

Cults and Other “Gospels”

Recognizing and Understanding the Differences



Cults and Other “Gospels”

- ♦ **Remember our definition of a “cult”**
 - ♦ **I've recommended six questions to ask yourself about any religious groups that seem at least potentially suspicious to you...**
 1. **Does the group have a prophet/founder who is revered by followers and claims to have *special* revelation from God or from angels?**
 2. **Are there authoritative writings or scriptures *in addition to* or *instead of* the Bible?**
 3. **Does the group view itself as the one *true* church, founded because the *true* gospel was lost in the early centuries of the church?**
 4. **What does the group believe regarding the Trinity? Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity? Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?**
 5. **How does the group believe we are *saved*? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?**
 6. **What belief does the group hold regarding life after death? What is its concept of Heaven and Hell?**



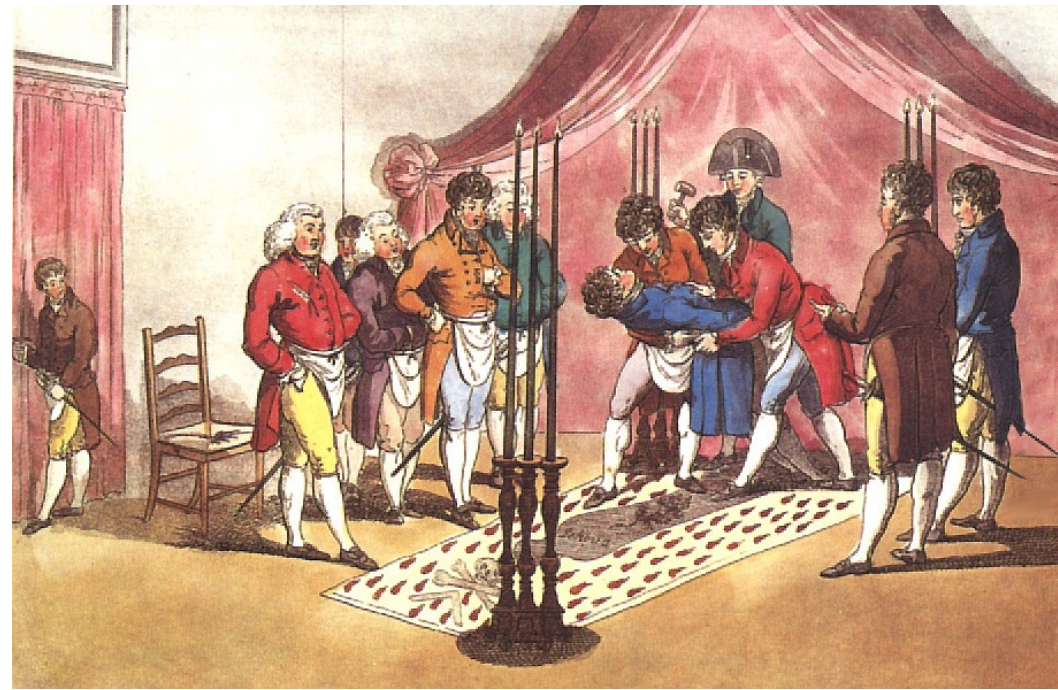
Cults and Other “Gospels”

- ♦ Introduction to Cults
- ♦ Peoples Temple
- ♦ Latter-Day Saints (“Mormons”)
- ♦ Jehovah's Witnesses
- ♦ Christian Science
- ♦ Scientology / Dianetics
- ♦ Unification Church (“Moonies”)
- ♦ **Freemasonry (“The Masonic Lodge”)**



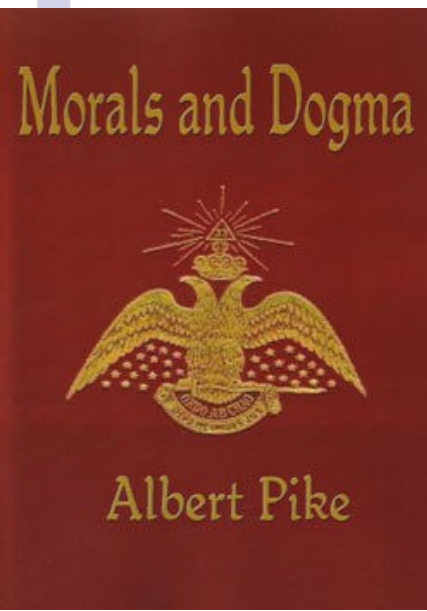
Freemasonry

- ◆ **Let's get back to our six questions...**
 - ◆ **Who is their founder?**
 - ◆ **Hiram Abiff, King Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre**
 - ◆ **Freemasonry teaches its members that the Craft was originally established 3,000 years ago, during the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, when King Hiram sent Master Mason Hiram Abiff to help —when it was actually established in London in 1717, in the back room of the Goose and Gridiron Ale House**
(but that just doesn't sound as prestigious and exotic...)



