

Notes and comments by Ed Halpaus on an anti-Masonic E-mail October 2006

“If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be without it?”

Brother Benjamin Franklin

One of the biggest problems I see with the anti-Masonic attacks is that they many times go on unchallenged. It is always easier to just smile, consider the source, and continue on with the important things in life. However, I do think it is important to read the charges the anti's level against our fraternity, to check them out for ourselves, and to let others know what we find out, so that they too benefit from our research.

Freemasonry has nothing to hide about its message and what it stands for; it can stand up to scrutiny. Just because some people from a particular sect of a religion make charges against the fraternity does not make the charges true or accurate.

Below is a segmented copy of an E-mail that was received by many Masons in Minnesota. I segmented it so that I might comment on each part. If you are interested in knowing the charges some Christian anti-Masons level against Freemasonry and some of the research I did on them then read on.

There are a number of good books that do an excellent job of giving good information on the charges many anti-Masons have charged Freemasonry with over the years; two that come to mind right now are: “Is it True What They Say about Freemasonry” by S. Brent Morris and Art De Hoyos, which is widely available and can, I believe, be purchased from the Scottish Rite since both Brother Morris and Brother De Hoyos are very active in the House of the Temple in D.C.; another is “Workman Unashamed” by Christopher Haffner, which has recently been updated and republished by Lewis Masonic. Both of these books are good books for the Masonic Student to read.

Well anyway, read the information below, and maybe this might be helpful to you in some way if you hear false charges from an anti-Mason.

The Anti begins with a friendly ‘Hello:’ *“Hello. Well I have a couple questions for you. Do you know the history of Freemason's? If so, please give me what you know about your history because I know about your history and want to see your thoughts on it.”*

The friendly hello doesn't last long with this Anti. He in the first paragraph tells us he wants the Freemason to tell what he knows, and then he, the Anti, will be in a position to evaluate what the Freemason sends to him. When one reads the first paragraph it is quite evident that the Anti does not really want to hear anything from us, he wants us to hear what he wants to tell us. The Anti continues:

“So...first off I want to talk to you about the hat you mason's wear called "The Fez". I hope you know the history of the hat. It holds quite a story. The fez is an example of the double meaning behind most of the Freemasonry's facade. Worn by every Shriner and even carried to the grave with pompous dignity, the history of the fez is both barbaric and anti-Christian. in the early eighth century, Muslims hordes overran the Moroccan city of Fez, shouting, "There is no go but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." There they butchered the Christian community. These men, women, and children were slain because of their faith in Christ, all in the name of Allah. Did you know about this history?

Well let us continue is the history. During the butchering of the people of Fez, the streets literally ran red with the blood of the martyred Christians. The Muslim murderers dipped their caps in the blood of their victims as a testimony to Allah. These bloodstained caps eventually were called fezzes and became a badge of honor for those who killed a Christian. The Shriners wear that same red fez today, with the Islamic sword and crescent encrusted with jewels on the front. The

greatest tragedy is that the fez is often worn by men who profess to be Christians themselves. Doesn't that just make you sick to your stomach? I hope you knew about this."

I have removed the extra large bold type used by the Anti, other than that I have not changed what he wrote in any manner.

The Anti's information about the Fez is flawed. It comes straight from the little anti-Masonic comic books published by Jack Chick.

From the Wikipedia Web Site: "In his comic-strip religious tract against Freemasonry, Jack Chick records a story that the original fez was red as it was dyed in the blood of murdered Christians. Mr. Chick uses this as evidence that the fez is satanic supporting his claim that Shriners are part of an anti-Christian conspiracy. There is no historical evidence to support this story, and many Shriners have responded by reminding detractors that many are, in fact, Christians, who are active in their particular churches and denominations." The anti-Masons have, at times, responded that you can't be a Christian and a Freemason too, but if you are - you are then being duped by the real leaders of Freemasonry. It is interesting to me that some people tell us what we cannot be, even though we say we are. Also the name 'Allah' is Arabic for God. Some Anti's don't seem to be tolerant enough to allow people in foreign lands to speak their own language.

