland, as one might think, according to the name. The Scottish Rite has 29 additional degrees that anyone who is a Freemason and is elected to join can obtain. These degrees are numbered from the 4th degree to the 32nd degree, respectively, and they build on the three degrees obtained from the Blue Lodge of Freemasonry. The Scottish Rite also has a 33rd Degree that is honorary and is given only to those that are deemed to be the most faithful Scottish Rite Masons. However, no one can ask to become a 33rd Degree Freemason, or he will be perpetually disqualified.¹⁵ The Master Mason is able to join the Scottish Rite by being recommended by a current Scottish Rite Mason who sponsors him into membership. The initiate then attends a meeting called a reunion where the degrees are presented as single act plays. It is in these plays where the specific philosophical and moral thought is expounded upon and taught, therefore culminating with the 32nd degree of which is called or entitled "Master of the Royal Secret." There is no memory work or examination of knowledge required of the initiate during this process. Therefore, for many, these philosophical and moral thoughts are not truly grasped initially and may take a lifetime to dissect and understand. This lifelong learning is usually

¹⁴ Barton, *Freemasonry and the Founding Fathers*, 9.

¹⁵ Knowledge gained by Researcher from being a member.

accomplished when the initiates themselves take part in the plays in the future for the purpose of teaching these philosophical and moral thoughts to those new initiates that would currently be being initiated.¹⁶ The American version of the Scottish Rite was formed in Charleston, SC, on May 31, 1801, with the creation of the Southern Jurisdiction, and later the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction was formed in 1831. It was stated that this separation of north and south was for general administrative efficiency.¹⁷

The York Rite Masonry is the self-proclaimed Christian route of Freemasonry following the teaching of Jesus Christ according to the Masonic Edition of the Holy Bible.¹⁸ According to the Masonic edition of the Holy Bible, it is a King James Version of the text with additional masonic study aids for the masonic student.¹⁹ The York Rite admits Master Masons of the Blue Lodge upon the recommendation of current York Rite Masons, the same as the Scottish Rite of Masonry. This branch of Freemasonry has 10 degrees. These degrees are grounded upon rituals related to the Temple of Solomon and the Christian Crusades of the Middle Ages.²⁰

As for the Shriners, previously (prior to 2000), the Shrine only accepted Freemasons that were in the Scottish Rite or York Rite, but that requirement has been repealed, and the only requirement now is for a Shriner to be a current member in good standing with a Blue Lodge. The Shrine or the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (AAONMS) is very distinct. It was created in 1870 by William J. Florence and Walter Millard Fleming. It seems that

¹⁶ “Frequently Asked Questions” Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Supreme Council 33 Southern Jurisdiction, USA, accessed August 15, 2020, <https://scottishrite.org/about/questions/>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ DeVore & Sons, Inc., *Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments*. Master Mason Edition (Wichita: Heirloom Bible Publishers, 1991), p.4.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Knowledge gained by Researcher from being a member.

as these two were Freemasons in Manhattan when there was talk of having a new fraternity for Freemasons. The idea came from Florence, who had traveled the world extensively and witnessed a party in Marseille that was a musical comedy that, at its conclusion, inducted the guests into a “Secret Society.”²¹ Florence used this outline as a template to create this new organization. The organization took on an Arabic theme and utilized the “Fez” as its trademark hat for its members.²² The organization has come under fire for hazing its initiates, usually with electricity.²³ When an individual shows up to be initiated into the Shrine, they initially see a doctor. That doctor checks their blood pressure and has them answer a questionnaire inquiring into their general medical condition. Upon completing the examination, the candidate is marked as either a “Hot Candidate” or a “Cold Candidate.” Then, all of the candidates are brought together as a group and are directed to an auditorium where they will watch a play. This play is actually the initiation ritual into the Shrine. It tells the history of the organization and reminds candidates to be charitable in their lives. Upon the completion of this, the director explains to the candidates that they have met the requirements of becoming a Shriner, and they are not required to do anything else until the evening banquet where they will be officially received as a Shriner. Next, all of the “hot” candidates are then offered the opportunity to go through the “second session,” and it is during this “second session” that the candidate undergoes hazing as part of their induction ritual. The hazing is done all in good fun, and usually, no one is hurt. The

²¹ “History: Beginnings” Shriners International, accessed July 23, 2020 <https://www.shrinersinternational.org/Shriners/History/Beginnings>

²² “History: The Fez” Shriners International, accessed July 24, 2020 <https://www.shrinersinternational.org/Shriners/History/Fez>

²³ “Man sues Shriners over initiation injuries Trial exposes secret ritual in which electric shock is used on initiates” The Baltimore Evening Sun, December 10, 1991 <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1991-12-10-1991344146-story.html>

Shriners raise money for the Children's Hospital by putting on this hazing event, and they do this by donating money to a group or unit within the Shrine who called themselves the "Wrecking Crew" and their sole purpose or reason for existence as a unit is to haze the "hot" candidates/initiates during this "second session." The Shrine is made up of different "units" that individually raise money for the Children's Hospital. Since the Wrecking Crew was designed to haze initiates as they were inducted into the organization, they received donations from current members for specific action(s) to be taken on certain candidates. Nearly all of the hazing involved stunts that had to be performed by the initiate where they would get shocked during the process. The current members would sit around the exterior of the room where this took place and would watch for entertainment purposes. In many Freemason's eyes, the Shrine is not true Freemasonry because of the activities that take place within it; they believe that it is only a fraternity that requires its members to be Freemasons first.²⁴

These higher degrees of Freemasonry are well established and carry the Master Mason on a further journey; however, the Masonic Bible states that,

After you become a Master Mason, no matter what added Masonic honor may come to you, no matter how high you may rise in the symbolic branches of the order, if you keep your vows as a Master Mason you have attained all there is, fulfilled all there is and received all there is to be received that fraternity and brotherhood, existing under a common impulse, can dispense among those who embrace the laws and edicts of a common procedure.²⁵

Since Blue Lodge Masonry is considered the highest level of Masonry, this paper will focus on these first three degrees, which are stated above as the Entered Apprentice Degree, the Fellowcraft Degree, and the Master Mason Degree.

²⁴ Information learned while participating in the Shrine

²⁵ DeVore & Sons, Inc., *Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments*. Master Mason Edition (Wichita: Heirloom Bible Publishers, 1991), p.4.

The origins of Freemasonry are still the discussion and debate of many scholars who, through speculation, have produced the best possible history that they are able. However, it has been stated that “of all the mysteries of Freemasonry, it may be said that there is perhaps none greater than the mystery of its origin.”²⁶ These questions of who, what, where, why, and when are the basis of much debate and study within this world of Freemasons. However, it seems through consensus that the origination was during the middle ages, and it was birthed in the guilds of operative stonemasons who built the world’s great cathedrals and castles of this era of the past.²⁷ Some of the facets of Freemasonry go back nearly 1000 years. These guilds protected their trade secrets, which were primarily mathematical knowledge and knowledge of construction methods. By doing so, confidentiality was needed, which protected the quality of the guild's work and safeguarded job security on the part of its members.²⁸ The history of Freemasonry begins with the craftsmen who traveled across Europe during this period building cathedrals, castles, churches, abbeys, and other stone buildings. These masons who completed these travels of the continent and did the physical work of stone cutting and laying were members of mason’s lodges. As stated above, these masons’ lodges were, in essence, the precursor to today’s union halls; in other words, they served the same purpose to masons of the time as the modern-day union provides to a tradesman. These traveling masons were called nothing less than freemasons. These skilled artisans actually worked for themselves and carried with them due to their talents of stone masonry, the ability to freely travel around gaining work,

²⁶ History and Evolution of Freemasonry p.19 <https://www.scribd.com/document/108447817/History-and-Evolution-of-Freemasonry-delmar-D-Darrah-1967>.

²⁷ “History of Freemasonry,” United Grand Lodge of England, accessed June 17, 2020, <https://www.ugle.org.uk/about-Freemasonry/history-of-Freemasonry>.

²⁸ “About Freemasonry,” Grand Lodge of North Carolina, accessed June 17, 2020, <https://www.grandlodge-nc.org/about-Freemasonry>.

and conducting construction projects. They were able to recognize each other through trade secrets that involved secret handshakes and other signs that would have the same effect today as someone carrying a dues card to a trade union. Some Masons did not travel and belonged to local masonic guilds rather than these previously stated lodges. These non-traveling masons (or those who belonged to these local masonic guilds) lived and worked in only one area. They made themselves available to work on local construction projects, new work, or actual repairs to existing buildings. The traveling Freemasons, therefore, hired or contracted these local Masons to work for them when they obtained contracts while traveling.²⁹

These masons of the period mentioned above had three degrees, based on the experience or knowledge of the worker. These three levels are still used today in actual unions of stonemasons. The novice who was part of the craft was called the Entered Apprentice. After seven years of apprentice work, they could move up to the rank of Fellowcraft. Once they mastered the tradecraft, they then moved up to the position of Master Mason. These types of Masons are considered and known as operative masons because of the skills and knowledge of architecture, as well as their ability to operate as actual stonemasons that worked with real stone. These workers were covered and governed under the Old York Constitutions of 926 A.D. and then followed under the auspices of the Old Charges of 938 A.D. These masonic regulations of that period governed the masons in four different areas. The first was God and religion due to the primary focus of their work being on cathedrals and most states having government-sponsored religions. It was here in this first area that the 926 A.D. Constitution gave instructions that “Every mason shall cultivate brotherly love, and the love of God, and frequent holy church.”

²⁹ Barton, *Freemasonry and the Founding Fathers*, 9-10.

Also, this same document required that “at every meeting and assembly they [shall] pray heartily for all Christians.” The second area was masonry as a professional craft, which concerned the behavior, conduct, and training of masons. The third was the science of geometry, which covered the mathematical and scientific basis of designs and calculations of an architectural nature. The last was the regal duty, which was instruction in the royal protocol since most of their customers were nobles, monarchs, and church officials from the government.³⁰

These charges were reviewed and brought up to date occasionally; however, they still kept up their Christian character. A good example is that the 1538 document declared that ‘The might of the Father in heaven, and the wisdom of the glorious Son, through the grace and goodness of the Holy Ghost, yet being three persons and one God, be with us at [our] beginning.’ The charges of 1686 required that Masons ‘be true men to God and the holy church.’ Then later, the 1722 charge stated that “A Mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine [a morally unrestrained and ungodly person].”³¹

Speculative Masonry was first recorded in 1646. This was when Elias Ashmole made a personal recording of his initiation into Freemasonry as a Speculative Freemason. He wrote, “as I was made a Freemason at Warrington in Lancashire with Colonel Henry Mainwaring of Karincham in Chesire. The names of those that were at the Lodge, Mr. Richard Penket Worden, Mr. James Collier, Mr. Richard Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam, Richard Ellam, and Hugh Brewer.” This is the first known written source that shows initiation into a speculative masonic organization. However, the initiation of these others that were mentioned had to be initiated at

³⁰ Barton, *Freemasonry and the Founding Fathers*, 11-12

³¹ Ibid.

some previous time and location.³² This period of the Renaissance was the pinnacle of the influence of the Freemasonry movement. However, with the decline of monumental church architecture in the 16th and 17th centuries, the operative guild began to decline. Therefore, between the eras of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, these Operative Freemasons began to accept non-masons, who came to be known as Speculative Masons, into their ranks. These new members were men of letters as well as wise influential statesmen. This led to the transformation of the Operative Guild of Masons to the social and fraternal organization of predominantly speculative masons during the 17th and 18th centuries.³³ This shows the transfer of the fraternity becoming more philosophic in nature and not so much as that of an actual workers guild as was probably initially intended. This philosophic nature came from the teachings and the use of tools and legends of the stonemasons work as “metaphors to emphasize internal enlightenment and personal growth” among members of the organization.³⁴ These philosophical masons that practiced Speculative Masonry became known as Accepted Masons because they had no knowledge of stonemason work.³⁵ Mackey, who is one of the prominent authorities of Freemasonry, explains that:

Speculative Masonry...may be briefly defined as the scientific application and the religious consecration of the rules and principles, the language, the implements, and materials of Operative Masonry to the veneration of God, the purification of the heart, and the inculcation of the dogmas of a religious philosophy. Speculative Masonry, or Freemasonry, is then a system of ethics and must therefore – like all

³² “History of Freemasonry.”

³³ “About Freemasonry.”

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Barton, *Freemasonry and the Founding Fathers*, 13

other ethical systems – have its distinctive doctrines. These may be divided into three classes, namely, the Moral, the Religious, and the Philosophical.³⁶

On the 24th day of June in 1717, which is known as St. John's day, and is ironically the same year as the 200th anniversary of the protestant reformation, four Freemasonic lodges in London England came together at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern in St. Paul's Churchyard to declare themselves as a Grand Lodge whereby they elected the first Grand Master in England who was Anthony Sayer. This is known as the first Grand Lodge in the World.³⁷

By 1723, the Grand Lodge of England had published the first rule book entitled: The Book of Constitutions of Masonry. The Grand Lodge also had, by this time, become in the habit of meeting quarterly and recording minutes of the actual meetings. Also, by this time, it had extended its authority outside the limits of London.³⁸ This new book of rules created the new standards of masonry and replaced the old charges that the operative masons had utilized for so long. This new book of standards was written by Scottish Presbyterian clergyman Rev. James Anderson and was entitled *Anderson's Constitutions*. However, in creating the new standards, he weaved into the new some of the old. He kept the three degrees of Masonry, the recognition methods that were secret, and the requirement to believe in God.