Freemasonry

- ◆ **Let's get back to our six questions...**
 - ◆ **Do they have any authoritative writings or scriptures *in addition to or instead of* the Bible?**
 - ◆ ***Not written down, per se...***
 - ◆ **“The Mason does not pretend to dogmatic certainty, nor vainly imagine such certainty attainable. He considers that if there were *no* written revelation, he could safely rest the hopes that animate him and the principles that guide him, on the deductions of reason and the convictions of instinct and consciousness. He can find a sure foundation for his religious belief, in these deductions of the intellect and convictions of the heart.”**
 - Morals and Dogma*
 - ◆ **“The authoritative source for Masonry is the *ritual*.”**
 - Bill Mankin, 32nd Degree Mason*
(i.e.; the beliefs and statements actively expressed and committed to by initiates into Freemasonry during the various secret rituals that they take part in)

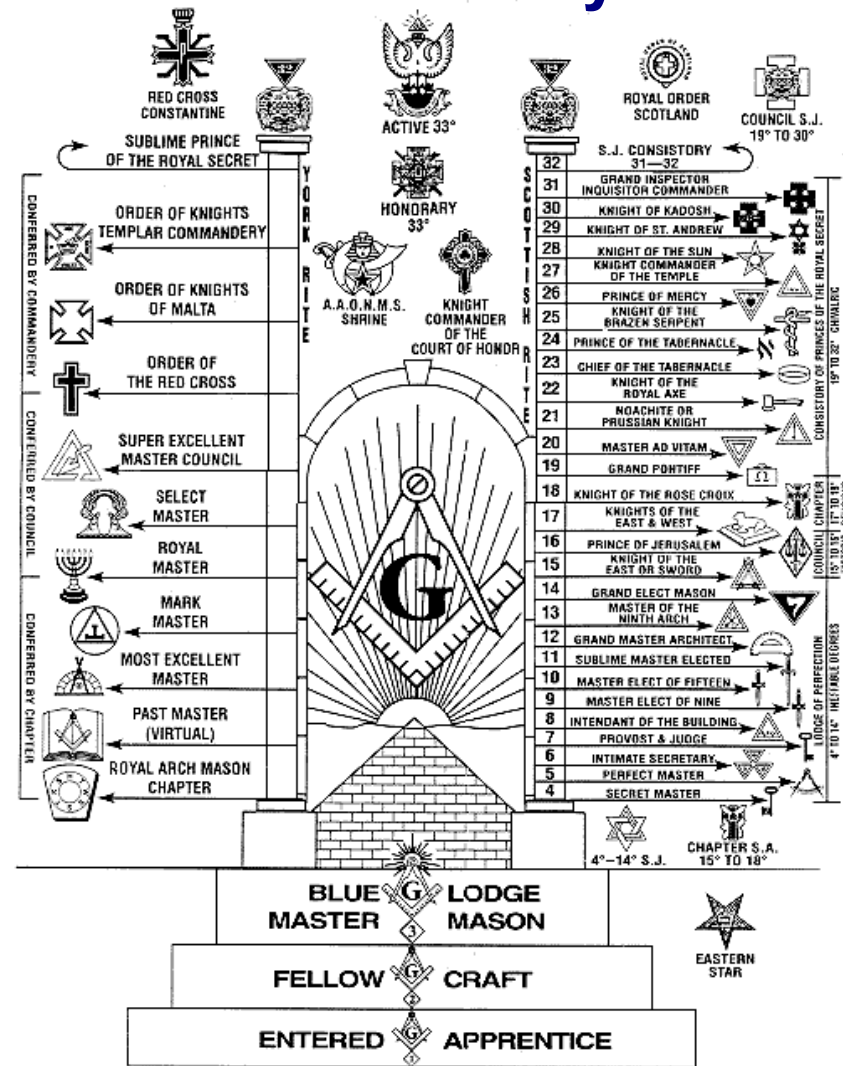
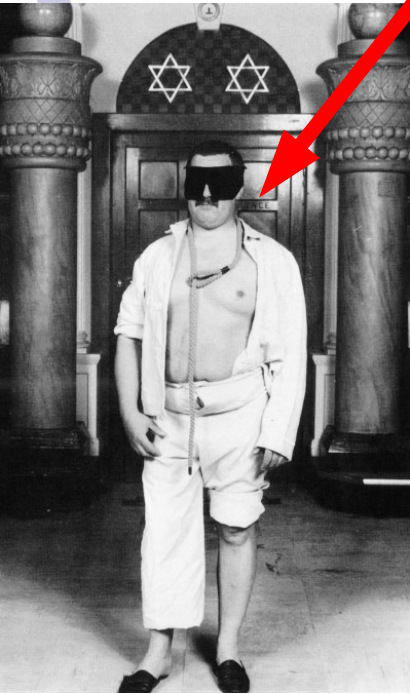