The history of the Fez is quite easy to findⁱ, and it isn't what the cartoonist or the Anti say it is. First of all, the city of Fez was founded in 789 C.E., (the late 8th century,) and is located on the river Fez. Fez was founded to be, and still is the second Islamic town in Morocco, only Moulay Idriss is older.

During the reign of the Sultan Mahmud Khan II (1808-39), European dress gradually replaced the traditional robes worn by members of the Ottoman court, and it was in 1826 that Mahmud II introduced a new headgear to replace the Turban. The story on how this came to be is interesting: Earlier in a quest for European style and dress the three cornered hat was introduced, but Mahmud II's advisor pointed out that the three-cornered hat was supposed to reflect the Holy Trinity, at which point Mahmud wisely dismissed adopting it for headgear to replace the Turban. Very soon after this decision a shipment arrived from Tunis of some Fezzes.

"Jeremy Seal, author of 'A Fez of the Heart: Travels round Turkey in Search of a Hat,' remarks, '...if these fezzes were not perhaps as Western as he had hoped, they at least would provide him with a clean break from the burdensome turban.' It wouldn't do not to wear a hat, yet, when it came time to pray, the hat could not be knocked off when the worshiper bent his head to the ground. Hence, brimless hats were eminently practical from the standpoint of prayer, if useless in keeping the sun out of one's eyes. In a land beset with tradition, the transition from turban to fez did not go easy. In the mid-1830s, traveler Thomas Allom noted 'the inhabitants still refuse to regulate their costume by direction of the Sultan; they refuse to doff the cherished turban... for the recently introduced fez.'" "A Reverend Walsh intoned about the Fez "A miserable substitute for the splendid turban."

The Fez eventually caught on and became widely accepted by 1903. "In 1903, the Turkish writer Halil Halid remarked, "I was seized with the ambition of appearing up to date, and of dressing in the more modern manner; that is to say, European costume in all but the fez."

I should mention that the original Fez's were red in color when they were shipped from Tunis back in 1826. So History shows that the charge in the Anti's message is not true. The Anti continues with his message:

"How about your rituals? Do you know the history of them? Well lets take a journey into background of them.

“The journey into Freemasonry begins at what is known as “The Blue Lodge.” The Blue Lodge is the foundation of all Freemasonry. These are the many local lodge groups scattered across the country in almost every little town and city. When a man goes into it he is initiated into The Blue Lodge through three degrees: the first, or “Entered Apprentice Degree,” the second, or “Fellowcraft Degree,” and the third, or “Master Mason Degree.”

“After going through the three degrees of The Blue Lodge, the Mason has the choice to stay in The Blue Lodge or to seek the advanced degrees through either the Scottish Rite or the York Rite. Many Masons will go through both.

“Within the Scottish Rite there are the fourth through the thirty-second degrees, plus the thirty-third honorary degree. The York Rite has thirteen degrees. Once the Mason has attained the thirty-second degree, through either higher arm of the craft, he has the option of petitioning to join the Shriners.”

The Anti makes the mistake that many do. I think this error is common because of the numbering of the degrees in the Scottish Rite, (the 4th through the 32nd,) however, every Freemason should know and be ready to correct those less informed that there is no degree higher than the third or Master Mason degree; even though there are more modern affiliated bodies that like to number their numerous degrees. Some may like the supposed prestige that others assume by him being a 32° Mason, but he knows that he is a Mason – on the level - with every other Master Mason. To continue:

“Many people think that Masons and Shriners are one and the same, but actually the Shrine is a separate body of the craft. Shriners are Masons who have achieved the highest degrees of The Blue Lodge, and Scottish or York Rites Masonry, who enter into what is known as “The Ancient and Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.”

“Every step of Masonry has its ritual initiation, the mildest being at The Blue Lodge Level. Even this is bizarre, to say the least. In order to join the Lodge, each Mason must first be initiated through an initiation ceremony which is similar throughout the world.

