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**Darkness Visible:
A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry
by Walter Hannah**

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should adopt the secularist basis of public school education. The public school system has labored for years under the handicap of not being able to work out from the Christian cultural basis of Filipino life. The present adult education program has taken upon itself the same limitations; it cannot recognize the historical and sociological fact that the culture of our adults is Catholic and that the influence of Spain still continues to impart spirit and direction to the lives of our masses. Catholic educators could build their program on this religious basis and work out into the fields of literacy, and economic and social development.

Since the present program of education of adults seems to rely heavily on the Community School, some discussion of the criticism of this movement appears in order. It is not unusual for observers to remark that the community school may be taking the pupils away from the classrooms and using them as unpaid sanitation brigades and thus weakening the effectiveness of the small amount of formal education they can receive under the present curtailment of class time. If this is true, then the program is only adding to the problem of illiteracy in the future.

In conclusion, the teacher and student will find this book a handy reference to the literature on adult education and to the materials available. Therein lies its value. It is not, however, a critical study of adult education in the Philippines.

NICHOLAS A. KUNKEL

DARKNESS VISIBLE. A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry. By Walter Hannah. Augustine Press, London. 1953. Pp. 231. 4 appendices. 12s. 6d.

The author of this book is an Anglican clergyman whose thesis is that no Christian (using that term in the sense of a person who accepts Christ as divine and the sole source of supernatural good) can belong to Masonry. Much less can clergymen and Bishops. This latter contention is no mere *tour de force*. Masonry is full of men who call themselves Christian clergymen, and numbers even a fair sprinkling of Bishops.

At the very outset the author is at pains to anticipate a difficulty. The difficulty may best be put in the words of a critic of *Darkness Visible*, Canon J. Cornes, Prov. Grand Chaplain, writing in the *Birmingham Gazette*:

This book is all tommy-rot—rubbish of a worthless kind. The author could not possibly know the ritual of Freemasonry. No one but a Mason could possess those secrets.

Mr. Hannah is therefore careful to show that the secrets of Masonry are no secret to anyone who has the industry to make the round of bookshops, to study the materials thus acquired and to consult ex-Masons. The Darkness of Masonry is easy to penetrate, it is Visible. (The expression is from the Masonic Ritual and is found also in Milton and Pope.) As convincing evidence that he knows what he is talking about, he gives 107 pages of signs, grips, rituals, initiations, etc., taken directly from Masonic publications. Besides this he has four appendices running to 35 more pages and a copious bibliography of Masonic and non-Masonic authors.

Mr. Hannah makes it clear that his point is doctrinal. He does not deny that Masons give generously to hospitals and orphanages, or that they maintain fellowship and helpfulness among themselves. He has some reservations regarding their high moral claims, but in general insists that they are beside the point.

The main point of Mr. Hannah's book is that Masonry is a religion, a religion that has no place for Christ. He quotes Sir John Cockburn (Past Grand Master of England, and Past Deputy Grand Master of Australia) from his book: *Freemasonry: What, Whence, Why, Whither?* Cockburn says:

The question whether Masonry is a religion has been keenly debated. But the contest appears merely a war of words. Perhaps the best way of arriving at a conclusion would be first of all to enumerate the points which are common to most religions and then enquire in what respect Masonry differs from them. Religion deals with the relationship between man and his Maker and instils a reverence for the Creator as first cause. Religions abound in observances of worship by prayer and praise. They inculcate rules of conduct by holding up a God or Hero as a pattern for imitation It would be difficult to say in which of these characteristics Freemasonry is lacking. Surely it abounds in all. Its ceremonies are elaborate and are unsurpassed for beauty and depth of meaning. They are interspersed with prayer and thanksgiving. . . . If the title of religion be denied to Freemasonry it may well claim the higher ground of being a Federation of Religions. It is a form of worship in which all religions can unite without sacrificing a jot of their respective creeds.

This is the opinion of one man and is, of course, not conclusive, even though he be an acknowledged Masonic authority. But at least it shows that there is strong evidence that Masonry is a religion and this in itself should be sufficient to warn off any man who puts any value upon his Christian heritage. As for the final observation of Cockburn that Masonry is a form of worship "in which all religions can unite without sacrificing a jot of their respective creeds," one jot

that Christianity would have to sacrifice is the belief that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life, *exclusively*, and that in no other name is there salvation: "For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." And that name is not Hiram Abiff, or any other of the mythical Masonic heroes. It is Christ. "No man cometh to the Father but by me," is Christ's condemnation of Masonry.

This then is the intimate nature of Masonry as revealed in its rituals and other serious documents. However it must be granted that the average Mason never thinks of his order in this light. The average Mason has been drawn by a desire for fellowship and mutual trust and sees in the order an opportunity of exercising a beneficent influence on his fellowmen. These values are enhanced for him by the allure of mystery, by a very human love of dressing up, of ceremonial and of pretentious titles, and finally, as Mr. Hannah says, by the attraction of "an occasional evening away from the wife."