Freemasonry



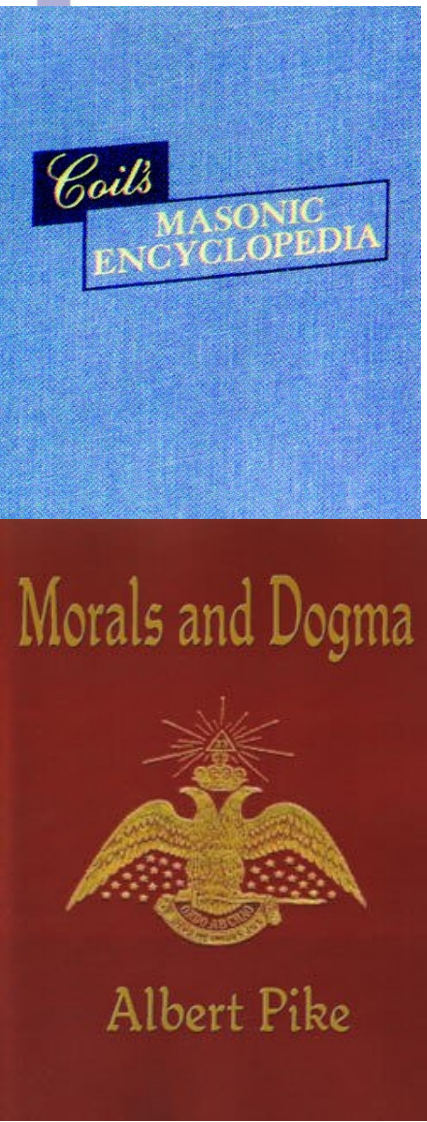
Funky little teaching moment...

- As we discussed last week, Masons are initiated into ever-rising “degrees” and with each degree, you have a new initiation, where you promise under oaths *never* to share the secrets of Freemasonry (usually requiring the initiate to be blindfolded, at least partially stripped, and lightly strangled with a rope around his neck—in a symbolic re-enacting of the murder of Hiram Abiff by three ruffians, due to his unwillingness to share the secrets of the Master Mason, no matter what they threatened)



Freemasonry

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 - ◆ “The Mason does not pretend to dogmatic certainty, nor vainly imagine such certainty attainable...”
—*Morals and Dogma*
 - ◆ “The prevailing Masonic opinion is that the Bible is only a symbol of Divine Will, Law, or Revelation, and not that its contents are Divine Law, inspired, or revealed.”
—*Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*
 - ◆ “The *literal* meaning (of the Bible) is for the vulgar only...”
—*Morals and Dogma*



Freemasonry

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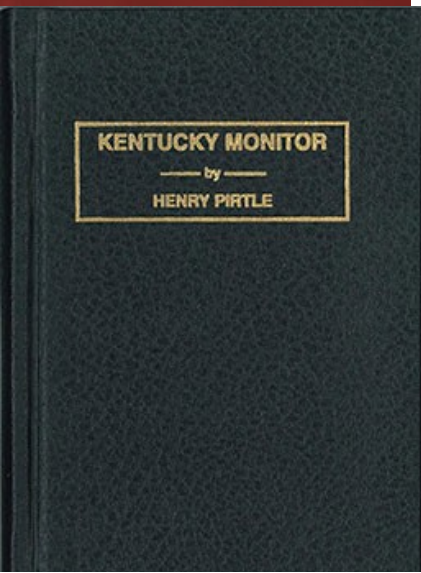
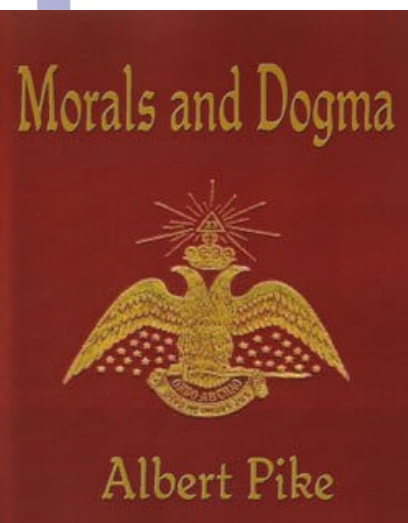
- ◆ ***Sort of...***