“The typical ceremony begins with the initiate being first divested of his jacket and his tie and any money or metal articles he has. His left trouser leg is then rolled up over the knee, his shirt is opened to expose his left breast, and his right shoe is removed and replaced by a slipper. Then the person who is to be initiated will have a blindfold put on him and a noose put around his neck. This is called a “Cable Tow.” The blindfold initiate (they call this being “hoodwinked”) is brought, with the noose around his neck, to the outer door of the Lodge.

“The candidate thus attired is said to be in darkness, an allegory of Masonry that signifies that everyone outside of Masonry is in darkness and that only Masons have the true knowledge that will bring light to the world.”

Every Mason will spot the errors in the Anti’s reporting about the ritual of the three degrees herein described and the rest that follows. It is perfectly right and proper for a Mason, when asked, to tell his family and friends what the cable tow really is, and that it is not a noose or tied as a noose. It is loosely tied once about the neck with a slip-knot, (so as to easily remove it,) and it is symbolic. Our late Brother Allen Roberts says in his book “The Craft and its Symbols” that “The Cabletow, (at times spelled as one or two words,) acted as an outward visible pledge of submission and fidelity. It is the symbol of a vow to assist another, even at the risk of our lives. Its strength and length depend upon a man’s ability to fulfill his obligations. It is a test of his character and his capacity to love.” The Cable Tow also symbolizes the tie the new Mason has to this new chapter in his life - where he becomes a Freemason.

Being in darkness, (being hoodwinked,) as a man enters the Lodge room is also symbolic; it is symbolic of our dependence on our fellowman, which is something that is true and proven in our everyday life. It is also symbolic of entering into a “strange dark world [as] you are guided to begin the long journey to the truths that freemasonry teaches” as Brother Roberts puts it in his book.

Freemasonry does not say to anyone anywhere that it only has the true knowledge. On the contrary Freemasonry tells its initiates that they are to search God's Word for the truth, and when the new Mason is introduced into Freemasonry he discovers that the Holy Bible is proudly displayed in the Lodge as he is told about it and the truths it contains. To continue:

"The new Mason is brought to the outer door seeking the light of the Lodge, and there the Doorkeeper, or Tiler, will put a sword or a sharp point to his breast and lead him into the lodge room, where an altar sits in its center. The lodge members await the candidate in the darkness that surrounds the altar, which is lit from a single light above. Behind the altar stands a man called "The Worshipful Master." He is the master of the Lodge and presides over the initiation.

"When the initiate is brought before him, he bows before "The Worshipful Master" and says something like this: "I am lost in darkness, and I am seeking the light of Freemasonry." He is then told he is entering into a secret organization and that he must keep the secrets he is going to be taught."

"Lit from a single light above." This must be very confusing to our Brethren in Europe and other parts of the world, where there are no Order of the Eastern Star chapters. This is an American thing, and it is one of my pet peeves, if you will allow me to have one. I am a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, but I wish that spotlight from the order was not installed above the altar in a Masonic Lodge; Masons, I believe, install this light to be nice to the Eastern Star. However, it is not in any sense a part of the Masonic ritual. Unfortunately, some Masons treat it ritually, especially many times by the Mason nearest the light switch when the Lodge is opened. That spotlight is totally unnecessary in a Masonic Lodge. However, if we here in America continue to use it during Lodge it will eventually become a custom, and we all know how a custom seems to become an important part of Masonry over the years.

Every Mason will know, and be able to tell anyone who would like to know, that we do not bow to the Master of the Lodge. I will also tell you that in the Grand Lodges I am familiar with the title of the officer is Master of the Lodge, the title for the Grand Master is Grand Master, we will add the appellation 'worshipful' as a sign of respect to the Master of the Lodge and 'most worshipful' as a sign of respect for the Grand Master, but that's all and that's the reason. The Anti would have the uninitiated believe that we worship some men, which is ridiculous, and every Mason should jump on that with a good correct explanation every time he has the chance. And the quote the Anti uses is not even close to anything I have ever heard a Mason say. To continue:

"At this time he is required to take a blood initiation oath. Every Mason who joins the Lodge takes his thumb or his hand to his throat and repeats an oath that has been repeated by every Mason who has joined the Lodge. In the Entered Apprentice or first level of The Blue Lodge, this includes the following words: Binding myself under no less a penalty than having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by its roots, and buried in the rough sands of the sea... When the new Mason goes into the second degree, or the Fellowcraft Degree of Masonry, the oath includes the following words: Binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having myself left breast torn open, my heart plucked out and given as prey to the wild beasts of the fields and the fowls of the air... Then, in the third degree, or the Master Mason's Degree, every Mason must swear an oath that includes the following: Binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken from thence and burned in ashes... This is quite interesting isn't it? Keep reading and you'll find out more history and background that you most likely never knew."