In 1725, the Grand Lodge of Ireland was established. In 1736 the Grand Lodge of Scotland had been formed. These three Home Grand Lodges began to take Freemasonry overseas, and the development of Freemasonry abroad mirrors the 18th and 19th-century development of the British Empire.³⁹

³⁶ Mackey, Albert G., *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (New York: Masonic History Company, 1924), Vol. II, p. 704.

³⁷ "History of Freemasonry."

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

By 1751, there came upon the scene a rival Grand Lodge that was located in London. Its members were Masons of Irish origin, and they claimed that the original Grand Lodge had made improvements upon Freemasonry that were not in keeping with the original intent. Therefore, they labeled the first Grand Lodge as the Moderns, and they referred to themselves as the Ancients. These two lodges refused to recognize the other and existed side by side at home and abroad for approximately 63 years.⁴⁰

In 1813, after both lodges had negotiated for four years, these two lodges actually united on 27 December 1813 to form the Grand Lodge of England. It was only after this merger that standardization of the ritual, procedures, and regalia was obtained.⁴¹

By 1814, there were as many as 647 Freemasonic Lodges in existence. The 19th century had in store for it a significant expansion of Freemasonry in both England and abroad.⁴²

In England, both World Wars had an expanding effect on Freemasonry. In the three years immediately following World War One, over 350 new Lodges were created. Likewise, in the three years following the conclusion of World War Two, more than 600 new Lodges were established. In most circumstances, this was nothing more than servicemen returning home from war and looking to continue the camaraderie experienced during the war. Freemasonry gave these servicemen the calm center that was so desperately desired following the issues of war.⁴³

On June 14, 1967, the 250th anniversary of the Grand Lodge of England was celebrated at the Royal Albert Hall. The main attraction at this service was the installation as Grand Master

⁴⁰ "History of Freemasonry."

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent. The Duke of Kent (Prince Edward) was born in 1935 as the first cousin to Queen Elizabeth II. Prince Edward is the 10th, current, and longest-serving Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, the governing body of Freemasonry in England and Wales.⁴⁴

On June 10, 1992, over 12,500 Freemasons and guests gathered at Earl's Court in West London to celebrate the 275th anniversary of the United Grand Lodge of England. For the first time in the history of Freemasonry, the television and press were present to broadcast a meeting of the Grand Lodge of England to the world.⁴⁵ Therefore, Freemasonry today is a place where some people just make friends and acquaintances, and for some, it is a place or a way to discuss the philosophies of life, and yet for others, it is a way to do goodwill and charity. Many may have one or more of these reasons for joining the fraternity, but no matter the reason, Freemasonry is considered a "society of men concerned with moral and spiritual values," according to the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. The Grand Lodge of North Carolina also explains that "Freemasonry seeks to unite good men of all backgrounds and make them better husbands, fathers, and citizens by encouraging and cultivating friendship, morality, and brotherly love. They also charge that "Freemasonry is the world's oldest and largest non-religious, non-political, fraternal and charitable organization." They state that the members of the Masonic fraternity are taught its principles, which are stated to be "self-knowledge and moral lessons through many ritual dramas that create a progression of allegorical degrees" and that these ritual plays or degrees which are learned and recited from memory and performed within each and

⁴⁴ Pro Grand Master, United Grand Lodge of England, accessed May 23, 2020, <https://www.ugle.org.uk/about/whos-who/governance/155-grand-master>.

⁴⁵ "History of Freemasonry."

every lodge, follow ancient forms using the stonemason's customs and tools as guides of allegory to the masonic student. By doing so, the fraternity claims to instill in its members a solid ethical and moral approach to life that is based on integrity, honesty, kindness, and fairness. The society thereby urges its members to keep the interest of the family foremost along with a strong concern for people, care for the poor, and help for those that are in need.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ "Freemasonry Today," Grand Lodge North Carolina, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.grandlodge-nc.org/about-Freemasonry/Freemasonry-today>.

Chapter 5: The Religion of Freemasonry

In many Freemasonic Lodges around the world, many Masons are Christians or who profess to be Christians. These men are active members of local churches where they live. Many are deacons, pastors, and strong leaders of the church and are well known in the community for their Christian stance and participation in the local church. It is usually these men who give a firm assurance that Freemasonry is nothing more than a gentleman's club or a fraternity that is set out to do nothing but make a good man better. Many Freemasons feel they can honestly say that from their experience inside the lodge, that they never felt as if they were or are conducting another religion of any kind. Many seem to feel that they did not even consider what they were doing was even some form of Christianity. This can be considered because most of the members of these Masonic Lodges in the southeastern United States are members of protestant low-churches. So, they are not formal in any way but are very laid back in their function of carrying out church worship. The lodge, on the other hand, is a very formal environment where no one speaks out of turn, everyone follows the protocols, and everyone had certain parts of the rituals that they specifically performed. In the protestant churches of these areas, it is not common for the congregants to get up and walk around during services. Congregants may also speak out without being recognized during these low church services. Modern praise and worship contribute to these activities and the culture within these churches. In the protestant church, the congregant is able to listen to a sermon that reminds them that they are sinners against God; they hear the gospel and then witness an altar call. Regarding Freemasonry, the Gospel is not allowed to be spoken inside of the lodge, and neither is politics allowed to be discussed. The only

similarity is that Freemasons pray to open and close the lodge, much like someone would do at any civic event where they would serve. So, the environment that one will observe at a Masonic Lodge is nothing like any church that most Freemasons have attended.

However, one must realize that many founders of Freemasonry, as well as original members of Lodges within the United States, were of the Anglican tradition, and in this tradition, there are many similarities of a church service found in the Lodge setting. In the Anglican church, there are Stewards, Deacons, and Wardens, and these positions are in Freemasonry as well. Of these three positions, only the Deacon is present in the Baptist church. However, even though the Deacon was a character that is known from the church, most Freemasons never relate it to anything synonymous.

To get at the idea of whether or not Freemasonry is a religion or not, one should first look to define the term “religion” to have a basis to start with. When consulting the Oxford Dictionary, one can discover that the word religion is a noun and is defined as “the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal god or gods.”⁴⁷ In this definition, one can immediately be pulled to the idea that Freemasonry is a religion because Freemasonry meets this definition of Religion. It believes in a superhuman controlling power that its followers call the “Supreme or Great Architect of the Universe”⁴⁸ they also worship this superhuman power by praying to it during its opening and closing prayers⁴⁹. Most believe that this name for this god is specific to Freemasons and not to any other sect or religious body. Therefore, this god is called the “Supreme or Great Architect of the Universe” by Freemasons

⁴⁷ “Religion,” Lexico by Oxford Dictionary, accessed July 18, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/religion>.

⁴⁸ Bahnson, 7-9.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 7.

and Freemasons alone, as stated before in this paper. In doing so, they set a standard that this god is theirs alone as they claim service to it in the Freemasonry organization.

Salvation

When someone in the United States thinks of what a religion is, they think of salvation. Many religions of the world teach as a basis of their religion the idea of salvation. In the fraternity of Freemasonry, many members support the idea that Freemasonry is not a religion because it offers no way of salvation. However, based on current information that is open to all regarding the basics of Freemasonry, it can be seen that Freemasonry does have a plan of salvation. It starts with every person who enters the lodge and goes through the three degrees of Freemasonry, where one is told that a man can get to Heaven by doing good deeds. This is seen in the opening and closing prayers of the three degrees. It becomes systematically more obvious as the Freemason progresses through the three degrees. Notice the opening and closing prayers of the First Degree.

First Degree Opening Prayer:

“Most glorious Lord God, as we are led from darkness into light, may we see Thee as Thou art, revealed in Thy word of truth, and worship Thee in the beauty of holiness forever and ever.”

First Degree Closing Prayer:

“Supreme Ruler of the Universe, accept our humble praises for the many mercies and blessings which Thy bounty hath conferred on us. May we be enabled to divest our hearts and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, and serve Thee with freedom, fervency, and zeal until we are brought together into that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Bahnson, 85.

In the first-degree prayers, the Freemason that is just getting started (this is an Entered Apprentice prayer) is shown that God is just someone that they worship but does not reveal the salvation plan that Freemasonry has for its member. In the first-degree opening prayer, it is evident that the prayer is straightforward and is compatible with Christian thoughts or understanding of what prayer is. The only difference is that there is no reference to praying in Jesus' name, as most Christians do. However, the Freemason is taught that no specific religion is discussed in the lodge, so the new Freemason deems this as being ok.⁵¹ In the closing prayer, the Freemason is exposed to the term supreme ruler of the universe, which was not the case in the opening prayer. Notice that the closing prayer mentions serving god and staying away from vices and superfluties in the Freemason's life, and being united in heaven with god. This reinforces the idea that most Christians have, that one should turn from sin and serve God.

In the second-degree prayers, there is a persistent gradual shift to the salvation teachings of Freemasonry.

Second Degree Opening Prayer

“Great Architect of the Universe, help us to remember that wherever we are or whatever we do, Thine All-Seeing Eye is upon us. May we continue to act together as a faithful craftsman, and never fail to discharge our duty toward each other, and to Thee, with fervency and zeal.”⁵²

Second Degree Closing Prayer

“Most Glorious Lord God, we involve Thy Divine blessing upon the labors of this hour. As we grow in numbers, may we grow in strength. May the corn of nourishment, the wine of refreshment and the oil of joy strengthen us, that we may be a faithful craftsman in the quarries of life. May we so labor that our work will be accepted of Thee and that

⁵¹ Personal experience in the Lodge.

⁵² Bahnson, 86.

Thou wilt grant unto us a place in that temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”⁵³

In the second-degree prayers, there is the further development of the idea that the name of the Freemason's god is the Great Architect of the Universe. This is stated in the opening prayer but then has eased off and goes back to the Glorious Lord God in the closing prayer. The Freemason is also exposed to the idea that God is the “All-Seeing Eye” who watches all things that Freemasons do and say and rewards the Freemason based on his merit.⁵⁴ Also, in the closing prayer of the second degree, there is an indication that the Freemason should be a faithful craftsman and that the god of Freemasonry may accept his labor. If it is accepted, then the Freemason will be granted a place in heaven.

In the Third-Degree prayers, the Freemason is further pulled into the idea of god being the Great or Supreme Architect of the Universe, and there is the further development of works-based salvation.

Third Degree Opening Prayer:

Most holy and glorious Lord God, the great Architect of the Universe, the giver of all good gifts in graces; Though hast promised that ‘where two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt be in the midst of them, and bless them.’ In thy name, we assemble, most humbly beseeching thee to bless us in all our undertakings, that we may know and serve the aright, and that all our actions may tend to the glory, and to our advancement and knowledge and virtue. And we beseech thee, O Lord God, to bless our present assembling, and to illuminate our minds, that we may walk in the light of the countenance; and when the trials of our probationary state are over, be admitted into ‘The Temple,’ not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.⁵⁵

It can be noticed in this opening prayer of the Third Degree that the Freemason is asking the supreme architect of the universe to bless their undertakings at the current lodge meeting so that

⁵³ Bahnson, 86.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 62-63.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 7-8.

they can serve the supreme architect of the universe correctly through a probationary period with the hopes that they will be admitted into heaven. This is followed by the prayer that is used to close the Third Degree that states,

Supreme Architect of the Universe, accept our humble praises for the many mercies and blessings which the bounty has conferred on us, and especially for this friendly and social intercourse. Pardon, we beseech thee, whatever thou hast seen amiss in us since we have been together; and continue to us thy presence, protection, and blessing. Make us sensible of the renewed obligations we are under to love thee supremely, and to be friendly to each other. May all our irregular passions be subdued, and may we daily increase in *Faith, Hope, and Charity*; but more especially in that charity which is the bond of peace and perfection of every virtue. May we so practice thy precepts, that we may finally obtain thy promises, and find an entrance through the gates into the temple and city of our God.⁵⁶

Here, the Freemason prays and praises the great architect of the universe during the lodge meeting as well as asking the supreme architect of the universe to pardon any sins that have been brought out during the meeting. Next, the Freemason asks the supreme architect of the universe to support them in their daily works of faith, hope, and charity and charity being recognized as most important for the purpose of obtaining entrance into heaven. This is validated through the wording of practicing “Thy Precepts,” which, if done correctly, will allow the Freemason to gain entrance into heaven. This idea is further illustrated by the teachings of the lodge involving the canopy of heaven in the First Degree. In the first degree, the Freemason is given the following explanation of the “Covering of a Lodge.”