- ◆ **“Every religion and every conception of God is idolatrous, insofar as it is imperfect, and as it substitutes a feeble and temporary idea in the shrine of that Undiscoverable Being.”**

- Morals and Dogma*

- ◆ **“Masonry makes no profession of Christianity... but looks forward to the time when the labor of our ancient brethren shall be symbolized by the erection of a spiritual temple... in which there shall be but one altar and one worship; one common altar of Masonry on which the Veda, Shatra, Sade, Zeda-Avesta, Koran and the Holy Bible shall at whose shrine the Hindu, the Persian, the Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Egyptian, the Chinese, the Mohammedan, the Jew and the Christian may kneel.”**

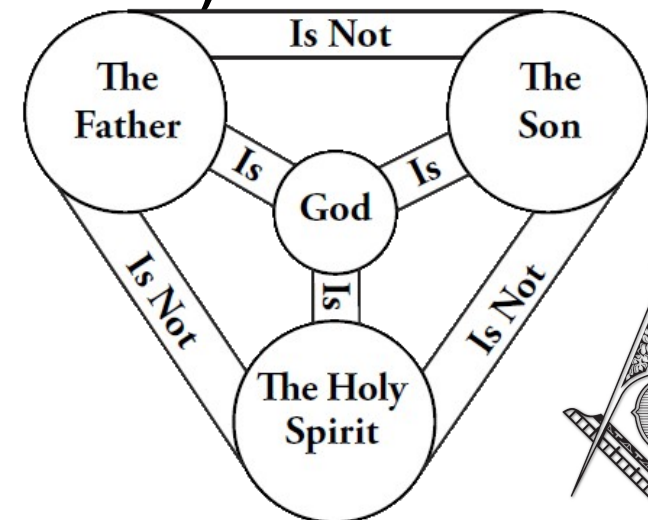
- from the “The Kentucky Monitor” Fellowcraft Degree*



Freemasonry

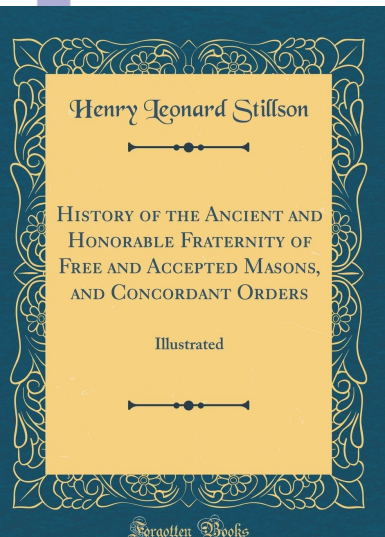
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 - ◆ **What does the group believe regarding the Trinity? Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity? Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?**
 - ◆ **“Jah, Bel, and On appear in the American ritual of the Royal Arch degree on the supposition that Jah was the Syriac name of God, Bel (Baal), the Chaldean, and On, the Egyptian.”**
 - Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*
(i.e.; “We totally have a Bible open on our altar, but we also totally believe that “Baal” is just another name for God...”)
(Maybe try reading Judges 6 or 1 Kings 18—
what was *Elijah's* take on Baal?)

Coil's
MASONIC
ENCYCLOPEDIA



Freemasonry

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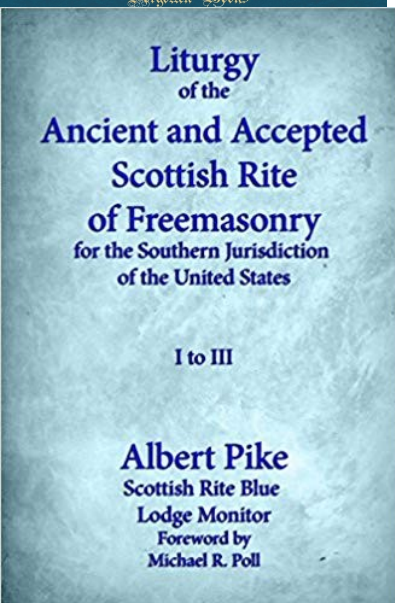
—*Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*

- ◆ **“Masonry, around whose altars the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to the one God who is above all the Baalim, must needs leave it to each of its Initiates to look for the foundation of his faith.”**