I always find it interesting that someone so learned in many things does not know the difference between an obligation and an oath. My obligation in my degrees is what I promised to do, my oath was; so help me God etc. As far as what the Anti calls a 'Blood Oath' is concerned; nowhere in my obligation as a Freemason was I asked, or did I agree, to inflict any kind of penalty on anyone; certainly not bodily injury or death on anyone and not a Brother Mason either. On the

contrary, as alluded to in the explanation of the cable tow above indicates, I said, as all Masons do, I would do all in my power to save a Brother Mason's life.

I truly believe, what most reasonable men would agree, that the ancient symbolic penalties are just that symbolic: Symbolic of the pain and suffering a good man would feel if he were to break his word once he gives it. Freemasonry takes a man at his word; his yes does mean yes and his no does mean no, just as it says in the New Testament. However, we use a few more words in the obligation, which is another word for promises made, just as it does in the Old Testament, the obligation clarifies what we are saying yes or no to. But where the oaths are concerned we take him at his word. To continue:

"The blue Lodge Mason who also claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ has to ask himself some basic questions. First of all, "How can I put a blindfold on, come before a man called The Worshipful Master, and say I am lost in darkness and need the light of Freemasonry?"

Using the word 'claims' indicates that the Anti will not believe a Freemason is a Christian, no matter what he says. To continue:

"The Bible brings us a very different message about light and darkness, one that brings with it the hope of joy: We write this to make joy complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: 'God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:3-7)."

Arguing religion with a zealot is a losing battle. At least in my opinion it is, for these reasons. The anti-Mason has learned what every critic and troublemaker knows; it is easier to level charges and to disrupt, than it is to analyze, interpret and to build constructively, so that understanding follows. Also our enemies spend a very long time planning their strategy and selecting their moves, and then attack us and demand we respond immediately to their charges. They are prepared, but they deny us the same privilege. I personally need time to read and analyze what they say and then research their charges; I wish many times I was a walking encyclopedia, but I am not.

While I am not as familiar with the Bible as I should, and will be, or as a Clergyman is, I do like to read and study the Bible. In my Bible study I like to tap into the knowledge of Bible Scholars so I can interpret what I read correctly, to do this I use three study Bibles, which I have here at home in addition to the study Bibles on the Internet. I also use about three concordances in addition to the Internet to find references using selected words in the Bible. When I look in my Concordance I see the word 'light' along with its many meanings and uses in Scripture. The study notes for the following scriptures are interesting: Proverbs 6:23 "For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life." The Study Note on this passage says: "it makes things clear and manifest, what is right and what is wrong; it enlightens the eyes of the understanding, whereby persons come to see both their sin and their duty; and it directs them to avoid the one and do the other."

Also Psalm 119:105 says: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." The study notes for this is interesting; Psalm 119:105 = "Apart from which I could only grope around in darkness." "In this life we walk through a dark forest of evil. But the Bible can be our light to show us the way ahead so we don't stumble as we walk. It reveals the entangling roots of false values and philosophies. Study the Bible so you will be able to see your way clear enough to stay on the right path." The word Light is used many ways in the Holy Bible, not only one way as the Anti would like us to believe. To continue:

“How can a Christian Mason say he is lost in darkness and seek to join the Lodge because he needs the light of Freemasonry? The Bible says if you are a Christian and say you are in darkness, you are living a lie, and the truth is not in you. If Christ lives in your life, you have The Light.”

