

## WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FREEMASONRY PART II—ITS DEVELOPMENT

The Protestant revolt's rejection of God's authority developed in a variety of ways, producing different evils. One of the worst was—and remains—the cult of Freemasonry.

In our snapshot of history in the last lesson I mentioned the philosopher René Descartes. The disruption in *theological* matters brought about by the Protestant revolt manifested itself in Descartes's thought. It has been admirably summarised by the historian H J A Sire in his recent study, *Phoenix from the Ashes* (Angelico Press, Kettering, Ohio, 2015) :

“The insight that [Descartes] chose as his starting point is a revealing one. It was the premise that a being who has been brought into the world, fed, washed, clothed, taught to speak, walloped to make sure he attended to his books instead of tormenting cats, filled with the multifarious store of riches drawn from countless minds and many ages, can take up his pen and pretend that the only thing he can be sure of is that he thinks, from which he deduces that he exists. The result was that, in wishing to settle philosophy on a basis of certain truth, Descartes settled it on a basis of abstracted fiction...” (pp. 110-1)

Descartes' thinking marked the beginning of *The Enlightenment*, or *The Age of Reason*. The period might better have been termed, “The Darkening”, or “The Age of False Reason”, for the great foolishness it demonstrated. Mr Sire's comments are apposite. The promoters of the *Enlightenment* followed his lead in their frequent resort to fiction rather than fact. They elevated the internal sense, *imagination*, above its station (as instrument of the intellect) to something approaching equality with intellect.

To suit his novel 'Protestant' theology, Martin Luther chose to remove from the canon of the Bible—the books whose content as revealed by God was determined (defined) by the Church twelve centuries prior—certain writings that contradicted his opinions. He applied his principle of private interpretation. It was not God, through His Church, who would decide what He had revealed, but Martin Luther.

Towards the close of the Seventeenth and the opening of the Eighteenth centuries, a number of writers in England and in France, invoking a similar principle, elected to reject *all of* the books of the Bible. They referred to themselves as 'free-thinkers', free, they said, of any dependence on alleged revelation, relying, rather, on the remarkable insights in physics exposed by scientists such as Sir Isaac Newton. Something of the fascination that had descended on the age was captured in passing by G K Chesterton in an essay early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century :

“[Galileo and Newton] painted a picture of the universe compared with which the Apocalypse with its falling stars was a mere idyll. They declared that we are all careering through space, clinging to a cannon-ball, and the poets ignore the matter as if it were a remark about the weather. They say that an invisible force holds us in our armchairs while the earth hurtles like a boomerang; and men still go back to dusty records to prove the mercy of God.” (In Defence Of Planets', *The Defendant*, London, 1901)

Now, these writers had a problem. They did not want to be tagged 'atheists', for the ideology of atheism was abhorrent at the time, considered a menace to the state and deleterious to legal sanctions, as indeed it remains. (The English House of Commons had condemned it in a vote on a bill against blasphemy and profanity in 1667.) To use modern jargon, it was 'politically incorrect' at that time to say you were an atheist. So they elected to call themselves *Deists*. Theirs was a purely *rational* religion, a religion without mysteries or miracles, they said. But the God they invented was a stark contrast to the personal God Who had revealed Himself to men as having made them in love. He was but a clock-maker, a builder, an architect, a worker with stone and wood, who, like any *efficient* cause, leaves the construction to look to itself once his task is complete.

The cult of Freemasonry put *Deism* into practice, giving it form and ceremony. In practice, it substituted man for God, and man's authority for God's authority, an aberration deriving from the cultural and intellectual movement of the *Renaissance* whose ethos was expressed in the motto of the Greek philosopher Protagoras, *Man is the measure of all things*.

In its refusal to accept that God had revealed himself to man in Jesus Christ, as in its refusal to acknowledge Christ's immense moral and cultural influence on the world, Freemasonry demonstrated its preference for fiction over facts established and undoubted over 1,600 years. This preference will become more apparent when we investigate the belief system on which it relies.

Freemasonry's *material* cause is a meeting after the fashion of the guild meetings of the workmen who had built the churches and cathedrals of the High Middle Ages, meetings in which a certain solemnity had been observed. Established for the protection of their members and of the arts of their several trades, these guilds were founded on adherence to Christ and His Church. But this foundation had shifted with the Protestant revolt.

Freemasonry's *formal* cause is the undertaking of its members to engage in conduct, apparently lawful, involving mutual support—fellowship and goodwill—subject to certain conditions. The first of these is that its members engage in a secrecy as to its operations and ends which seems unnecessary. Masons claim this reflects the secrets in which guild workmen protected the skills and operations of their particular trade, but this ignores the fact that no Freemason engages in any such skills and operations. The need for secrecy appears, however, once it is realised that the absolute pledge of mutual support to a fellow member extends to a member's engagement in any activities, regardless of morality. Christ insisted that I should love my neighbour as myself, should do unto others as I would have them do me. Insofar as Freemasonry respects this obligation, it limits it so as to exclude any but those within its brotherhood. True, it insists its members must ever be upright in their behaviour, but this requirement frequently goes unsatisfied in the Masonic preference.

The second, and much more serious condition, is the demand that each member seal his commitment with a blasphemous oath after the fashion of the oaths enforced by the tyrant, Henry VIII, upon his subjects. The taking of these oaths in formal ceremony provides Freemasonry with its air of solemnity and attests to its perverted focus.

Freemasonry mocks true religion by emulating it and inverting its priorities. It has weekly meetings,

rituals, ceremonies, regalia, formalities, mysteries, even hymns. Its members are initiated in a ritual which parodies Catholic ritual, as the oaths to which it compels them parody baptismal promises. Instead of the formal renunciation of Satan and all his works, the Masonic neophyte swears blind obedience to the master of the lodge in whatever he may command.

All authority comes from God. Accordingly, the demand of submission to some man or group of men purporting to stand for some higher and esoteric principal, distinct from submission to a lawful superior in society—which derives from our nature as men—such as to the head of state, to a police officer acting within the ambit of his authority, or (within his jurisdiction) a judge, is a demand that men submit to an authority *not given by God*. In other words, it is a demand that men worship a false god. Accordingly, such a demand adds to Freemasonry's breach of the Second Commandment, breach of the First, *Thou shalt not have strange gods before me*.

Since Freemasonry is a mockery of true religion through conscious blasphemy, one may conclude with reason that it is an invention of the devil, and that the devil exercises an abiding influence in its operations. There is plenty of evidence to show that Freemasonry produces harm in any society in which it operates.

A major influence in promoting *Enlightenment* values was the Holy Roman Emperor, Joseph II (1765-1790). Let us listen to what Mr Sire has to say about Freemasonry under his influence.

“It had been founded earlier in the century with no particular tendency to liberalism or anti-clericalism; but its ethos of brotherhood and equality... made it soon a bastion of Enlightened thought... In Europe, Freemasonry embraced a number of advanced groups, for example, the *Illuminati*... These were very enlightened indeed; their programme was the abolition of all religions, all monarchies, and the institutions of marriage and private property. They were founded as a secret society in Bavaria in 1776 and were discovered and suppressed by Charles Theodore's government nine years later... In Vienna, Mozart served as exquisite chapel master to the whole esoteric nonsense...” (*Phoenix from the Ashes*, op. cit., pp. 125-6)



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

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