

THE LETTER “G”

By

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This past week I went to a bookstore in a nearby shopping center to pick up a copy of the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* I had ordered for a Bible class. The shop was a “Christian bookstore,” and I browsed a bit to see what books they might have on our gentle craft. I didn’t expect much positive, but I was dismayed at the viciously deceitful material that was being purveyed in the name of Truth.

I have no problem with someone who honestly disagrees with me. There is a wide diversity of opinion among Christians on many topics, including divorce, baptism, gambling, and the nature of the sacraments, to name just a few. The debates on these subjects have been heated and may never be settled on this earth. If someone says his understanding of Christian duty prevents him from encouraging his neighbor to worship God, unless it is as a Christian, then I can understand why he would not want to be a Mason. When someone states, however, that he cannot be a Mason because we are phallic worshipers and the letter *G* stands for “generative force,” I become angry. Such an allegation is a lie and a deliberate distortion of Masonic symbols.

The symbolism of the letter *G* is as simple as it is straightforward — it is an elementary play on words and has the dual meanings of *geometry* and *God*. Prichard’s 1730 *Masonry Dissected*, one of the exposures of early Masonic ritual, captures the symbolism perfectly in two questions from the Fellow Craft Degree. **Q.** What doth *G* denote? **A.** One that’s greater than you. **Q.** Who is greater than I, that am a Free and Accepted Mason, the Master of a Lodge? **A.** The Grand Architect and Contriver of the Universe, or He that was taken up to the top of the Pinnacle of the Holy Temple. Prichard

certainly had no intent of helping the fraternity with his book, but even he didn’t stoop to the disgusting perversions spread by our modern detractors.

The record shows that otherwise respected Masonic scholars of the middle to late 1800s, such as Albert Mackey, Albert Pike, and their followers, had ideas about the origins of Freemasonry that are discredited today. No one, in fact, knows where our gentle craft began, but Pike and Mackey were strong proponents of the theory Freemasonry was descended from the Ancient Mysteries and various forms of pagan worship. While their ideas were quite fashionable a century ago, no serious Masonic student takes seriously these parts of their writings.

Henry W. Coil, 33°, is often quoted by anti-Masons as an expert — but only when they think his ideas support their preconceived notions about Freemasonry. They conveniently overlook *Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia* when it contradicts their twisted fancies, as it does in the case of the Ancient Mysteries:

From about 1779, [the Ancient Mysteries] came more and more into prominence. It was a fertile field and there was scarcely the possibility of disputing anything at all that was said within its limits.... [T]he theme spread like wildfire....

Mackey and Pike embraced it avidly, and the latter’s *Morals and Dogma* is largely given over to Ancient Paganism. Mackey, in *Masonic Ritualist* (1867) and *Symbolism of Freemasonry* (1869) carried it not only to an absurd degree, but to an extent which can hardly be less than revolting to a Christian....

In order properly to interpret Mackey and Pike on Paganism, one must understand that both of them entered the Fraternity in the 1840s, when the fabulous type of Masonic literature was at its height and both walked unsuspectingly into the circle of magism, paganism, and occultism before they were properly seasoned in the history or doctrine of the Craft. Those things that were indisputably Masonic, such as the *Gothic Constitutions*, the minutes of lodges in the pre-Grand Lodge era, and the Constitutions of the premier Grand Lodge, they ignored, but followed irresponsible writers who were teaching doctrines neither then nor since approved or adopted by any Grand Lodge of symbolic Freemasonry.(pp. 460–61)

Albert Mackey, quoted so religiously by our foes, repudiated the idea of Masonic descent from the Ancient Mysteries in his *History of Freemasonry* (1906). His last writings can hardly be called support for his earlier theories, and hence are ignored by those looking for lurid accusations.

It has been a favorite theory with several German, French, and British scholars to trace the origin of Freemasonry to the Mysteries of Pagans, while others, repudiating the idea that the modern association should have spring from them, still find analogies so remarkable between the two systems as to lead them to suppose that the Mysteries were an offshoot from the pure Freemasonry of the Patriarchs.

In my opinion there is not the slightest foundation in historical evidence to support either theory, although I admit the existence of many analogies between the two systems, which can, however, be easily explained without admitting any connection in the way of origin and descent between them.(p. 185)

Is modern Freemasonry a lineal and uninterrupted successor of the ancient Mysteries, the succession being transmitted through the Mithraic initiation which existed in the 5th and 6th centuries; or is the fact of the analogies between the two systems to be

attributed to the coincidence of a natural process of human thought, common to all minds and showing its development in symbolic forms?

For myself, I can only arrive at what I think is a logical conclusion; that if both the Mysteries and Freemasonry have taught the same lessons by the same method of instruction, this has arisen not from a succession of organizations, each one a link of a long chain of historical sequences leading directly to another, until Hiram is simply substituted for Osiris, but rather from those usual and natural coincidences of human thought which are to be found in every age and among all peoples.(p. 197)

The real test of Masonic acceptance of the Ancient Mystery theories of Mackey and Pike is to study the writings of serious Masonic historians from the authentic school, not those from the romantic period. The publications of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, the American Lodge of Research, the Texas Lodge of Research, the Ohio Chapter of Research, and others show that these absurd theories have been politely ignored. They have died the quiet death they deserved. The pathetic irony is that only one group today believes the tall tales of Mackey and Pike — not the Grand Lodges, not the Scottish Rite, but the anti-Masons. Our enemies are so anxious to believe the worst about us, they rush to embrace hypotheses long since abandoned, if ever widely accepted. Whether they are incompetent as historians or simply facile liars is for others to decide.