The Anti wants to use the word ‘light’ with only one meaning and he would like everyone to go along with him on this point. But the fact is there is more than one meaning and more than one way to use the word, and that is why it is almost universal that the Lamp of knowledge is used to represent learning. To continue:

“The second thing the Christian Mason must ask himself is this: "If I am going to join the Lodge, how can I come before a man called "The Worshipful Master" and bow before him in a religious ceremony and say I am lost in darkness?"

“Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24).

“Jesus said that we cannot serve two masters. We can't claim to be a follower of Christ and then bow before a man we accept as our Worshipful Master any more than we can bow before a Buddha. The money that Christ warned us about fits right into the Lodge. What is it if not the prestige, wealth, power, and position among men promised by Lodge membership?”

The Study notes in one of the Bibles I use, (Tyndale’s Life Application Study Bible,) says; “Jesus contrasted heavenly values with earthly values when he explained that our first loyalty should be to those things that do not fade, cannot be stolen or used up, and never wear out. We should not be fascinated with our possessions. Lest they possess us. This means we may have to do some cutting back if our possessions are becoming too important to us. Jesus is calling for a decision that allows us to live contentedly with whatever we have because we have chosen what is eternal and lasting.”

As mentioned earlier Masons do not bow down to anyone, and nowhere in Freemasonry is it implied that being a Mason makes any man better than his neighbor. To continue:

“The third thing we must ask is how a Christian can take a pagan blood oath. How can a man who says he is a follower of Jesus Christ swear to have his throat cut from ear to ear and his bowels ripped open and given to the beasts in the field as a penalty for breaking such an ungodly oath?

“Most Masons responds by saying that these oaths are just some kind of spooky college-fraternity-type stuff that means little or nothing. But in the fifth chapter of the book of James we are warned:

“Above all, my brothers, do not swear--not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned (James 5:12).

“God's Word says that the penalty for taking Masonic oaths is condemnation. God isn't amused by this. He absolutely forbids taking these pagan blood oaths of Masonry.”

From an electronic concordance and study Bible on the Internet called ‘Search God’s Word,’ I have learned that the Anti’s interpretation of this portion of scripture is different from some Biblical Scholars: “Above all ... This should be understood merely in the sense of "especially." It was a common sin of that day to punctuate ordinary conversation with all kinds of imprecations and oaths used as a device for establishing credibility. Apparently, many to whom James wrote were guilty of this, hence the emphasis upon it. Dummelow's paraphrase is: "Avoid especially the use of an oath to strengthen your assertions in ordinary conversation." The words "above all" have the additional utility of identifying the admonition here as having been given originally by the Lord Jesus Christ himself (Matthew 5:34,37). Agreement is felt with Roberts and many others who have insisted that "This passage has nothing to do with solemn and serious civil and

religious oaths." The underlining is mine. Reading the Study Notes in "Search God's Word" makes it clear to me that James 5:12 has nothing to do with the solemn ceremonies in Freemasonry either. To continue:

"But what is it that must be kept so secret? Why is it that Masons are required to take these pagan blood oaths of secrecy not to reveal the secret, of Masonry even before they are told what they are supposed to keep secret? Why must these men bow down while still in ignorance of the secrets to which they are being bound? Why would a man who would never buy a car or a home or enter into a business agreement without first studying all the terms kneel and swear obedience to the things he has no understanding of?"

Secrets, yes we want some things private. But that isn't any different from many board meetings in many business places, and family meetings in families. In fact, my church has its annual meeting every year, and when it does, only members of my church are allowed to attend and to be privy to content of the annual meeting. Privacy is not an exclusive quality of any one organization, and privacy does not make an organization a secret society. A Board for a museum and historical society I was once a member of had both Masons and non-Masons on it, and there was a time when the Executive Director asked us to keep some things private. Many churches and business places have their public face and functions just as the local Masonic Lodge has its public face and functions, but they all also have their private functions. Privacy, it seems to me, is a basic right that should not be condemned by any person or group. To Continue:

"How about we talk about the secret password..."

"In the seventeenth degree of the Scottish Rite, or the Knights of the East and West Degree, after the candidates have completed the initiation they are given the secret password, "Jubulum," and the sacred word, "Abaddon." Here is the clue to the true identity of the Masonic deity. It is revealed in the "sacred word" of this ritual "Abaddon." In Revelation 9:11 (The Holy Bible) we learn that --'they [the demons and workers from hell] had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.'