Regarding the sentiments of the ritual, the horrendous oaths and the mystical atmosphere, most members, far from seeing in them a religion, would agree with the two Masons, interrogated by Mr. Hannah, who characterized them as "cow-boys and Indians," "Punch and Judy." In other words a game. But that explanation, while it may diminish the subjective culpability of the individual Mason, answers the difficulty by creating a new one, as we shall see presently.

Mr. Hannah presents two dilemmas to the Masons. The first is about the oaths. The Apprentice or First Degree Mason in his initiation pronounces a most blood-curdling oath that he will preserve the secrets of Masonry, which he as yet knows nothing about, but which he has been assured by the Worshipful Master contain nothing "incompatible with his civil, moral or religious duties." Passing over the fact that a conscientious man does not lightly take oaths about things he knows nothing of, even upon the assurance of a worshipful third party, there is another difficulty. The subject of the initiation swears upon the Bible to preserve the secrets of Masonry in every detail:

The several points I solemnly swear to observe without evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation of any kind, under no less penalty on the violation of any of them, than that of having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the root and buried in the sand of the seas at low water mark, or a cable's length from the shore, where the tide regularly ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, or the more effective punishment of being branded as a wilfully perjured individual void of all moral worth, and totally unfit to be received into this worshipful Lodge, or any other warranted Lodge or society of

men, who prize honor and virtue above external advantages of rank and fortune. So help me God, and keep me steadfast in this my great and solemn obligation of an Entered Apprentice Freemason.

The author asks about this oath, is it taken seriously, or is it not? If it is, what of the morality of delivering oneself a ready victim to crimes which are in violation of every law human and divine ("nothing incompatible with civil, moral or religious duties"!)? If it is not taken seriously (Cowboys and Indians) what of the morality of swearing so solemnly upon a Bible to a charade? "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God *in vain*." And of course Mr. Hannah's special difficulty is how Christian clergymen and Bishops can do this.

Another dilemma that Mr. Hannah presents to the Masons regards their claim to possess a unique way to God and a secret formula for a higher morality. If they really believe that they have this, is it not highly immoral to conceal such a boon from the rest of humanity? These things are the preoccupation of all men, to find God and the truth, and to model their lives in conformity with these findings. How is an order good and praiseworthy, which keeps these things from mankind?

The reason alleged by the Masons is that these secrets would do harm if they were delivered into the hands of the uninitiate. Really, is not this cabalistic pretense a little thin in our day? These secrets cannot be such highly explosive stuff, if they can be safely handled by hundreds of Masons that are our well-known fellow citizens.

The fact of the matter is that this is just more oratory, cowboys and Indians. But if it is, what of the morality of making such claims and persuading men in and out of the Lodge that they are well-grounded?

The condemnation of Freemasonry by the Catholic Church is a source of great irritation to Masons, and is characterized by them as narrowness and intolerance. Nevertheless, Hannah says:

Masons who properly understand the Roman outlook take a more realistic line. A. E. Waite, anti-Catholic but on the whole extremely fair, says in his *New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (1925): 'It is impossible that the Latin Church should tolerate an institution like Masonry. That Church has not only an elaborate systematic literature of *theologia et philosophia moralis* but doctrinal ruling thereon and . . . by its own hypothesis it is the sole and Divinely ordained custodian of faith and morals. Masonry sets out to be regarded as another and independent system of ethics, another guide to life. As such

it is implicitly and explicitly under judgment from the beginning, a competitor and a rival.' (Vol. II, pp. 264-5)

This Masonic author has hit the nail on the head. Masonry is a rival guide to life. There is only one guide to life, Christ. And there is only one institution which is authorized to proclaim that guidance, namely the Catholic Church. There are in the operation of Masonry other things which are objectionable. But the fundamental issue is that Masonry is a religion, a false religion, to which Catholics can no more belong than they could to Mithraism in the Apostolic era.

Mr. Hannah's contention that Masonry is incompatible with Christianity is borne out by the fact that every religion which has investigated the question has decided against Masonry. It is generally believed that the Catholic Church is the only religious body that has condemned Masonry. This is a mistake. The Greek Orthodox Church, four groups of Presbyterians, the English Methodists, the Salvation Army, the American Lutherans, and the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa have all condemned Freemasonry. Mr. Hannah ends his book with a challenge to his own church to take a stand with regard to it.

LEO A. CULLUM

REVIEWERS

HARRY S. HUDSON is Deputy Chief Public Affairs Officer in the USIS at the American Embassy in Manila. His close association with Ambassador Spruance (the central figure in the book under discussion) lends to his review special interest and authority.

REV. FRANCESCO PARISI, S.J. is professor of rational and experimental psychology at Chabanel Hall and has not only much theoretical knowledge, but also practical experience in fields related to psychiatry.

REV. CHARLES E. WOLF, S.J. writes of an old comrade when he discusses Father Rively's travel narrative. The two men were together as students in the Philippines before the war and rounded off their Far East association with concentration under the Japanese at Los Baños. Father Wolf is now assistant Master of Novices at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Novaliches.

REV. MIGUEL A. BERNAD, S.J., REV. NICHOLAS A. KUNKEL, S.J. and REV. JOSEPH J. KAVANAGH, S.J. are well known to readers of this review.