—*Liturgy of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*

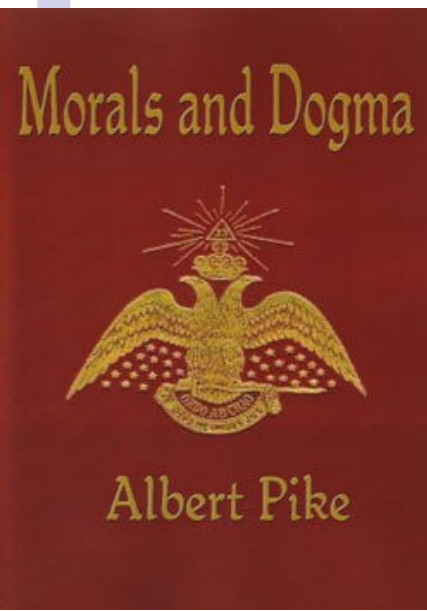
- ◆ **“The culmination of all the Mysteries of the Orient was accomplished in the coming of the 'MESSIAH'; Hebrew, Mâshîah from Mashah, to Anoint; hence the ANOINTED ONE; Christus, Latin; Christos, Greek; Krishna, Sanscrit.”**

—*History of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons*



Freemasonry

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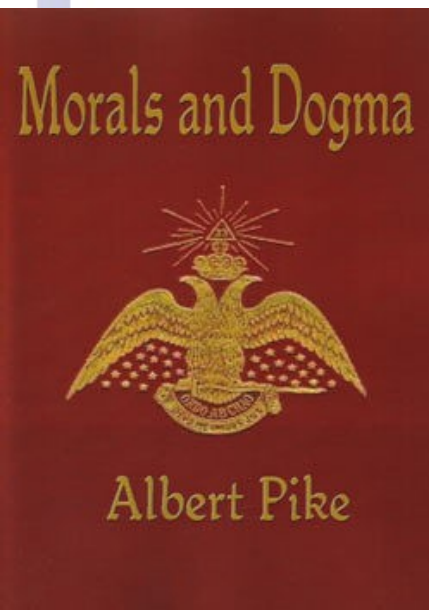


Freemasonry



Funky little teaching moment...

- ♦ In fact, a Mason *is not allowed* to think otherwise—
“None has the right to object, if the Christian Mason sees foreshadowed in Chrishna and Sosiosch, in Mithras and Osiris, the Divine Word that, as he believes, became Man, and died upon the cross to redeem a fallen race. Nor can he object if others see reproduced, in the Word of the beloved Disciple, that was in the beginning with God, and that was God, and by Whom everything was made, only the Logos of Plato, and the Word or Uttered Thought or first Emanation of Light, or the Perfect Reason of the Great, Silent, Supreme, Uncreated Deity, believed in and adored by all. We do not undervalue the importance of any Truth. We utter no word that can be deemed irreverent by any one of any faith. We do not tell the Moslem that it is only important for him to believe that there is but one God, and wholly unessential whether Mahomet was His prophet. We do not tell the Hebrew that the Messiah whom he expects was born in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago; and that he is a heretic because he will not believe. And as little do we tell the sincere Christian that Jesus of Nazareth was but a man like us, or His history but the unreal revival of an older legend.”

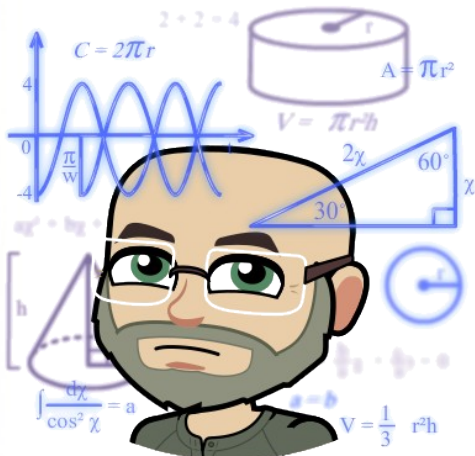


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- ◆ *Pastor Kevin Logic Note:* Logically, if you “do not undervalue the importance of any Truth” by implying that *any* Truth is *more* Truth than any *other* Truth then—by definition—you undervalue the importance of every Truth by implying that NO Truth is *actually* **T**ruth, but rather that *all* of it is just “myths people believe that have no *inherent* level of **T**ruth to them”—thus, logically, you're pretending to be doing *one* thing, but actually accomplishing the exact *opposite*...