"I must ask...how could any true Christian dare to take upon himself that evil name as a sacred word? I mean...you do call yourself a Christian...don't you?"

"So my question for you is...what are your thoughts on Freemasonry now? If you come to the realization that you've been part of a lie this whole time than I want to give you a chance to come free from this lie."

The passage of scripture, (Revelation 9:11,) in the New Revised Standard Version, (without the editorializing of the Anti,) reads thus: "They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon." [Abaddon is pronounced Ab-ad-done]

First in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible the name Abaddon can be found in no less than 7 passages in scripture: Job 26:6, 28:22, 31:12, Psalm 88:11, Proverbs 15:11, 27:20, and Revelation 9:11

In many of these passages of scripture the word Sheol along with Abaddon is used, such as in Proverbs 15:11 "Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the Lord, how much more human hearts!" NASV in the New International Version it reads; "death and destruction lie open before the Lord – how much more the hearts of men!"

Sheol means the abode of the dead, and Abaddon means destruction or the condition of the dead, so the two words Sheol and Abaddon allude to the place and state of the dead.

If we were to look at the study notes in Tyndale's Life Application Study Bible we will read: "The locust-demons have a leader whose name in Hebrew and in Greek means destroyer. It may be a play on words by John to show that those who worshipped the great god Apollo worshipped only a demon." Brother Mackey says Abaddon is a Hebrew word signifying destruction. "By the Rabbis it is interpreted as the place of destruction, and is the second of the seven names given by them to the region of the dead. In the Apocalypse it is rendered by the Greek word Apollyon, and means the destroyer. In this sense it is used as a significant word in the high degrees." (It appears Brother Mackey was of the opinion that because the Scottish Rite numbered their degrees that the 17th degree was higher than the third, but I doubt he thought it was higher in the sense of more important.)

Anyway, based on the Scriptures and references mentioned, I really doubt that Masons who have taken or received the 17th degree have done what the Anti is suggesting.

"Roland Blackmore, a Masonic scholar, states, "It is a lamentable fact that the mass of our membership are ignorant of everything connected with Freemasonry." Steinmetz, another Masonic scholar, writes:

"Most of the truly great Masonic writers have deplored the lack of esoteric Masonic knowledge among the Craft in general. The average Mason is lamentably ignorant of the real meaning of the Masonic symbols, and knows as a little of its esoteric teachings.

"As Masons go through the steps of the Lodge, they experience a series of rituals with symbolism and allegories that represent a very specific religious worldview and philosophy. Many Masons are ignorant of what this is. They become puzzled when asked to define the goal of Freemasonry. Most will say something about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, or about making good men better."

Sadly this is truer than we in Freemasonry would like to admit. The lack of understanding about what Freemasonry is and isn't - is lacking among many in the Craft. However, there are many Masons through their Grand Lodges, Lodges, Research Lodges and Societies who are doing their level best to get good solid information about Freemasonry into the hands of Freemasons and anyone else who is interested in knowing about the craft for as low a cost as possible. Much of it is at a very reasonable cost to no cost at all. That way everyone who wants to learn about Freemasonry can learn about it from Freemasons and get good accurate advice instead of the bogus information spread by the anti-Masons of the world. To Continue:

"If you are a Mason and are ready to get your life on track with Jesus, pray this prayer right now:

"Father in heaven, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I confess that I have sinned. I confess that I have allowed myself to fall under the power and authority of Lucifer, the god of Masonry. I confess it as sin, and ask that You forgive me. I reject it and cast it from me and will immediately remove my name from its rolls. Jesus, I call You Lord and Savior and ask that You come into my heart and fill me with Your love and Holy Spirit. Let no unclean thing remain! I am Yours and Yours alone! I am set free, in Jesus' name. Amen!"