“The covering of a Lodge is a clouded canopy a starry decked heaven, where all good Masons hope at last to arrive, by aid of the theological ladder which Jacob in his vision saw extending from earth to heaven; the three principal rounds of which are denominated *Faith, Hope and Charity*; and which admonished us to have faith in God, hope in immortality, and Charity to all mankind; of these the greatest is charity; faith may be lost

⁵⁶ Bahnson, 8-9.

in sight. Hope ends in fruition, but charity extends beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity.”⁵⁷

In this explanation, the idea of faith is downplayed, saying that it can be lost in sight. Hope is downplayed by the idea of fruition, basically saying that one will believe when the end has come, and the idea of charity is expounded upon as something that is boundless and eternal. This boundless and eternal charity are the works that are encouraged and mandated to the Freemasons as the works required for salvation.

In addition, in the first degree, the Freemason is given a white leather apron or “Lambskin.” This lambskin is the leather apron that one sees the Freemasons wearing at events and large meetings and makes the Freemason distinguishable to all as a member. The Bahnsen Manual states that, “The lamb has in all ages been deemed an emblem of innocence; he, therefore, who wears the lambskin as the badge of a mason, is there by continually reminded of that purity of life and conduct, so essentially necessary to his gaining admission into the celestial lodge above, where the supreme architect of the universe possess.” This “badge” is considered very important to every mason because it symbolizes what their reward in heaven is. This is the charge that is given to the Freemason in the First Degree when he is given this White Leather Apron.

I now present you the lambskin or white leather apron, which is an emblem of innocence, and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle; more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other order that can be conferred upon you at this time, or any future period, by king, prince, potentate, or any other person, except he be a Mason, and which I hope you will wear with equal pleasure to yourself, and honor to the fraternity.

It may be that, in coming years, upon your head shall rest the laurel leaves of victory; on your breast may hang jewels fit to grace the diadem of an Eastern potentate; nay, more than these, with light added to the coming light, your ambitious feet may tread round

⁵⁷ Bahnsen, 25.

after round the ladder that leads to fame in our mystic circle, and even the purple of our fraternity may rest upon your honored shoulders; but never again from mortal hands, never again, until your enfranchised spirit shall have passed upward and inward through the pearly gates, shall any honor so distinguished, so emblematic of purity and all perfections, be bestowed upon you as this which I now confer. It is yours to wear throughout an honorable life, and at your death to be placed upon the coffin which shall contain your earthly remains, and with them laid beneath the silent clods of the valley.

Let its pure and spotless surface be to you an ever-present reminder of a 'purity of life and rectitude of conduct,' a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements. And when at last your weary feet shall have come to the end of the toilsome journey, and from your nerveless grasp shall drop forever the working tools of life, may the record of your life and actions be as pure and spotless as the fair emblem which I place within your hands tonight. And when you're trembling soul shall stand naked and alone before the Great White Throne, may it be your portion to hear from Him who sitteth as the Judge Supreme the welcome words- 'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'"⁵⁸

So, by this presentation of the White Leather Lambskin or Apron, we see that the Freemason is instructed to keep it and wear it as a reminder of what a pure life looks like. The Freemason is reminded every-time he puts it on to go to a lodge meeting or to conduct any business of the lodge that he will be judged by the purity of his life here on earth. Also, the "All-Seeing Eye" will be watching his every-move and charitable action to decide if the Freemason's merits are going to meet the standard that will allow him to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Creed

Another reason provided as to why Freemasonry was not a religion was because there was no creed. Many low church protestant church members are not very familiar with creeds. Most have never been in a church where creeds were even discussed. Some of these church members, however, have heard of the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. They are taught that they are not inspired words, so they are not to be considered as important. Many of these church

⁵⁸ Bahnson, 15-16.

members could dismiss the whole idea of creeds and not understand what the significance is of Freemasonry not having one. However, reviewing the idea that the founding fathers were Anglican, they would know a lot about the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. They would have said the Apostles Creeds daily as part of their Daily Office and would have said the Nicene Creed weekly at their Eucharists Service. These creeds are to Anglicans a statement of what they believe as a Christian. Their daily reading of the Apostles Creed would remind them from start to finish on a daily basis everything that is important as a Christian from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and what he did on the cross and his glorious resurrection and his reign of the present and the future.

So, the question is, does the Masonic Lodge have a creed? The creed of Freemasonry is more unwritten than written out. For example, every Freemason must affirm that they believe in one singular god, they also must profess that they believe in the immortality of the soul, they must serve God by practicing the tenets of Masonry, and also say prayers as well as swear oaths to the “Great Architect of the Universe.”⁵⁹

To be certain, these beliefs that make up an informal creed are not all particular to any one religion. There are many religions that believe none, one, or more of these ideas, but not in the make-up that a Freemason does when associating himself to the world as a Freemason.

Doctrinal Statement

Another reason that is provided in the Masonic Lodge as to why Freemasonry is not a religion is that there is no actual doctrinal statement. For example, Baptists are very familiar with

⁵⁹ John Ankerberg & John Weldon; *The Facts on Masonic Lodge: Does Masonry Conflict With The Christian Faith?* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House Publishers, 1989). p. 16.

the Baptist Faith and Message.⁶⁰ It is in this document that many find a basis as to what they believe as Southern Baptist. For the betterment of the church, someone has taken the time to write out answers to specific questions and create an instrument of doctrinal accountability known as the Baptist Faith and Message. As in the Baptist church, the Anglican Church has a similar document called the 39 Articles of Religion.⁶¹ So, as for the Freemason, there are some items that informally represent a doctrinal statement. To be initiated into the lodge, a candidate must profess the belief in a singular God.⁶² When the candidate is initiated, this singular god is not named or described but is just referred to as god, as has been explained previously. If the candidate says that he does not place his trust in anything, then he is led out of the initiation ceremony never to be a Freemason.⁶³ Next, a Freemason must believe in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.⁶⁴ This is imperative because the charitable work that is taught in Freemasonry is to be performed for the brothers under the direction of God, who is the Father of all. The Freemason must also believe in the immortality of the soul.⁶⁵ This is a required belief because and is taught in the allegory of Hiram Abiif in the Third Degree.⁶⁵ This legend explains the immortality of the soul and is the basis of life after death for the Freemason. This leads us to

⁶⁰ Baptist Faith & Message 2000, Southern Baptist Convention, accessed May 23, 2020, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/>.

⁶¹ Articles of Religion, Anglicans Online, updated 23 May 2017, http://anglicansonline.org/basics/thirty-nine_articles.html.

⁶² The Grand Lodge of A.F. and A.M. of North Carolina *The Official Standard Of The Work* (Raleigh: The Grand Lodge of A.F. and A.M. of North Carolina, 2013) p. 41

⁶³ Hall, 69.

⁶⁴ Bahnson, 78.

⁶⁵ The Grand Lodge of A.F. and A.M. of North Carolina. 169-200

the final belief of the Celestial Lodge, where the Freemason will live and reside for all of eternity.⁶⁶

Theology

Dr. Elmer Towns, in his *Theology* textbook, explained that the baby boomers were not interested in understanding doctrine but instead wanted practical steps to be able to live a life for Christ. Dr. Towns goes on to explain that because of this trend, the church and even our seminaries are not exposing laypersons to solid church doctrine and instead are teaching ways to manage money, overcome mental issues, and various other life skills.⁶⁷ Therefore when a member of the church goes to a masonic lodge and is instructed on how to act towards other people by giving, especially when it has a general “religious” overtone, then the individual believes that it is compatible with their faith. They may believe that the church and the Lodge are teaching the same thing, especially when they see a King James Bible out in every meeting that is opened to a specific scripture.⁶⁸ However, Dr. Towns states that “anytime someone takes several Scripture verses and synthesizes them into one sermon or Sunday school lesson, he is constructing theology.”⁶⁹

In the Lodge, there is evidence of this construction of theology. Upon entering the Lodge for the first time, the candidate is taken to the altar and caused to kneel. He is asked, “In whom do you put your trust?” If the reply is anything other than “God,” he is led out of the lodge room and sent on his way. However, if he does answer “God,” then the initiation ritual proceeds with

⁶⁶ Bahnson, 22.

⁶⁷ Elmer L Towns, *Theology For Today* (Belmont, CA, Wadsworth/Thomas Learning, 2002), 1.

⁶⁸ Personal observation and experience.

⁶⁹ Towns, *Theology For Today*. 5.

the master saying, “your trust being in God, your faith is well-founded, arise and follow your conductor and fear no danger”⁷⁰ This shows that the basis of the lodge is God. If the candidate does not have a connection to God, then the candidate will never be a Freemason. It is impossible for an atheist to be a Freemason or someone who has a belief in polytheism. This monotheistic belief will be the basis that leads the Freemason to realize that the one God for everyone is the Great Architect of the Universe.

Each degree has its own scripture that is opened for viewing during the ritual. In the First Degree or Entered Apprentice Degree, it is Psalm 133. This Psalm is read by the Master of the Lodge just prior to the candidate being asked about whom he places his trust in. It reads,

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.⁷¹

This scripture provides the basis for unity. There is a unity of thought, intention, and execution. Therefore, the Freemason sees harmony as the strength and support of all well-regulated organizations including the Lodge of Freemasonry. The dew is recognized to be a blessing from nature in places where there is little or no rain. The oil is understood to be precious because Israel would honor its people with such. All in all, the passage is a veneration as to the magnificence of brotherly love.⁷²

In the Second Degree or the Fellowcraft degree, the Bible is open to the book of Amos Chapter 7: 7-8, which reads, ”Thus he showed me; and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made

⁷⁰ Code of the Grand Lodge, 41-42.

⁷¹ Bahnson, 12.

⁷² Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 32-33.

by a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, a plumb-line. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them anymore.”⁷³

In this passage of scripture, Freemasonry has given it a deep theological meaning about one of the basic tenets of the craft, which is the work that is done by the Freemason or better known as his charity. It is said that this passage of scripture is just as crucial to the fellowcraft in the second degree as Psalm 133 is to the Entered Apprentice in the First Degree. The focus is on the part of scripture, which indicates that the Lord has set a plumb-line “in the midst of his people Israel.” He is indicating that he will not be judging them with a plumb-line that is set up in another land but will instead use one that is in close in proximity to the work being evaluated. Undoubtedly this is to show the Freemason that he is to judge his own work and the work of others by this same standard. It is to be presumed that all plumb-lines would hang accurately, just as all squares would be accurately square and all levels accurately level. However, it is possible that a person would use a tool and presume that it is accurate, but to another, the tool could be inaccurate. Therefore, the Freemason is taught here that he must give allowance to a possibility that a man’s tool was flawed but that he still used the tool correctly. Thus, his work is true by the tool that was used. An example would be that the Eiffel Tower and the Washington Monument were both constructed using plumb-Lines. Each builder “knows” that his work is true and erect because he knows he used his plumb-line correctly. However, a man standing on the moon with a powerful telescope would see that the two buildings were not parallel because they were built at different latitudes. The builders may argue with each other as to whose work was wrong because, in both of their eyes, they are each correct. Therefore, the Freemason is taught through

⁷³ Bahnson, 40.

this scripture that the Great Architect of the Universe will hopefully think both are correct since each was deemed perfect by the plumb used to erect it. The Freemason also learns to judge his own work by the plumb-line that he uses and to not give validation to anyone else's standard for his work. Thus, "if he erects that which is good work, true work, square work by his own working tools-in other words, by his own standards-he does well." Only when the Freemason is not being true to his own conscience is he building a structure that is not level and not plumb and not square.⁷⁴

During the Third Degree, the Bible is open to the book of Ecclesiastes 12: 1-7 (KJV), which reads,

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when though shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain; in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets; or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

In Masonry, there are two recognized interpretations for this passage of scripture. The first is a representation of old age, becoming senile, and decay. The second is a reference to a much-feared and seldom observed thunderstorm in Palestine.

The first interpretation is there to give advice to the Freemason to remember his creator before he goes blind, and before his hands began to tremble, and before his legs are weakened,

⁷⁴ Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 75-77.

and his teeth drop out, and before he is frightened at every stage of life. However, the second interpretation of the storm is a little harder to understand. It seems that maybe one must be ready at all times because we never know when the storm will come.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Ibid., 127-129.

Chapter 6: Rough Ashlar to Perfect Ashlar

Freemasonry was designed to make a man a moral man as found in Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics. "Moreover, the good man is not the one who does a good deed here and there, now and then, but whose life is good, 'for as it is not one swallow or one fine day that makes a spring, so it is not one day or a short time that makes a man blessed and happy.'"⁷⁶

The definition of Freemasonry is "a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols."⁷⁷ It is upon this definition that Freemasonry is built. To understand what this means in Freemasonry, we first have to understand the two denominations of Freemasonry. According to the North Carolina Lodge Manual, the two denominations are Operative Masonry and Speculative Masonry.⁷⁸ These two definitions of denominations have been previously explained. In speculative masonry, the individual man is determined by the Lodge to be a rough ashlar. A rough ashlar is a stone taken from the quarry in its natural state. It is then cut and shaped by the workmen to a specific design that was drawn out in the plans for a specific building. When the stone has been made to fit all of the required dimensions, the workmen will bring it to the building site where it would be installed in its specific place as part of a larger work. In other words, each individual stone would be specifically made for a specific location in the structure. Since, in speculative masonry, man is considered to be the rough ashlar, he has to be cut and shaped to the correct design, which will make him a perfect ashlar. This perfect ashlar

⁷⁶ Stumpf, Samuel Enoch, *Elements Of Philosophy: An Introduction* 3rd Ed.(New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc, 1993). p. 32

⁷⁷ Bahnson, 17.