Freemasonry

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—*Morals and Dogma*

- ◆ **“The true disciple of ancient Masonry has given up forever the worship of personalities... As a Mason, his religion must be universal: Christ, Buddha or Mohammed, the names mean little, for he recognizes only the Light and not the bearer.”**

—*The Religion of Masonry*

- ◆ **Newton was a 33rd Degree Mason and historian (and an Episcopal / Universalist minister), so we can pretty much accept that his summation here is accurate—that at its core, the religion of Masonry is about believing in an impersonal Light as Creator, and dropping the Holy Spirit and the Divine Personhood and salvific work of Christ out of the equation entirely**



THE
RELIGION OF MASONRY

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON



Freemasonry



Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ In fact, repudiating Christian **T**ruth is essential for becoming a “true Mason”
 - ◆ “In all the preceding degrees you must have observed that the object of Scotch Masonry is to overthrow all kinds of superstition, and that by admitting in her bosom on the terms of the strictest equality, the members of all religions, of all creeds, and of all countries, without any distinction whatever, she had, and indeed can have, but one single object and that is to restore to the Grand Architect of the Universe; to the common father of the human race those who are lost in the maze of impostures, invented for the sole purpose of enslaving them. The Knights of Kadosh recognize no particular religion, and for that reason we demand of you nothing more than to worship God. And whatever may be the religious forms imposed upon you by superstition at a period of your life when you were incapable of discerning truth from falsehood, we do not even require you to relinquish them. Time and study alone can enlighten you. But remember that you will never be a true Mason unless you repudiate forever all superstitions and prejudices.”

—*Scottish Rite Masonry Illustrated*



SCOTTISH RITE
MASONRY



Freemasonry

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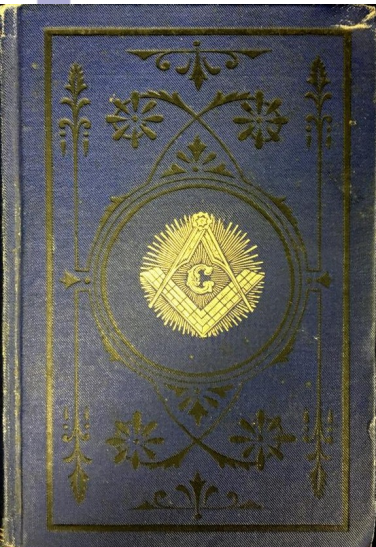
- ◆ **“Let all the energies of our souls and the perfection of our minds be employed in attaining the approbation of the Grand Master on high, so that when we come to die... we gain the favor of a speedy entrance to the Grand Lodge on high, where the Grand Architect of the Universe forever resides, and where, seated at his right hand, he may be pleased to pronounce us upright men and Masons.”**

—*Standard Masonic Monitor*

- ◆ **“He who wears the lambskin as a badge of a Mason is thereby continually reminded of purity of life and conduct which is essentially necessary to his gaining admission into that Celestial Lodge above.”**

—*Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor*

(i.e.; it's your purity of life and conduct which save you—not any redemptive work by Christ on the cross)



Duncan's
Masonic Ritual
and Monitor
(Annotated)

OR GUIDE TO THE THREE SYMBOLIC DEGREES OF THE
ANCIENT YORK RITE

MALCOLM C. DUNCAN



Freemasonry



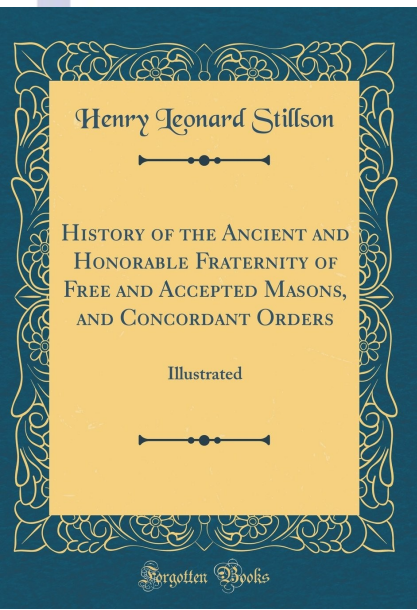
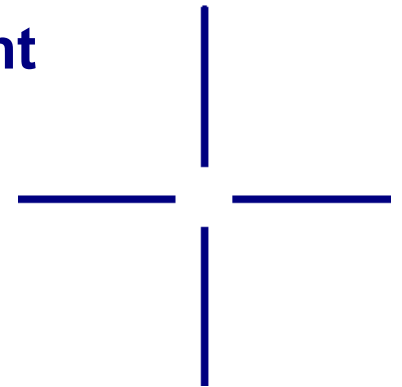
Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ In fact, the Cross isn't even really a symbol of redemption at all

“[The] *First Cause* has always revealed itself by the *Cross*; the *Cross*, that unit composed of two, each of the two divided to form four; the *Cross*, that key of the mysteries of India and Egypt, the Tau of the Patriarchs, the divine sign of Osiris, the Stanros of the Gnostics, the Key-Stone of the Temple, the Symbol of Occult Masonry; the *Cross*, that central point of junction of the right angles of two infinite Triangles; the *Cross*, which in the French language seems to be the first root of the verb *croitre* (to believe, and to grow or increase), thus uniting the ideas of Science, Religion, and Progress.