I find this part of the Anti's message very interesting. Because he condemns Freemasonry for the obligation repeated during the initiation, but he then tells the reader that he should pray the prayer he, the Anti, has written out for the reader to pray. His prayer is something he thinks we should do as a promise to God and Jesus to change our ways, that we have made a grievous error in our lives by becoming a Mason. Isn't a prayer dictated by someone else similar to an obligation dictated by someone else? And if a Mason were to pray the prayer he should be honor bound to live up to it, and if he didn't; he might feel the pain a good man might feel when he breaks his word. Not to mention that others expect him to live up to his promise given in the prayer.

Nehemiah 5:13 says: "I also shook out the front of my garment and said, 'Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.' And all the assembly said, 'Amen!' And they praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise."

From this passage of Scripture it is fairly plain that according to the Bible keeping promises is very important. There are many other passages where God punished Israel when the leaders, (Kings,) did not fulfill their promises to God.

"If you want to learn more about the history of Freemasonry and the lies behind it. Go to your nearest bookstore and buy "Fast Facts on False Teachings" by Ron Carlson and Ed Decker. All the facts and history give in this letter were taken from their book.

"Thanks for your time!

"~AH~"

Finally he mentions Ron Carlson and Ed Decker; two of those who make big money by being against the Masons. I firmly believe if there weren't money in it they wouldn't be against it. I would also suggest that the professional anti-Masons make more money from Freemasonry than any freemasons do. Most Freemasons volunteer their time and efforts, although some full time Grand Secretaries are paid because it is their livelihood, but they don't do it for the money. And our Grand Secretaries earn a living by helping to build up rather than tear down as the anti's do. This reminds me of the poem by Brother Edgar Guest called "What kind of Man are you?"

What kind of man are you?

By Brother Edgar Guest

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a "look out below!", and a lusty yell
They swung a ball and a side wall fell.

I asked the foreman: "Are these as skilled
As the men you would hire if you had to build?"

He gave me a laugh and said: "No indeed,
Just common labor is all we need.
We can wreck in a single day or two
What it took the builders a year to do."

So I said to myself as I went on my way
"Which of these roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with care
Measuring life by rule and square?
Or am I a wrecker who walks my town
Content with the labor of tearing down?"

Regarding the Fez, a Brother asked me awhile ago if I could tell him the symbolism of the color red or maroon that the Shrine uses for their Fez. After many conversations with Shrine officials and much reading there is no special significance and no symbolism to the color of the Shrine Fez. Fez's today can be purchased in many colors and the Shrine selected a maroon red for theirs. However the shade of Maroon Red will vary slightly from one Shrine jurisdiction to another. Other organizations that use a Fez selected other colors.

The Anti tries in his wording to convey some sort of silliness or embarrassment in our ritual. There is no frivolity in Masonic ceremonies: No more than there is any frivolity in the ceremonies of the Christian Church. The Anti and I are both members of the Christian Religion, which follows tradition that is very old; it seems odd to me that either one of us should condemn a group where the members believe in God and follow old traditions, even if we don't completely understand them. Many devout well know Christian Church Leaders have been and still are Masons, and they saw no problem with being a Christian and a Mason.

The writer of this E-mail only wants to use one biblical definition of light. If he were to expand his thinking to the foundation which holds up and supports the New Testament, he will see many meanings of the word in the Old Testament.

Also in the 1st degree we honor Jesus by: Using His words in explaining the meaning of the three distinct knocks; His birth in the explanation of the Blazing Star, and Christianity is the only religion named in the degree work; it is mentioned in the third section of the lecture of the First Degree where the symbol of the point within a circle is explained, and the two Saints John are mentioned. We might think that many of our enemies would like it if we would use some of the words of Jesus and mention only one religion in our degree work; Christianity. It seems to me they don't know as much about Masonry as they ought to.

Freemasons advocate tolerance, but there are some people involved in the fundamentalist sects of Christianity that are not tolerant of others, and because of that they have no time for people of other religions or of the Freemasons. These are the kind of people we are dealing with in the enemies of Freemasonry.

The Anti uses so many falsehoods and misunderstandings, and Freemasons need to know when someone says something that isn't true about our Fraternity.

“To be furious in religion is to be irreligiously religious.” William Penn

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

Ed Halpaus

ⁱ www.historyhouse.com