⁷⁸ Bahnson, 43.

is then used for a spiritual building in heaven. The individual himself carries out this process through the moral teachings of Freemasonry. So, in essence, the Freemason's journey is one where the Freemason starts his masonic from where he is currently in life and then uses the moral teachings from Freemasonry to become good enough to gain admittance into heaven.

Many Freemasons do not understand this concept when they join Freemasonry. To many, it is just a fraternity. In this fraternity, the members would participate in the organization long enough until one day they will get the ability to learn parts in plays that are performed (these plays are performed behind a closed door to members only). The idea was to do the speaking part perfectly without blemish as it was performed. A lot of study and practice was done so that the part could be performed to absolute perfection. While working on performing plays was the main effort, the Freemasons will also do things to raise money for widows of deceased Freemasons and orphans at the Freemasons children's home. It is not until the Freemasons have been in the organization a while that they began to understand that these plays are actually teaching practices that "good" men should and have to do. It is at this point that many will come to understand the plays as a form of ritual or liturgy. However, think of those early Freemasons that were constantly exposed to the liturgy in the Anglican Church. The definition of Freemasonry is "stated" to many initiates when they first start in the organization, and they even memorize it as part of a play, however for many of these, this explanation goes right over their head and they never really understand it. Therefore, Many of these individuals never take it seriously until much later in their participation with the organization. This could be a possible reason why many Freemasons stop being participating with Freemasonry. Do they realize this and stop coming to the Lodge and stop paying dues? Most members lose their membership in Freemasonry for failing to pay their yearly dues. But to many, in the beginning, the main focus seems to be on

having the ability to say speaking parts perfectly, and this is what makes you a good mason. It can be considered by some that somehow the contents of the teaching fall secondary to the delivery method.

This method of morality that is taught to the Freemason is delivered using three degrees, as stated earlier in this paper. The Freemason progresses from one degree to the next by showing that they are “proficient” in the preceding degree before they can be exposed to the next degree. An individual that seeks to become a Freemason does so by “petitioning” a lodge for membership. He is examined by a committee that usually visits him at his home to see how he lives in his natural environment. They report back to the Lodge their findings and then the candidate is voted on for membership. It takes a unanimous vote for the individual to be accepted. Once he is accepted, he is deemed to be a “Candidate” and is given a date to be “Initiated.” The candidate's initiation is the act where he receives the instruction of the first degree of Freemasonry. There are five main areas of the degree. These are the working tools, objects in the lodge, the obligation, the lecture, and the charge to the candidate at the end of the ritual. In these five areas, one will find all of the teachings of Freemasonry. Once the ritual is complete, the candidate is accepted as an Entered Apprentice because he has gone through the teaching and agreed to the degree's obligation. The Entered Apprentice is then assigned a coach who will teach him the catechism for the just learned degree. Inside the catechism are a question and answer period of what happened during the degree that was conferred. The newly granted Entered Apprentice then memorizes this catechism from his coach. When the coach feels that he is ready, he is then required to stand in the lodge in front of all the other members and recite from memory the questions to the answers as his coach asks them. It is the decision of the master of the lodge as to whether the catechism was done correctly. If it was not done correctly, then the

individual returns at a later date when they are deemed to be ready, and they will try again. Once the Entered Apprentice's catechism is approved, then a date is set for the individual to receive the second degree of Freemasonry and become a Fellow Craft. The same process is done for this degree as was done for the Entered Apprentice degree. When the Fellowcraft shows proficiency in the Fellowcraft catechism, they are scheduled for the third degree to become a Master Mason. The third degree works just like the two proceeding degrees except that the candidate is not required to learn the catechism unless they want to be eligible to hold an officer's position within the lodge. Most members learn the catechism so that they can have a chance to serve in the line as an officer.

Initiation (from Darkness to Light)

In Freemasonry, there is a significance of blindfolding the candidate as they are being initiated. Freemasonry teaches its students that an aspirant was kept in the dark for a period on the outset of the initiation into the ancient mysteries. This is where the symbol of darkness was acknowledged as a symbol of initiation. This darkness is there to remind the candidate of Freemasonry that he is ignorant but that Freemasonry will enlighten him. He is also reminded of his evilness but shown that Freemasonry can purify that evilness. The candidate is also reminded that he is of the world and that Freemasonry will rescue him from that. During the initiation, the candidate hears the biblical passage, which states, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Bahnson, 20.

Working Tools

In transforming a Rough Ashlar to a Perfect Ashlar in Freemasonry, the individual is taught the use of the working tools. These working tools are based on the tools that an Operative Mason would use to conduct stonemason work. These working tools are different in each degree. In the first degree are the 24-inch gauge and the common gavel. In the second degree, there is the plumb, level, and square. In the third degree, there are all the implements but more especially the trowel.

The 24-inch gauge is the first working tool that the Freemason is exposed to. This instrument was used by the operative masons to measure things and layout the work they were going to do. However, the speculative mason learns that the implement is used to divide time. The teaching explains that since the gauge is divided into 24 equal parts, it represents the 24 hours in the day. These twenty-four hours are then broken down into three equal parts. These three equal parts are eight hours for service to God and brothers in distress, eight hours for the Freemason's usual avocations, with eight hours remaining for sleep and refreshment.⁸⁰ We can see here that this implement is used to create a workflow or work schedule in the Freemason mind. He is taught that there are only three important things in life. By dividing his time into three equal parts, he will give an equal amount of time to items and be evenly balanced.

The next implement or working tool that the Freemason is exposed to and taught how to utilize is the common gavel. This instrument was chosen because it was used by Operative Masons to “break off the corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builders use.” However, the speculative Freemason is taught that it is used for a different purpose, which is to

⁸⁰ Bahnson, 17-18.

divest his heart and conscience of all superfluities and vices of life. He is also taught that this purpose is nobler than the latter. He will then be able to have his mind fitted as a living stone for “that spiritual building, ‘that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’”⁸¹ This is the first directive of how to start building the spiritual temple that the Freemason has set out to build as a Freemason. As the Freemason is looking to transform himself from the rough ashlar to the perfect ashlar, he learns that he needs to remove all of the roughness from his heart and conscience. As is explained later in this thesis, this roughness is things outside of Freemasonry's moral code. Referring back to the earlier definition, Freemasonry is a morality system, and this is the first step in removing everything that is not moral from the Freemason.

In the second degree, the student of Freemasonry will discover that, as stated earlier, there are three more working tools, which are the plumb, the level, and the square. The Freemason is taught that an Operative Mason uses the plumb to raise and set perpendiculars or better known as the walls in a building. This implement would indicate whether or not the wall is straight up and down and not leaning. If it is leaning, then it will not be able to hold any weight from the roof. However, the speculative mason is taught that he is to use this implement to walk uprightly in all that is done for man and God. A man can stand tall and straight up and down when he does things of good character and a high moral standard. Sometimes, people refer to each other as being able to “hold their head high” when they have done good in life. This is similar to that; if we are not standing straight, then we are morally corrupt.⁸²

The Freemason learns how to use the square also as a working tool. The square was used by operative masons to “square their work.” If work was not square, it would not be

⁸¹ Ibid., 18.

⁸² Bahnson, 42.

architecturally correct and would cause problems when trying to join together with other work. The speculative mason learns to use this implement to “square their actions by the square of virtue.” In essence, this is a means of teaching which would require the Freemason to do fair and virtuous acts towards other people. These righteous acts are the moral precepts that Freemasonry needs the man to display in himself as he becomes more virtuous on his journey to becoming a perfect ashlar.⁸³

The last working tool of the fellowcraft is the level. The Freemason learns that the level was used to “lay horizontals” in their building of actual buildings. Without the level, the stonemason would not be able to keep floors level, which would cause problems in the overall appearance and structural support of the building. The Speculative Freemason is taught to use the level to remind him that he is “traveling upon the level of time to that undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveler returns.”⁸⁴ This can be better understood to mean that the Freemason only has one chance to build his spiritual building. Once it is done, he is unable to undo the work and do it again. This can be better perceived from an Operative Mason who builds a wall and sees that it is not level, so in response, he tears it down and builds it again to better specifications. The level of time keeps the Freemason from walking the same path twice.⁸⁵

Once the Freemason becomes a Master Mason, he is exposed to the trowel. The Freemason learns that the Operative Mason used the trowel to spread cement, which unites the pieces of a building into one common mass. However, the Speculative Mason learns that this tool is to be used by him to spread “the cement of brotherly love and affection.” The Freemason

⁸³ Bahnson, 42.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 74.

is further told that this “cement unites us into one sacred band, or society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist, but that noble contention, or rather, emulation of who can best work and best agree.” This definition is not very clear to the modern reader, yet it is the definition used during the instruction process in the Lodge. It is meant to be used to teach the Freemason that he must get along with everyone through friendship.

Objects in the Lodge

A Freemason will attend a lodge maybe once or twice a month or more. During these times, he will be working with a group to stay consistent in his ability to keep his parts of the play (or the ritual) memorized so that when the time comes to bring someone new in and perform the ritual, he will be ready. During this practice and the actual rituals themselves, the Freemason will be exposed to the objects in the lodge. These objects are not the Freemason's working tools, but they are items that are used in the lodge to represent other things and meanings.

The first objects to discuss are the furniture of the lodge. These are also known as the three great lights in masonry.⁸⁶ The furniture of the lodge is the Holy Bible, Square, and Compasses.⁸⁷ The Holy Bible is shown to be the “rule and guide of faith.”⁸⁸ It is also recognized as the “Great Light in Masonry.”⁸⁹ From this book, religious scripture is taken and used within the rituals; however, none of the scriptures are Christian in nature. The gospel is not presented in any way when these scriptures are read. The scriptures used are (as stated above) Psalm 133, Amos 7:8, and Ecclesiastes 12:1-7. Just because the Bible is located in the lodge and

⁸⁶ Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 37.

⁸⁷ Bahnson, 26.

⁸⁸ Bahnson, 14.

⁸⁹ Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 37.

opened to these particular scriptures during each of the degrees, it does not represent a specific type of faith represented in the lodge. The book is used for its moral teaching and not its theological teaching. This stands to reason because if someone from another faith group (Islam, Judaism, or Hinduism, etc.) is present in the Lodge, then the book of their particular faith would be displayed along beside the Holy Bible on the altar. They would use their own particular faith book for the purpose of taking the obligation that is required during the degree or ritual.⁹⁰ The Grand Lodge of North Carolina says that Freemasonry is no more Christian than it is Muslim, Brahmin, or Jewish. The organization's use of the Holy Bible “must not confuse the initiate so that he reads into Freemasonry a sectarian character which is not there.”⁹¹

The Square, as a furniture of the lodge, is there as an emblem of the Master of the Lodge and represents his office.⁹² During specific degree work, the candidate of the degree will walk in a “square” at certain times during the ritual. Also, during regular lodge meetings, the officers will walk in a square as part of their ritual for the evening's work. This visual reminder of the object being in the lodge, as well as the reminder of walking in a square, will constantly remind the Freemason to produce virtue in his actions since it is a working tool as well.⁹³

Compasses are part of the furniture of the lodge. However, their definition is unique. The Freemason is taught that the Compasses are used “to circumscribe and keep us within due bounds with all mankind, but more especially with the brethren in Masonry.”⁹⁴ This is further

⁹⁰ Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 37.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

⁹² Bahnson, 26.

⁹³ Personal observation concerning the square in the lodge.

⁹⁴ Bahnson, 14.

explained to mean that the Freemason is to “circumscribe their desires and keep their passions in due bounds.”⁹⁵ It reminds the Freemason to put up a shield as an outer point that he will not cross. In doing so, this will keep him where he needs to be morally.

The next object in the lodge that is notable is the “Lambskin” or “White Leather Apron,” which was discussed earlier. Many people will recognize who are Freemasons at a funeral because they are wearing these white leather aprons. This apron is presented to the candidate during the ritual of the First Degree. During the degree, the candidate is told that the apron is an “emblem of innocence and the badge of a mason.”⁹⁶ The first degree takes this part of the ritual very seriously. This is what is further stated to the candidate when he receives the apron,

“It may be that, in coming years, upon your head shall rest the laurel leaves of victory; on your breast may hang jewels fit to grace the diadem of an Eastern potentate; nay, more than these, with light added to the coming light, your ambitious feet may tread round after round the ladder that leads to fame in our mystic circle, and even the purple of our fraternity may rest upon your honored shoulders; but never again from mortal hands, never again, until your enfranchised spirit shall have passed upward an inward through the pearly gates, shall any honor so distinguished, so emblematic of purity and all perfections, be bestowed upon you as this which I now confer. It is yours to wear throughout an honorable life, and at your death to be placed upon the coffin which shall contain your earthly remains, and with them laid beneath the silent clouds of the valley.