(It is an apt emblem and symbol of *Infinity*; because its four arms, each infinitely prolonged, would infinitely diverge, the distance between them infinitely increasing).”

—*History of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons*



Freemasonry



Funky little teaching moment...

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“The incommunicable axiom is Kabalistically contained in the four letters of the *Tetragram*, thus arranged: in the letters of the words AZOTH and INRI, written Kabalistically, and in the Monogram of Christ, as it was embroidered on the Labarum, and which the Kabalist Postel interpreted by the word ROTA, from which the Adepts have formed their TARO, or TAROT, repeating the first letter to indicate the circle, and to give it to be understood that the word has returned. The whole magical science consists in the knowledge of this secret. To know it and to dare without serving is Human Omnipotence; but to reveal it to a profane is to lose it; to reveal it even to a disciple is to abdicate in favor of that disciple.”

—*History of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons*

(and now, we're back to swearing our secrecy—never to share the core of the “whole magical science”)



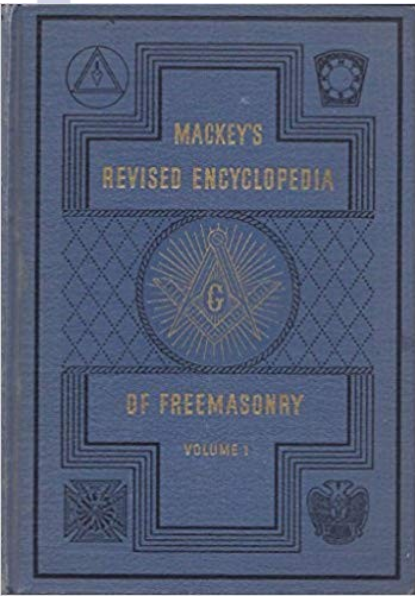
Freemasonry

- ◆ **Let's get back to our six questions...**
 - ◆ **What belief does the group hold regarding life after death? What is its concept of Heaven and Hell?**
 - ◆ **“If you have ever taken the time to contemplate on the meaning within the Craft, the culmination of the Masonic journey, what the way of life we call Masonry is, well its end is IMMORTALITY. And when we get to the other side what are we going to see and hear and feel and taste and touch? Who knows. But we can dream, can't we? And may your dream lead you to ONENESS with the Grand Architect of the Universe.”**
—Fred Milliken, 33rd Degree Mason, Past Master of Plymouth Lodge in Massachusetts, and Executive Director of the Phoenix Masonry Museum
 - ◆ **And that's about as detailed a description as you're ever going to get of the “Celestial Lodge” —because the whole point of the religion of Freemasonry is that we can't really know much of *anything* about God or His will**



Freemasonry

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 - ◆ **“The legend of the Third degree, and the legends of the Eleusinian, the Cabiric, the Dionsysian, the Adonic, and all the other mysteries, are identical in their object to teach the reality of a future life; and this lesson is taught in all by the use of the same symbolism, and substantially the same scenic representation.”**
—Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry



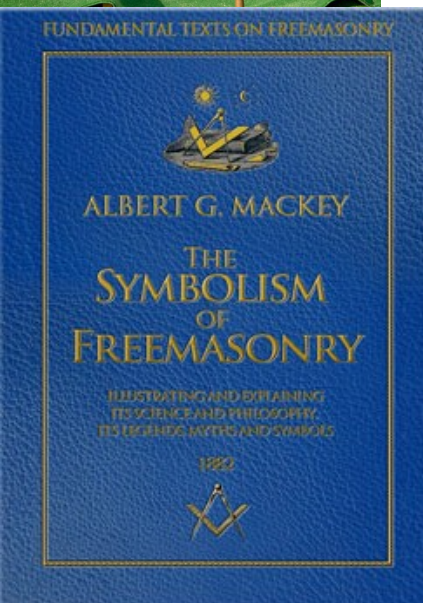
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- ◆ What belief does the group hold regarding life after death? What is its concept of Heaven and Hell?
- ◆ “Freemasonry has a religious service to commit the body of a deceased brother to the dust whence it came, and to speed the liberated spirit back to the Great Source of Light. Many Freemasons make this flight with no other guarantee of a safe landing than their belief in the religion of Freemasonry.”

—*Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*

- ◆ *It is a religion*—and yet, Masonic authorities argue that we fall into a “great error in calling the Master Mason's degree a *Christian* institution... If Masonry were simply a Christian institution, the Jew and the Moslem, the Brahmin and the Buddhist, could not conscientiously partake of its illumination; but its universality is its boast. In its language citizens of every nation may converse; at its altar men of all religions may kneel; to its creed disciples of every faith may subscribe.”