Let its pure and spotless surface be to you an ever-present reminder of a ‘purity of life and rectitude of conduct,’ a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements. And when at last your weary feet shall have come to the end of their toilsome journey, and from your nerveless grasp shall drop forever the working tools of life, may the record of your life and actions be as pure and spotless as their fair emblem which I place within your hands tonight. And when your trembling soul shall stand naked and alone before the Great White Throne, may it be your portion to hear from him who sitteth as the Judge Supreme the welcome words – ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of the Lord.’”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Bahnson, 26.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 15.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 15-16.

As one can see, a lot is said about the White Leather Apron. Operative Freemasons used the apron to protect their clothes from the “rough material” used in the building process.⁹⁸ In other words, to keep cement and mortar off of them. To the Speculative Freemason, it is to be a reminder of a pure life and good moral conduct. The name “Lambskin” reminds the Freemason of the Old Testament use of a Lamb as a sacrifice and the fact that it had to be pure. This pureness also sets an example that the Freemason is to be pure in his character.⁹⁹ Freemasons wear this garment every time they gather together in the lodge. Therefore it is a good reminder because it is so close and personal with the wearer. They can’t help that it be a constant reminder for that particular Freemason to live up to what it represents.

Supports of a Lodge

The Supports of a Lodge are Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty. These supports are explained as the three great pillars in the lodge. The first pillar being Wisdom is represented by the Master of the Lodge.¹⁰⁰ Since the Master is responsible for all the teaching and learning in the Lodge, this name is considered correct for his position or office. It is this Wisdom that is sought after by the guild that is searching for more light in Masonry.

The second support of the Lodge is the pillar named Strength. Strength is represented by the Senior Warden of the Lodge. The strength is recognized in his ability and duty to assist the

⁹⁸ Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 45.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰⁰ Bahnson, 24.

Master of the Lodge. This teaches the Freemason that even the Master who has all the knowledge still needs assistance from someone to be successful.¹⁰¹

The third support of the Lodge is the pillar named Beauty. It is represented by the Junior Warden because he observes. This teaches the Freemason that he must observe the world and his work on himself. Without work, beauty is never cherished.¹⁰²

Covering of a Lodge

When the Freemason is inside the Lodge, they see the ceiling of the room representing the blue sky of heaven. This is where the name “Blue Lodge” comes from.¹⁰³ This covering is understood to be a canopy that is clouded and decked with stars. It is that place depicted here that all “good Masons hope at last to arrive.” The Freemason is taught that he will be aided by a theological ladder that Jacob of the Old Testament saw in his vision that extended from earth to heaven. This theological ladder has three “principal rounds” on it that are shown to be faith, hope, and charity. The round of faith reminds the Freemason to have faith in God. Hope shows the Freemason to have hope in immortality. The final round, charity reminds the Freemason to be charitable to all men everywhere. The Freemason learns that the greatest of these is charity because “faith may be lost in sight, hope ends in fruition, but charity extends beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Bahnson, 24.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Ornaments of a Lodge

Some of the objects in the lodge are ornaments. The ornaments are the mosaic pavement, indented tessel, and blazing star. The Freemason sees the mosaic pavement as the floor covering in the lodge. The mosaic floor is checkered colored with white and black. This is explained to the Freemason as a representation of King Solomon's Temple ground floor. The Freemason learns from this that life is checkered with good and evil.

Next, the indented tessel is represented as a border around the mosaic pavement (or checkered floor). This indented tessel surrounds this floor and is representative of the "blessings and comforts" that surround mankind of which mankind hopes to obtain by "faithful reliance on divine providence."

The divine providence is represented hieroglyphically by the blazing star in the center of the mosaic pavement. This represents to the Freemason that God is at the center of everything and everyone.¹⁰⁵

Lesser Lights of the Lodge

There are three lesser lights in the lodge. They are used most notably in the first degree when the candidate is brought from darkness to light by having his blindfold removed. He sees the three great lights in masonry illuminated by the three lesser lights. The three great lights, as described earlier, are the Holy Bible, Square, and compasses, which are sitting on the altar for the candidate to view. Since it is dark in the room, the candidate can only see these great lights because of the light given off from the three lesser lights, which in essence, are three candles in the form of a triangle on the altar. These three candles represent the light from the east, west, and

¹⁰⁵ Bahnson, 27.

south. In essence, these are the same locations that the Master of the Lodge, the Senior, and Junior Warden hold, respectively. The Freemason is taught that King Solomons Temple was situated so far north of the ecliptic that neither instrument of light (sun or moon) could dart any rays of light into the temple at high noon. Therefore, the North is masonically a place of darkness.¹⁰⁶ This becomes a stronger teaching point when the newest initiated Enter Apprentice is required to sit in the North¹⁰⁷ after he is initiated because he has not yet gained any Masonic light due to him having not yet memorized his catechism.¹⁰⁸

Jewels of the Lodge

The Jewels of the lodge are six in number. The reason that these items are called Jewels is that “they have a moral tendency which renders them jewels of inestimable value.”¹⁰⁹ They are evenly divided into movable and immovable jewels. The immovable jewels are the square, level, and plumb. These implements have been mentioned before, but in this instance, they are actually pendants that are worn around the necks of the three principal officers of the lodge. These immovable jewels are considered to be immovable because they have a confined place within the lodge, and they are never relocated. The square is worn by the Master and is confined to the east. The level is worn by the Senior Warden and confined to the west. Finally, the plumb

¹⁰⁶ Bahnson, 28.

¹⁰⁷ Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 48-49.

¹⁰⁸ Personal experience in the Lodge.

¹⁰⁹ Masonic Dictionary, Jewels of a Lodge, accessed August 2, 2020, <http://www.masonicdictionary.com/jewels.html>.

is worn by the Junior Warden and therefore confined to the south. These jewels presence on the three principal officers further promotes their symbolic meanings within the lodge.¹¹⁰

The three movable jewels are the Rough Ashlar, Perfect Ashlar, and the Trestle Board. These are called movable jewels because they are not confined to any one part of the lodge.¹¹¹ Many Freemasons within the lodge have never witnessed any object within a lodge that was called a movable jewel or respectively a rough ashlar, perfect ashlar, or trestle-board. However, the definition that is explained makes them fully evident in the life of the Freemason.

Obligation

During the first, second, and third degrees, the candidate is required to place his hand on the Holy Bible, Square, and Compasses and recite an obligation to be able to proceed with the ritual. The candidate for the degree enters this process without knowing the substance or requirements of the obligation. As he is swearing his obligation to the lodge, he hears the content of the obligation for the first time.¹¹² These obligations are either affirmative or negative. In other words, the affirmative acts are those promises which require something to be performed. In contrast, the negative acts of the obligation are actions that are forbidden by the members of the lodge.¹¹³ All in all, Freemasonry's obligations require that the Freemason not share any secrets of Freemasonry with anyone outside of the fraternity and hold himself accountable to high moral

¹¹⁰ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry And Its Kindred Sciences* (Germany: Jazzybee Verlag Jurgen Beck, 2013) Chapter “J” under “Jewels Of A Lodge” Location 31871 of 66325. Kindle.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² My experience with obligations.

¹¹³ Mackey *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* Definition “Obligation” Location 41475 of 66325. Kindle.

standards for his entire life. There seems to be found nothing presented in the obligations that would go against any Biblical standard that any Christian would have.¹¹⁴

Lectures/Teachings

Inside the blue lodge, more teachings are carried out, from the degree teams to the candidates. The teachings are provided through lectures in each degree. The first teaching comes from the Old Testament and makes reference to Jacob's ladder. This was discussed earlier, that the covering of the lodge was explained to being a reference to heaven above and that this was a place where all good Masons hoped to arrive.¹¹⁵ The Freemason is taught that he will hope to get to heaven with the aid of the theological ladder that Jacob saw in his vision that was extending from earth up into heaven. On that theological ladder are “three principal rounds,” which are said to be “Faith, Hope, and Charity.” Faith is explained to the candidate as having faith in God, but that “faith may be lost in sight.” Hope is explained to the candidate as the “hope in immortality” but that it ends in fruition. Finally, charity's idea is for the Freemason to provide charity to all mankind because this is the greatest of these three rounds based on the words of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13. The reason, according to the Freemason, is because that “charity extends beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity.”¹¹⁶ So when the Freemason looks up at the ceiling when he is in the lodge, he is reminded that this is the “Blue Lodge” due to the ceiling's color being blue to represent the heavens. He is then reminded of Jacob's ladder is the way that he gets to heaven and “charity” is the most important “round” or

¹¹⁴ Experience of the researcher, having taken all three obligations personally.

¹¹⁵ Bahnson 25.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

rung on the ladder in which he must climb. Thus, the Freemason is reminded that charity's performance is most important in his approval for admittance into heaven.¹¹⁷

Operative vs. Speculative Masonry

Through the candidate's learnings in the lodge, he will be taught the difference between operative versus speculative masonry. From the very beginning, the candidate is shown that Freemasonry is a philosophical science that has been created upon the actual stonemason works of days gone by. Everything that the candidate is taught or is exposed to is a reference from some part or function of actual stonemason work. However, the Freemason is taught the use of these ancient tools for philosophical purposes to create morality in oneself as a trait to be used for the aid of his fellowman. These explanations help the Freemason to "learn to subdue his passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity."¹¹⁸ When these traits are perfected in the Freemason, he will have become a "perfect ashlar," but it takes a lifetime to accomplish this.¹¹⁹

Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth

The Freemason will also learn of the three tenets of masonry. These tenets are brotherly love, relief, and truth. Brotherly love is a concept used to teach Freemasons that all men are the same. This is not rich or poor, young or old, high or low, but instead, they are all one family. Because of this, Freemasons are to aid, protect, and support each other. This is how men of many

¹¹⁷ Discussions with Freemasons about charity.

¹¹⁸ Bahnson, 43.

¹¹⁹ This is part of my conclusion.

different sects, countries, opinions, and other differences can enjoy true friendship where they usually would remain distant because of the differences. Relief is learned by the Freemason to soothe, sympathize, and restore peace to the minds of troubled individuals. It is upon this desire that friendships with others are made. Truth is the final tenet, which is a “divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue.” This is actually the very first lesson that the candidate of Freemasonry learns upon entering the lodge.

Four Perfect Points of Entrance

The Four Perfect Points of Entrance are taught to the Freemason as the Gutter (throat), the Pectus (breast), the Manus (hands), and the Pedes (feet). These four points have specific relationships to the Freemason. First the gutter is symbolic of the penalty of the Freemason not keeping the obligation of the 1st degree of Freemasonry. The second being the pectus which reminds the Freemason of the entrance into the lodge upon a sharp instrument when he was first brought into the lodge as a candidate being blindfolded. Third is the Manus which reminds the Freemason that he placed them upon the Holy Bible when taking the obligation, the position in which they were in when he performs the sign of each degree, and that he can know a Freemason in the dark by the handgrip associated with the fraternity. Finally, the Pedes remind the Freemason that he stood at a certain angle (a square) when performing the signs and prayers during the rituals and signs associated with the degrees.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ My experience and the Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, Location 43370 of 66325

Four Cardinal Virtues

The Four Cardinal Virtues are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice. These virtues are the illustrations associated with the Four Perfect Points of Entrance and were received from Aristotle and the church. First, Temperance is taught to the Freemason in that it may be used to restrain the Freemason's affections and passions so that the individual (or body) may be tame and also governable. This frees the Freemason's mind of any allurements of vice and should be a "constant practice of every mason."¹²¹ The second virtue is Fortitude. Fortitude is taught to the Freemason to allow him to undergo any pain, peril, or any type of danger when the situation calls for its mandated act. This is just the opposite of rashness and cowardice. It allows the Freemason to face danger and keep tight the secrets of Freemasonry.¹²² Prudence is taught to the Freemason to regulate their lives by using actions that are agreeable to the standards of reason. This should be a virtue of every Freemason inside and outside of the lodge.¹²³ Finally, justice is taught to the Freemason as the standard or the boundary of right to render every man his just due without deciding whether or not they are worthy. The principles of justice are to be so engrained of every Freemason that they are the basis of any real man.¹²⁴

Point Within A Circle

In Freemasonry, there is a concept that is taught to the candidate during the ritual called the Point Within A Circle, and two distinct parallel lines emborder this circle. These parallel lines represent Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist. On top of the circle is the

¹²¹ Bahnson, 34.

¹²² Ibid., 34-35.

¹²³ Ibid., 35.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 35-36.

Holy Bible. This picture points out the whole duty of the Freemason. The point represents the Freemason with the circle indicating his boundary line representing his required duty to God and man. While going around this circle, the Freemason touches the two lines as well as the Bible. This represents the idea that he should suffer his passions, interests, and prejudices to serve man and God but those limits themselves are even limited.¹²⁵

Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Freemason is taught that a knowledgeable life is essential to being able to serve God and mankind. To be the best man one can be and put oneself on a sure path to becoming that perfect ashlar, a man should be familiar with grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. The Freemason is taught that the most important of these is geometry because it is the most esteemed and is known as the fifth science.¹²⁶

Geometry

Freemasonry calls geometry “the first and noblest of sciences” and that it is the “basis on which the superstructure of Masonry is erected.”¹²⁷ When someone sees the common picture of the Freemasonic symbol, they will see the letter “G” inside of it. Many Freemasons indicate that this G stands for both God and Geometry.¹²⁸ In Freemasonry's teaching, the candidate learns that it mostly stands for Geometry because of the relationship of geometry to the philosophy of Freemasonry. In Freemasonry, there is an idea that God created the world and the universe by

¹²⁵ Bahnson, 31-32.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 49.

¹²⁸ Personal experience of researcher.

design. The Freemason can see that design in nature because everything works in harmony and must have been designed. Therefore, the science of geometry shows the three-dimensional aspects of architecture and is the root of mathematics.¹²⁹

Five Orders of Architecture

In Freemasonry, the candidate is exposed to the five orders of architecture. These five orders are as follows; Ionic, Doric, Corinthian, Tuscan, and Composite. Freemasons are taught that three are Greek, and two are Roman. The Greek is represented as Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian, and the Roman is Tuscan and Composite. These five orders of architecture are there to allude to the five senses that a Freemason has, which are hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and tasting. It is the first three that the Freemason uses the most in his charity to mankind.¹³⁰

Charges

Upon completion of the degree work or ritual for each degree, the candidate for that particular degree is given a charge before completing the night's work. These charges are the final reminder to the candidate to comply with the ritual's information and live life according to it. There are three separate charges, one from each of the three degrees. These further drives home the points laid out in the degree work to the candidates.

1st Degree Charge

“Brother: - As you are now introduced into the first principles of Masonry, I congratulate you upon being accepted into this ancient and honorable Order; ancient, as having existed from time immemorial; and honorable, as tending in ever particular, so to render all me who will be conformable to its precepts. No institution was ever raised on a better principle or more solid foundation; nor were ever more excellent rules and useful maxims

¹²⁹ Bahnson, 47-50.

¹³⁰ Bahnson, 46-47.

laid down that are inculcated in the several Masonic lectures. The greatest best men of all ages have been promoters and encouragers of the art, and have never deemed it derogatory to their dignity to level themselves with the fraternity, extend their privileges, and patronize their assemblies. There are three great duties which, as a Mason, you are charged to inculcate – to God, your neighbor, and yourself. To God, in never mentioning his name but with that reverential awe which is due from a creature to his Creator; in imploring his aid in all your laudable undertakings, and in esteeming him as the chief good; to your neighbor, in acting upon the square, and doing unto him as you wish he would do unto you; and to yourself, in avoiding all irregularity and intemperance, which may impair your faculties, or debase the dignity of your profession. The performance of these duties will entitle you to public and private esteem.

In the State you are to be a quiet and peaceable citizen, true to your government and just to your country. You are not to countenance disloyalty or rebellion, but patiently submit to legal authority, and conform with cheerfulness to the government of the country in which you live. In your outward demeanor, be particularly careful to avoid censure or reproach.

Your frequent appearance at our regular meetings is earnestly solicited, yet it is not meant that Masonry should interfere with your other duties, for these are on no account to be neglected; neither are you to suffer your zeal for the institution to lead you into argument with those who, through ignorance, may ridicule it.

During your leisure hours, that you may improve in Masonic knowledge, you are to converse with well-informed brethren, who will always be as ready to give, as you will be to receive, instruction.

Finally, keep sacred and inviolable the mysteries of the Order, as these are to distinguish you from the rest of the community, and mark your consequence among Masons.”¹³¹

2nd Degree Charge

“Brother: – Being passed to the second degree of Masonry, we congratulate you on your preferment. The internal, and not the external qualifications of a man, are what Masonry regards. As you increase in knowledge, you will improve in social intercourse.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate the duties which as a Mason you are bound to discharge, or enlarge on the necessity of a strict adherence to them, as your own experience must have established their value. Our laws and regulations you are strenuously to support, and be always ready to assist in seeing them duly executed. You are not to palliate or aggravate the offences of your brethren; but in the decision of every trespass against our rules, you are to judge with candor, admonish with friendship, and reprehend with justice.

¹³¹ Bahnson 37-39.

The study of the liberal arts, that valuable branch of education, which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration; especially the science of geometry, which is established as the basis of our art. Geometry, or Masonry, originally synonymous terms, being of a divine and moral nature, is enriched with the most useful knowledge; while it proves the wonderful properties of nature, it demonstrates the more important truths of morality.

Your past behavior and regular deportment have merited the honor which we have now conferred; and in your new character it is expected that you will conform to the principles of the Order, by steadily persevering in the practice of every commendable virtue. Such is the nature of your engagement as a Fellow Craft, and to these duties you are bound by the most sacred ties.”¹³²

3rd Degree Charge

“Brother: - Your zeal for the institution of Masonry, the progress you have made in the mysteries, and your conformity to our regulations, have pointed you out as a proper object of our favor and esteem. You are now bound by duty, honor and gratitude to be faithful to your trust; to support the dignity of your character on every occasion; and to enforce, by precept and example, obedience to the tenets of the Order.

In the character of a Master Mason, you are authorized to correct the errors and irregularities of your uninformed brethren, and to guard them against a breach of fidelity. To preserve the reputation of the fraternity unsullied, must be your constant care; and for this purpose it is your province to recommend to your inferiors, obedience and submission; to your equals, courtesy and affability; to your superiors, kindness and condescension. Universal benevolence you are always to inculcate, and by the regularity of your own behavior afford the best example for the conduct of others less informed. The ancient landmarks of the Order intrusted to your care, you are carefully to preserve, and never suffer them to be infringed, or countenance a deviation from the established usages and customs of the fraternity.

If in the circle of your acquaintance, you find a person desirous of being initiated into Masonry, be particularly attentive not to recommend him unless you are convinced he will conform to our rules; that the honor, glory and reputation of the institution may be firmly established, and the world at large convinced to its good effects.

Your virtue, honor, and reputations are concerned in supporting with dignity the character you now bear. Let no motive, therefore, make you swerve from your duty, violate your vows, or betray your trust; but be true and faithful, and imitate the example of that celebrated artist whom you have this evening represented. Thus you will render yourself

¹³² Bahnson, 51-52.

deserving of the honor which we have conferred, and merit the confidence that we have reposed.”¹³³

As one can see, these charges fully summate the evening’s work and are a reminder to the Freemason to live the life that they have been taught as a Freemason. Moreover, the Freemasons in the audience hearing the ritual and the cast of the ritual hear these charges repeatedly throughout their life as Freemason. Therefore, they are constantly reminded of their life as a Freemason.

All in all, these different aspects of Freemasonry show that the main teachings of the lodge give instruction to the Freemason and teach him to change himself from the rough ashlar that is located in the quarry to the perfect ashlar that is suitable for the builder’s purpose. This is continuously working on the Freemason, chipping away all of the areas of life that are not moralistic until, at some point, they have become that perfect ashlar. It is then that the Freemason hopes that his work has been good enough that God will allow him into heaven.

¹³³ Bahnson 67-68

Chapter 7: Hiram Legend

The Hiram legend is specific to Freemasonry. Most Freemasons are first introduced to it during their participation in the Third Degree ritual. Inside the fraternity, this particular part of the ritual is called “being raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason.”¹³⁴ As stated before, when a candidate gets to this point, they have already memorized the second-degree catechism and stood up in the lodge and said the catechism back as the coach asked them the questions. They have then been deemed worthy of passing with “suitable proficiency” by the Master and ready to receive the Third-Degree. The night starts just like the other two degrees. The blindfolded candidate is brought into the lodge where he is given instruction, including being sworn to the third-degree of Freemasonry's obligation. The candidate then has his blindfold removed where they are brought from darkness and given more Masonic light. They are taught the working tools of Master Mason and a few other lessons. During the ritual, there comes a point when the candidate is allowed to wear the Junior Warden’s jewel in the South. The Master of the Lodge becomes irritated at the event and informs the candidate that no matter what they believe, they have not yet become a Freemason. The candidate is then sent away, where they are once again blindfolded and returned to the lodge room to take part in the Hiram Legend. Most people do not realize that they are now being given even more instruction.

Upon entering the Lodge, blindfolded, the candidate is led through what is explained to be King Solomon’s Temple. They are also told that they are portraying Grand Master Hiram

¹³⁴ Based on my experience in the Lodge.

Abiff, who has been hired by King Solomon to build the great Temple. It is also stated that it was nearing completion and that Grand Master Hiram Abiff is leaving work for the day. The candidate, still blindfolded, is conducted through this process by a member of the lodge. As he is portrayed as leaving the temple when the candidate is ambushed by three fellowcraft masons demanding the secrets of a master mason. Initially, the candidate is approached by the first fellowcraft mason named Jubela and is asked for a master mason's secrets by this fellowcraft mason. The candidate is unable to tell them anything of value, so he is attacked with a 24-inch gauge for not giving over the secrets. The candidate is symbolically injured from the attack. Next, the candidate is confronted by a second fellowcraft mason named Jubelo, where he is asked again for a master mason's secrets. The candidate does not divulge any secrets and is attacked again but with a different trade tool, a square, giving him further symbolic injury. Lastly, the candidate is confronted by a third fellowcraft mason named Jubelum, where he is asked a final time for a master mason's secrets. After not complying with the request, the candidate is again attacked and symbolically killed by the attacker by being hit in the head with another trade tool, a setting maul. During the ritual, a very soft stage prop is used, which allows the candidate to be hit aggressively without real injury. The candidate is then pushed back and laid down on the floor as if dead, on top of a canvas that can be used to carry the symbolically dead candidate around during the rest of the ritual.

The murderers, realizing that they have just killed the Grand Master Mason, plot to hide the body under a pile of rubble in the temple. They then come back at night and move the body outside of the Temple and bury the body in a shallow grave (all symbolic, of course) to the west. They mark the grave with a sprig of acacia. The three ruffians then attempted to leave the country but are denied passage through the port of Joppa.

The next day, twelve fellowcraft masons report to King Solomon, in white gloves and aprons, to show their innocence. They proclaim that they and three others had conspired to extort the word of Master Mason from the Grand Master and that if he refused that they were going to kill him. However, the twelve decided not to go through with the deed, but they were worried that the other three had possibly carried out the deed.

The next day the Grand Master is deemed to be missing. King Solomon reminds himself of the three workmen who came to him about the plot on Grand Master Hiram Abiff. So, King Solomon has the Secretary call the roll of the workmen. It is discovered that three workmen are missing. Their names are Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum. In response to this news, King Solomon calls out the twelve fellowcraft masons from the workmen to search for the missing ruffians. Three go in a northerly direction. Three more go in an easterly direction. Three more go in a southerly direction. The final three go in a westerly direction to look for Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum.

During this ritual, the candidate is lying on the canvas blindfolded like he is in a grave. The ritual continues with some of the fellowcraft coming across a traveler and inquires if he had seen any men traveling his way. He reports that he had seen three men near Joppa's coast, and they appeared to be Jews based on how they dressed and were workmen from the temple. He further reports that they were asking about getting passage from Joppa to Ethiopia, but they could not obtain passage because of an embargo and were sent back into the country.

The twelve return to the Temple, whereupon they are asked by King Solomon how they made out. The three described the story the traveler told them. Based on that information, King Solomon sent them back out to find the three ruffians and bring them in. They go out and find the ruffians who had confessed to killing Hiram Abiff. Once they were returned to King

Solomon, they were sentenced and executed. Each was executed based on the confession that he had given. These penalties became the symbolic penalties that each Freemason agrees to when taking the obligation of each degree.

The fellowcraft masons were then sent back out to find the grave. The ones that go in a westerly direction find the grave and report back to King Solomon. King Solomon then orders that an Entered Apprentice Lodge be convened, and they go and get the body. When they arrive at the grave, they try to raise the body (the candidate) from the grave with the entered apprentice grip, but it does not work. The skin cleaved from the bone. Next, a lodge of fellowcrafts are sent, and they try to raise the body with the grip of the fellowcraft. However, that does not work either. They report this back to King Solomon. So, he, in turn, brings a lodge of master masons to the grave where King Solomon tries to raise the body with the grip of a master mason or “Lions Paw.” King Solomon is successful in raising the body from the dead. A word was then whispered from King Solomon into the ear of the candidate after he is stood up in a particular fashion. This particular fashion is foot to foot, knee to knee, chest to chest, hand to back, and mouth to ear. This is explained to the new fully raised Freemason to be the five points of fellowship. The new Freemason is further instructed not to say that word to anyone else except under that fashion.¹³⁵

This legend teaches the immortality of the soul. The masonic writer Albert Pike gives a Christian explanation of the legend of Hiram Abiff. Pike tells his readers that,

The murder of Hiram, his burial, and his being raised again by the Master, are symbols, both of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Redeemer; and of the death and burial in sins of the natural man, and his being raised again to a new life, or born again, by the

¹³⁵ As experienced by the researcher.

direct action of the Redeemer; after Morality (symbolized by the Entered Apprentice's grip), and Philosophy (symbolized by the grip of the Fellow-Craft), had failed to raise him. That of the Lion of the House of Judah is the strong grip, never to be broken, with which Christ, of the royal line of that House, has clasped to Himself the whole human race, and embraces them in His wide arms as closely and affectionately as brethren embrace each other on the five points of fellowship.