—*The Symbolism of Freemasonry*

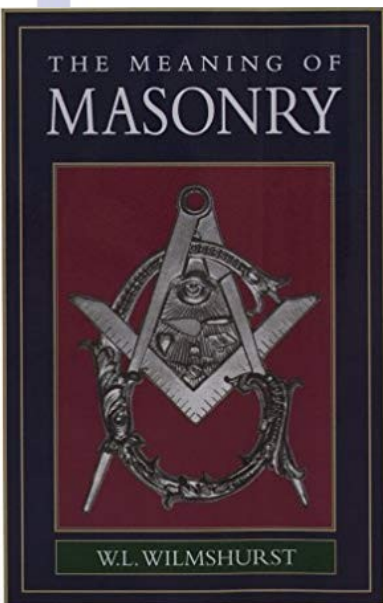


Freemasonry



Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ Past Provincial Grand Registrar W.L. Wilmhurst summed up Freemasonry well in an extended quote:
“To sum up the import of the teaching of the three degrees, it is clear, therefore, that from grade to grade the candidate is being led from an old to an entirely new quality of life. He begins his Masonic career as the natural man; he ends it by becoming through its discipline, a regenerated perfected man. To attain this transmutation, this metamorphosis of himself, he is taught first to purify and subdue his sensual nature; then to purify and develop his mental nature; and finally, by utter surrender of his old life and losing his soul to save it, he rises from the dead a Master, a just man made perfect, with larger consciousness and faculties, an efficient instrument for use by the Great Architect in His plan of rebuilding the Temple of fallen humanity, and capable of initiating and advancing other men to a participation in the same great work.”

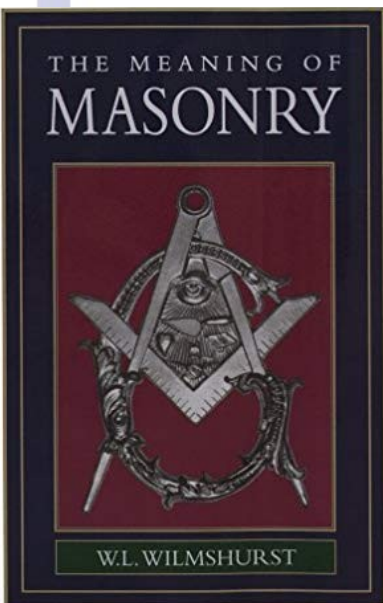


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“This—the evolution of man into superman—was always the purpose of the ancient Mysteries, and the real purpose of modern Masonry is, not the social and charitable purposes to which so much attention is paid, but the expediting of the spiritual evolution of those who aspire to perfect their own nature and transform it into a more god-like quality. And this is a definite science, a royal art, which it is possible for each of us to put into practice; whilst to join the Craft for any other purpose than to study and pursue this science is to misunderstand its meaning. Hence it is that no one should apply to enter Masonry unless from the deepest promptings of his own heart, as it hungers for light upon the problem of its own nature. We are all imperfect beings, conscious of something lacking to us that would make us what, in our best moments, we fain would be. What is that which is lacking to us? “What is that which is lost?” And the answer is “The genuine secrets of a Master Mason,” the true knowledge of ourselves, the conscious realization of our divine potentialities.”

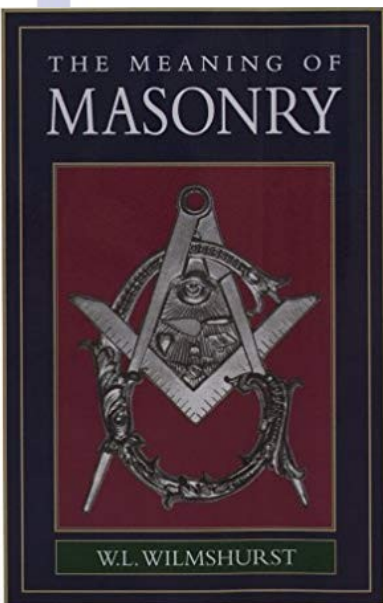


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“The very essence of the Masonic doctrine is that all men in this world are in search of something in their own nature which they have lost, but that with proper instruction and by their own patience and industry they may hope to find. Its philosophy implies that this temporal world is the antipodes of another and more real world from which we originally came and to which we may accelerate our return by such a course of self-knowledge and self-discipline as our teaching inculcates.”



- ◆ This *is* a religious cult, and it is *at odds* with Christianity
 - ◆ How can we best minister to Masons?