The three murderers of Khir-Om symbolize Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas the High-Priest, and Judas Iscariot: and the three blows given him are the betrayal by the last, the refusal of Roman protection by Pilate, and the condemnation by the High-Priest. They also symbolize the blow on the ear, the scourging, and the crown of thorns. The twelve fellow-crafts sent in search of the body are the twelve disciples, in doubt whether to believe that their Redeemer would rise from the dead.¹³⁶

Based on this understanding, many Christians in the lodge have associated the legend of Hiram Abiff with that of Jesus Christ. They see this legend as pointing to the Jesus Christ of their faith that allows life after death through resurrection to an afterlife that is synonymous with life in heaven with God.

¹³⁶ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, 640-641.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

After conducting this research and writing up its conclusion, the information gathered will be used to write a book to help others understand this question and effectively assist churches in their outreach to the community so that many more will find their way to Jesus Christ. Many evangelical Christians have struggled long and hard with Freemasonry, and some seem to consider it a fraternal organization that is separate from the church and just indicates that it is men becoming better men. Many people say that Christians can not be Freemasons for several reasons. Some hold the idea that the lodge was satanic, or that it is part of the occult, that it is heretical, that it shows a works-based method of salvation, that it was a replacement for the church, and so forth. However, after the study on Freemasonry, there does seem to be a conclusion. At first, many may want to know if a Freemason could be a Christian or if the two were utterly incompatible. This would not be a useful analysis because it is too simplistic. The question that must be asked at the start is what is required to be a Christian, and the answer is that one has to believe that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for man's sin, as noted in 1 John 2:1-2. Therefore, believing that "Jesus is Lord" and that he was raised from the dead by God as in Romans 10:9-10 is the only way that an individual can be saved. There must also be a belief that this was by God's grace and not through any work that is done, as indicated in Ephesians 2:8. So, this seems to be a straightforward requirement, and it would seem that it would require a direct statement of apostasy to that fact for any Christian to somehow not be a Christian. After reviewing all of Freemasonry, there does not seem to be any such statement or requirement

located anywhere in Freemasonry's rituals. However, there seem to be three main issues found that are problematic for an evangelical Christian.

Darkness To Light

The first issue that emerges as a discovery in this review of Freemasonry is in reference to an individual coming from darkness to light. In Freemasonry, when an individual is approved for membership, they have to go through the initiation. In this initiation, the candidate is brought to the door of the lodge, where they are received. When they are received, they have a conductor (the Junior Deacon) that leads them through the process because they are blindfolded. The Senior Deacon asks the question, "Who comes here?" and the Junior Deacon then answers for the candidate and says, "Mr. (First Name) (Last Name), a poor blind candidate who wishes to be brought from darkness to light to receive a part of the rights and benefits of this worshipful lodge erected to God and dedicated to the Holy Saints John as many brothers and fellows have done before." The senior deacon then asks the candidate, "Mr. (First Name) (Last Name) is this of your own free will and accord?" The candidate then is instructed by the Junior Deacon to answer, "it is."¹³⁷

Light to a Christian is a reference to Jesus Christ. This is indicated in the Gospel of John. It was here that Jesus spoke to the people and explained that he was the light of the world and that anyone who followed Him would not walk in darkness but will, instead of darkness, have the light of life.¹³⁸ It is a convincing argument that any Christian would understand that Christ is

¹³⁷ Code book of the NC Grand Lodge, 37-38.

¹³⁸ John 8:12.

the light of the world, especially if they have been educated in Sunday School, attended church, or been through any evangelistic readings. Jesus goes further and enlightens the world about this concept later in John's book, where he explains that he is the light of the world when he is in the world.¹³⁹ Jesus supports this further when clarifying to the Pharisees that he had come into the world so that the blind could see.¹⁴⁰ So, when a Christian hears in the lodge that he will be brought from darkness to light, there must be an awareness that comes over the Christian candidate when he wonders if this will expose him to the Jesus he already knows. Many Christians upon entering the Lodge must contemplate this when they enter the lodge for the first time. Many may likely stand there with a blindfold on and trust that it is a good thing because someone they know and trust is a part of it, along with many friends and associates of the church. As an evangelical Christian hears that they are about to be brought from darkness to light, they must wonder how Christ is going to be part of all of this, but then they hear no mention of Christ within the ritual.

Mackey in the Encyclopedia of Freemasonry gives a definition that is important to understand the basis of light in Freemasonry. Mackey says that,

Physical blindness in Freemasonry, as in the language of the Scriptures, is symbolic of the deprivation of moral and intellectual light. It is equivalent to the darkness of the Ancient Mysteries in which the neophytes were enshrouded for periods varying from a few hours to many days. The Masonic candidate, therefore, represents one immersed in intellectual darkness, groping in the search for that Divine light and truth which are the objects of a Freemason's labor.¹⁴¹

It is this blindness that Freemasonry is claiming to cure in the life of the candidate. Notice that the definition says this it is divine light and truth. The Freemason's understanding can further

¹³⁹ John 9:5.

¹⁴⁰ John 9:39.

¹⁴¹ Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, - Blindness. Location 10568 of 66325

illustrate that this darkness to light is actually a light that has a salvation ability at the end of the Freemason's life on earth. The Freemason understands that the soul is immortal and that the hope is to one day live with God in heaven. To do so, one must have the light of Freemasonry to be able to get to this final resting place. Therefore, the Freemason is taught that he will make this journey if he follows the life of a Freemason. Mackey gives us a definition of the cornerstone in his encyclopedia. This definition tells the reader that the cornerstone is a "symbol of morality" and a "cube of truth." Its location is situated in the northeast corner. The north is a place of darkness, and the east being the place of light, position this cornerstone symbolically as between the darkness and the light. Mackey further tells his reader that,

The permanence and durability of the corner-stone, which lasts long after the building in whose foundation it was placed has fallen into decay, is intended to remind the Freemason that, when this earthly house of his tabernacle shall have passed away, he has within him a sure foundation of eternal life-a corner-stone of immortality-an emanation from that Divine Spirit which pervades all nature, and which, therefore, must survive the tomb, and rise, triumphant and eternal, above the decaying dust of death and the grave.

This explanation shows that in the symbolism of Freemasonry, this cornerstone signifies a true Freemason. It is the first character that the newly initiated entered apprentice is required to represent after he has been initiated as he sits in the northeast corner of the lodge.¹⁴² As Freemasons witness this many times over a lifetime of experience in the lodge, they agree with the idea that the Freemasonic philosophy or theology gives them spiritual light and an entrance to heaven. This has to be an issue for an evangelical Christian because once informed; the evangelical must only equate Jesus Christ as the definition of light.

¹⁴² Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, - Cornerstone.

Pelagianism

The second issue that comes to the surface from this research of Freemasonry is that it teaches a Pelaginic view of salvation. The Pelaginic view of salvation comes from a theologian named Pelagius. Pelagius was a British monk who was born approximately 354 AD and lived until sometime past 418 AD.^{143, 144} He was born in the British Isles and perished, possibly in Palestine¹⁴⁵. The pelagian doctrine was said to have been an issue for the church because it undermined the church's authority, and it required high demands of moral conduct, which raised the requirement of becoming a Christian and in turn discouraged church fellowship, especially among the higher-class citizens of Rome.¹⁴⁶ Pelagius was against the doctrine of divine grace, which he blamed for Rome's moral laxity at the time. Instead, Pelagius was adamant that man had a basically good moral nature and was himself capable of voluntarily choosing Christian self-discipline for holy advancement.¹⁴⁷

In 415 AD, at the synod of Jerusalem, Pelagius was accused of heresy. He was able to clear his name and gain the ability to circumvent censure. However, in 416 AD, Pelagius wrote *On Free Will* in response to attacks by Augustine, and this resulted in the censure by two African councils of his teaching. This was followed by Pope Innocent I condemning and

¹⁴³ Harrison, Carol. "Truth in a Heresy?: 1. Pelagianism." *The Expository Times* 112, no. 3 (December 2000): 78–82. doi:10.1177/001452460011200302.

¹⁴⁴ Allen, Charlotte. 2019. "Pelagius the Progressive." *First Things* 292 (April): 11–13. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a6h&AN=ATLAI FZK190408001730&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁴⁵ Pelagius, Encyclopædia Britannica, August 20, 2020, access date XXX, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Pelagius-Christian-theologian>.

¹⁴⁶ Beck, J.H. (2007), *The Pelagian Controversy: An Economic Analysis*. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 66: 681-696. doi:[10.1111/j.1536-7150.2007.00535.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1536-7150.2007.00535.x).

¹⁴⁷ Pelagius, Encyclopædia Britannica.

excommunicating Pelagius in 417 AD.¹⁴⁸ Therefore the Christian world has known Pelagianism to be heresy since this time.

Freemasonry provides much Pelaginic thought within its ritual work. There are many, but this paper will name a few and discuss their fallacy. First, we can start with the definition, which states that Freemasonry is “a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols.” The Bahnson manual goes on to say that Freemasonry is “the most ancient society in the world; its principles are based on pure morality, its ethics are ethics of pure religion; its doctrines, the doctrines of brotherly love; and its sentiments, the sentiments of exalted benevolence. It encourages all that is good, kind, and charitable; and reproveth all that is vicious, cruel, and oppressive.”¹⁴⁹ This definition alludes to a process that teaches a person to become self-sufficient in righteousness. For the Christian, this is just an impossible option according to the Bible. The Bible tells us in Romans that “None are righteous, no, not one” it also further states that no one does good.¹⁵⁰ It has been stated before by members in the Lodge that Freemasonry is all the religion they need. This statement comes from this fallacy of becoming linked into an organization that pushes perfection from a moral point of view as a requirement for admission into heaven.¹⁵¹

Second, Freemasonry teaches the concept of speculative masonry to its lodges. In speculative masonry, the Freemason “learns to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity.”¹⁵² All of these things mark the

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Bahnson 17.

¹⁵⁰ Romans 3:10-12.

¹⁵¹ Researcher’s personal experience within the lodge.

¹⁵² Bahnson, 43.

idea of living a perfect life. It fulfills the call of Pelagianism and gives the Freemason the ability to think he is totally in control of making himself perfect in the eyes of God and man. The definition also goes on to explain to the Freemason that speculative masonry “is so far interwoven with religion, as to lay us under obligation to pay that rational homage to the Deity which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness.”¹⁵³ This definition teaches the Freemason that he will never find happiness or fulfill their duty to God unless they become and act as Speculative Freemasonry teaches. All the ideas instituted in this definition turn the mind of the Freemason toward works and away from grace.

In furtherance of the idea that Freemasonry supports a Pelaginic view of salvation, one cannot overlook the prayers associated with the rituals of the degree. As explained in a previous chapter, these prayers go a long way to convince the Freemason that the lodge is a substitution for the church with a different set of rules for salvation. In the opening prayer to the lodge of the third degree, the chaplain states that God is amid the lodge and provides a blessing to the people in attendance.¹⁵⁴ This happens because the Freemason is mindful that the Bible quotes Jesus in saying, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”¹⁵⁵ This gives the perception that this current meeting is a religious meeting of the church. The prayer even goes on to say that they are assembling in His name (God’s name), and they hope that all of their actions will be pleasing to Him so that at some point, they will be admitted into the Temple in heaven.¹⁵⁶ In the closing prayer of the third degree, the chaplain prays that all of the lodge

¹⁵³ Bahnson, 43.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

¹⁵⁵ Matthew 18:20.

¹⁵⁶ Bahnson, 8.

members' irregular passions be subdued and asks that each one of the members increase daily in Faith, Hope, and Charity. He further prays a special request for the ability to perform charity so that everyone can “find and enter through the gates into the temple and city of our God,”¹⁵⁷ implying that Freemasons have to be good enough and do the right things for admittance into heaven. This is the heresy that convicted the theology of Pelagius.

The next point to bring up in this argument for Pelagianism is the concept of making a rough ashlar a perfect ashlar. Many Freemasons may not realize this concept until they have been a Freemason for a while. However, this becomes evident when explained in relation to spiritual alchemy. This concept has been taught throughout lodges worldwide; however, many never got the point until later in their masonic journey because there is just so much information involved. The idea that a Freemason is a rough stone in the quarry and becomes a perfect stone or a stone in the state of perfection is Pelaginic in its process.¹⁵⁸ That is based mostly on the situation involving the rough ashlar and the perfect ashlar being the same person but one just being in a most perfected state; it makes sense to say that this is Pelaginic since the individual himself is the one doing the perfecting. It has nothing to do with the concept of salvation through grace but more so to do with works-based salvation that is rejected in the Bible.¹⁵⁹

Furthermore, to make an even stronger argument that Freemasonry is Pelaginic, one should look at the lodge's furniture, which comprises the Holy Bible, Square, and Compasses. This furniture is there to remind the Freemason that He has a duty to God (the Holy Bible), and in doing that duty to God, he must live a moral life which is represented by the Square, and

¹⁵⁷ Bahnson, 8-9.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 29.

¹⁵⁹ Ephesians 2:8-9.

finally, Compasses remind the Freemason that he should “circumscribe his desires, and to keep his passions within due bounds.”¹⁶⁰ These items remind the Freemason to live up to a certain moral standard that is seen in all that is said and done.

Next, we must look at the Four Cardinal virtues that a Freemason is taught in the first degree. They are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice.¹⁶¹ These Four Cardinal Virtues remind the Freemason of yet another standard he must live and perform to make himself into that Perfect Ashlar of which there is no outside help. He must do this all by himself to show that he is worthy to one day enter the Temple of God in heaven.

The next point of the argument that Freemasonry is Pelagianistic is its teaching concerning the theological ladder that the Freemason must use to get to heaven. In the Freemasonic ritual, the Freemason is taught that Jacob from the Old Testament had a vision where he saw a ladder going up to heaven. The three principle rungs on the symbolic ladder that one needs to climb to heaven are Faith, Hope, and Charity. However, the Freemason is taught that Faith can be lost in sight, and Hope ends in fruition; only Charity extends beyond the grave.¹⁶² This tells the Freemasonry that the works of Charity are more important than the faith he puts in God. This notion draws the Freemason away from the evangelical Christian teaching that Faith is the only way to heaven and instead emphasizes the merit of the individual work that the Freemason must do on his own. This teaching is in contradiction to the teachings of the Bible.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Bahnson, 26.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 34-35.

¹⁶² Ibid., 25.

¹⁶³ Ephesians 2:8-9.

Next, the working tools are another example of the organization being Pelaginic. The working tools are the twenty-four-inch gauge, common gavel, plumb, level, square, and trowel. All of these tools assist the Freemason in taking himself from the Rough Ashlar to the Perfect Ashlar so that he can be admitted into heaven according to Freemasonry's belief. However, the Common Gavel is the most significant. The instrument is to be used by the Freemason to chip off of himself all of the "vices and superfluities of life."¹⁶⁴ By doing this, he is himself making these corrections and making him acceptable in God's eyes.

Finally, the White Leather Apron is a symbol that supports the idea that the Lodge teaches Pelagianism. The Freemason is given this apron the night they are inducted into the Lodge. They are taught that it is the most important thing one can be given. The Freemason is told that "its pure and spotless surface" is to be "an ever-present reminder of a 'purity of life and rectitude of conduct' a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements." The Freemason is further instructed that

when at last your weary feet shall have come to the end of their toilsome journey, and from your nerveless grasp shall drop forever the working tools of life, may the record of your life and actions be as pure and spotless as the fair emblem which I place in your hands tonight. And when your trembling soul shall stand naked and alone before the Great White Throne, may it be your portion to hear from Him who sitteth as the Judge Supreme the welcome words- 'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'¹⁶⁵

These words do not sit correctly with the evangelical Christian who believes that grace will get him into Heaven through Faith. He also believes that the Great White Throne is reserved for those to be judged and not the Christian, who will go to the Judgement seat of Christ, but not the Great White Throne. This White Leather Apron will be a reminder to the Christian that he has to

¹⁶⁴ Bahnson, 18.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 15-16.

continuously leave a perfect life in the hope of hearing those words stated above from God. A Christian will be in conflict with this teaching.

Not Evangelistic

The third reason that makes living a Freemason's life incompatible with an evangelical Christian is that the Christian will be unable to evangelize others. An evangelical Christian is one who seriously takes to heart the Great Commission, which is the charge from Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus instructed his disciples to go out and spread the gospel to all parts of the earth. He commanded his disciples to make disciples of others and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁶ The evangelical Christian sees this as their mission in life. This mission encourages Evangelicals to go “Soul Winning” and share their faith with others in the hope that they too will develop a belief in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Some Christians keep tabs on this and record the number of people that they lead to Christ. They then ensure follow-up is done, and those whom they lead to Christ will become disciples of Christ as well.

Many Evangelicals will remember the first person that they lead to Jesus Christ. They will be very happy and feel a feeling of joy when they see someone give their life to Christ. It will be the basis of their Christianity. Soul winning will be a lifestyle and not just a term that other people do. However, if that evangelical Christian was a Freemason, and the individual they were going to witness to was a Freemason but a different religion, then this could never happen because of the laws of Freemasonry. It is because he would have to show that the other's religion

¹⁶⁶ Matthew 28:16-20.

is wrong. The reason for this restriction is taught in the second degree of Masonry. In the Fellowcraft Degree, the Freemason learns to use the working tools of a Fellowcraft, which are the Plumb, Level, and Square (also known as the immovable Jewels in the Lodge) to make his perfect Ashlar or to build his perfect Temple. But note that the Freemason is taught that the Freemason is to use “his own” tools to build “his own” Temple. Therefore, he cannot judge the work of another by his tools. Instead, he is to judge the work of the other Freemason by that Freemason's tools. For example, it is thought that all plumb lines hang alike as all squares are equally square, and all levels are equally the same in reference to accuracy. But a man can use a tool and think it is true, which to someone else it is not. If a tool used to build with and the tool used to judge are not alike, then the judgment will be inaccurate. So, the judge must use the tool that the builder used to build his work. This is taught in the Lodge and verified by the Grand Lodge in their instructional books. For example, a Freemason may learn that the Washington Monument and the Eiffel are both plumb based on the builder's tools used respectively in each part of the world at that time. Both structures are at right angles to Sea Level. However, to someone sitting on the moon with a very strong telescope, they would look to be not parallel to each other. Since they are at different latitudes, they will rise from their perspective places at separate angles from each other. From this, the Freemason learns that they cannot judge one man's god by the standards he has for his god. So, A Christian could never evangelize to a Muslim, Jew, Buddhist, Hindu, or any other religion. He would be unable to do so because he would have to judge that man by his own working tools and not the other individual's tools. Instead, he can only judge the man by that man's tools and validate that he is correct by that person's tools. It is further explained to the Freemason that the Great Architect of the Universe would judge each man correctly because each man's working tools were true and correct to each

man, respectively.¹⁶⁷ So you can see that this would be very problematic for an evangelical Christian to do and agree to.

All in all, there are no specific issues in Freemasonry that would require a Christian to become an apostate to maintain membership, but there are several issues that would be problematic for an evangelical Christian. These are: agreeing that they were once in darkness and Freemasonry brought them to into the spiritual light, that Freemasonry teaches a Pelaginic requirement to gain admission to heaven, and that evangelism is not allowed to be performed to another Freemason. Therefore, this research concludes that it would be tough to live a life as a Freemason and as an evangelical Christian at the same time. I would choose to serve Christ as an evangelical Christian.

¹⁶⁷ Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry*, 73-77

Appendix A: Definitions

Council of Carthage: A council (really a minor synod) assembled under the presidency of Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, to take actions concerning the errors of Caelestius, a disciple of Pelagius.

Council of Ephesus: A council of Christian bishops convened in Ephesus (near present-day

Esoteric Masonry: The unwritten ritualistic work designed for and understood by the specially initiated alone.

Exoteric Masonry: That part of the ritualistic work suitable for the uninitiated public.

Freemasonry: A beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols.

Masonry: The erection of buildings and consecrating them to the veneration of God, we will admit was the purpose of the builders, of the ancient operative art. While the Masons of the Speculative Science operate in a spiritual sense, employing the tools of the operative Mason as symbols, and using veiled allegories, from the Bible to convey to their initiates lesson and belief, that there is life beyond the grave.

Master Builder: In an operative sense, a high intellect artificer, an architect, a skillful worker, who with proper materials such as was furnished by Solomon and Hiram king of Tyre, and placed in the hands of such as man as, “the widow’s son of the tribe of Naphtali,” we may readily understand the magnificence of such an edifice as the Solomonic Temple. However, with reference to Speculative Science and that spiritual builder, we cannot lose sight of that builder, who erects the Temples of living stones-teaching strict rectitude and justice towards his fellowmen; and that their demeanor should be marked by the level of

curtesy and kindness; while uprightness of heart and integrity of action, symbolized by the plumb, should be their distinguishing characteristics; and thus guided by the movable jewels of Masonry, they may descend the vale of life and joy, in hope of being accepted by the Most High, as successful candidates for admission into the Grand Lodge above.

Master Mason: Represents man, when youth, manhood, old age, and life itself, have passed away as fleeting shadows, yet raised from the grave of iniquity, and quickened into another and better existence. By its legend and all its ritual, it is implied that the Master Mason has been redeemed from the death of sin and the sepulcher of pollution; and the conclusion that is arrived at is, that youth, properly directed, leads the Master Mason to honorable and virtuous maturity, and that the life of man, regulated by morality, faith, and justice, will be rewarded at its closing hour, by the prospect of eternal bliss.

Monarchianism: A belief-system that presupposes one God.

Operative Masonry: That which alludes to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure will derive figure, strength, and beauty, and whence will result a due proportion, and a just correspondence in all its parts. It furnishes man with dwellings, and with convenient shelters from the vicissitudes and inclemencies of the seasons, and while it displays the effects of human wisdom, as well in the choice as in the arrangement of the sundry materials of which an edifice is composed, it demonstrates that a fund of science and industry is implanted in man for the best, most salutary, and beneficent purposes.

Pelagianism: The theological doctrine of Pelagius and his followers, in particular the denial of the doctrines of original sin and predestination, and the defense of innate human goodness and free will.

Perfect Ashlar: A stone of a true square, which can only be tried by the square and compasses.

This represents the mind of a man at the close of life, after a well-regulated career of piety and virtue, which can only be tried by the square of God's Word, and the compasses of an approving conscience.

Philosophy of Masonry: Involves the history of its origin, an inquiry into the ideas that lie at its base, an investigation of its peculiar form, an analytical study of its several degrees, and a development of the ideas which are illustrated by its ritualistic emblems, myths and veiled allegories and which speak through its sublime system of symbols.

Raised: The expressive term used to designate the reception of the candidate into the third or sublime degree of a Master Mason, and alludes to both a part of the ceremony and the Masons faith in the glorious morn of the resurrection, when the Mason's body will rise, and become as incorruptible as their souls.

Resurrection: A belief in God and a belief in resurrection to a future life is the belief of every true Master Mason. This doctrine of a resurrection is one of the great Landmarks of the Order, and its importance and necessity may be estimated from the fact, that almost the whole design of speculative Masonry, from its earliest origin, seems to have been to teach this great doctrine of the Resurrection.

Rough Ashlar: The entered apprentice has not perfected himself in Masonry is symbolized by the freestone in the quarries, that has not been smoothed by the Master Builder.

Speculative Masonry: That which causes its followers to learn to subdue their passions, act upon the square, keep the tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity. It is so far interwoven with religion, as to lay it followers under obligation to pay that rational homage to the Deity which at once constitutes their duty and their happiness. It

leads the contemplative Mason to view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of creation and inspires him with the most exalted ideas of the perfection of his Divine Creator.

Sublime Degree of Master Mason: The final degree of Masonry named for the solemnity of the ceremonies which accompany it, as the profound lessons of wisdom which it inculcates. The important part of the degree is to symbolize the great doctrines of the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul; and hence it has been remarked by a learned writer of the Masonic Order that “the Master Mason represents a man saved from the grave of iniquity, and raised to the faith of salvation.”

Symbol: A word derived from the Greek *sumbolon* from *sumballein*, to suspect, divine, compare; a word of various meaning, even with the ancients, who used it to denote a sign, a mark, a watchword, signal, token, a searing, etc., its meaning is still more various in modern times. Freemasonry is a complete system of symbolic teaching, and can be known, understood and appreciated by those who study its symbolism, and make themselves acquainted with its occult meaning. To such, Freemasonry has a grand and sublime significance. Its symbols are moral, philosophical, and religious, and all these are pregnant with great thoughts, and reveal to the intelligent Mason the awful mystery of life, and the still more awful mystery of death.

Temple Builder: Third Landmark. The legend of the third degree is an important landmark, the integrity of which has been well preserved. There is no rite of Masonry, practiced in any country or language, in which the essential elements of this legend are not taught. The lectures may vary, and indeed are constantly changing but the legend has ever remained

substantially the same. And it is necessary that it should be so, for the legend of the Temple Builder constitutes the very essence and identity of masonry.

Temple of the Body: To the Master Mason, the Temple of Solomon is truly the symbol of human life; for, like life, it was to have its end. Masonic teachings are not intended to convey an historical fact concerning the erection of a building, but ever to keep in sight, the beauty of that temple as a symbol of the life in which he should live as a man and Mason.

Veiled Allegory: is synonymous with parable. Saying one thing and meaning another, is veiled allegory. In the New Testament, we find the sayings of Jesus in veiled allegory. The same is used in Freemasonry, to conceal from those, except to whom the teachings rightly belong, the mysteries of Speculative Science; and then only to them that has the desire to enter its caverns in search of the jewels hidden there.

Wages of a Master Mason: The operative Mason, in ancient times, received, as compensation for his labor, corn, wine, and oil-the products of the earth-or whatever would contribute to his physical comfort and support. His labor being material, his wages were outward and material. The Free and Accepted Mason, on the other hand, performs a moral work, and hence his reward is interior and spiritual. The enlightened brother finds his reward in the grand and gratifying results of his studies, and in the joyful results of his Masonic deeds.

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