

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER

VOL. XXX (No. 12)

DECEMBER, 1916

NO. 727

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CHICAGO

Per copy, 10 cents (sixpence). Yearly, \$1.00 (in the U.P.U., 5s. 6d.).

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Dawn of a New Religious Era

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By George Chatterton-Hill, Ph. D.

University of Geneva, Switzerland

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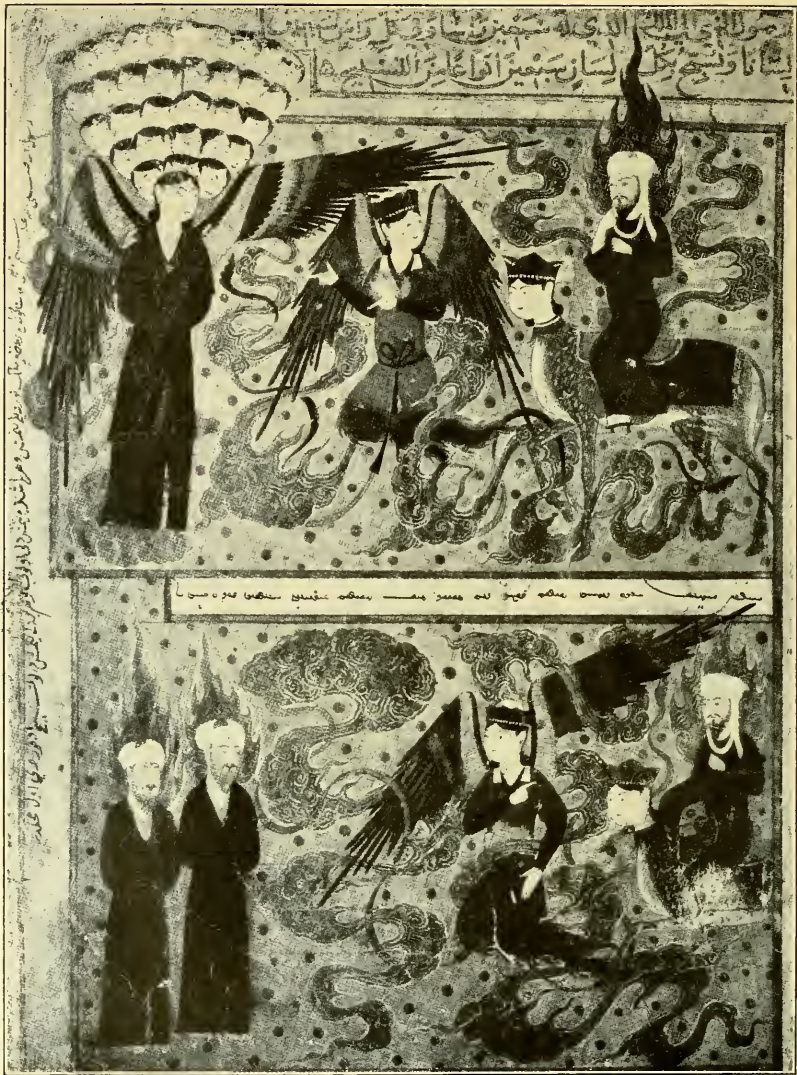
This book cannot be too strongly recommended to all those who desire to obtain an insight into the hidden recesses of European political history, where the forces are at work which have shaped the evolution of Europe since about the middle of the sixteenth century.

The author has attempted to show that the present war is a typically English war of destruction waged against a continental rival who was at once envied and feared. The history of the war cannot yet be written in detail. For the purpose of the present book such a detailed history is not necessary. But what is necessary is, that Americans should understand that this is not an accidental war, but a war carried on with the object of annihilating an economic rival.

The Open Court Publishing Company

Chicago, Illinois





THE ASCENSION OF MOHAMMED.

From a 15th century manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris.

Frontispiece to The Open Court.

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VOICES FROM GERMAN FREEMASONRY.

AFTER ERNST SCHULTZE.

FREEMASONRY is a society which does not plead for any patriotism but stands for the ideal of humanity. It originated through the medieval guild of master masons retaining their aspirations and using the terms of the masonic trade as symbols for the building up of a temple of mankind.

Masons believe in the architect of the world as the main symbol of an ethical world-conception, and look upon one another as brothers. This ideal of brotherhood is adhered to even in the face of the difficulties of struggle, of competition and of war. Thus it happens that in times of war Freemasonry has always asserted its ideals with special emphasis, and it is natural that in times of national struggle and hatred Masonic ideals have again and again, with more or less success, been appealed to. There have been voices among the Freemasons tending to disrupt the friendly connection of the lodges between different countries, and on such occasions the differences between Masonic institutions in different countries often become apparent.

The Freemasons of England and France are almost at opposite extremes in their views, while their German brothers occupy a middle position; but at present the difficulty is not between the French and the English, but between the Germans and the two extremes of Masonic thought, viz., the almost atheistic lodges of Latin Italy and France, and the well-nigh dogmatic Christian conception prevalent in Great Britain. At present the situation is not clear, for the connection between the lodges in different countries has been interrupted, and the present war has allowed very little, if anything, in the way of a friendly approach between the French and German branches of the order. Our readers, however, will be

curious to learn how the humanitarian ideal of Masonry fares at such a time as the present, and we here quote at some length from an article by Ernst Schultze which is representative of Masonic feeling in Germany to-day. The article appeared in the *Mitteilungen aus dem Verein deutscher Freimaurer* and the extracts here presented have been translated into English for *The Open Court* by Mr. Percy F. Morley.

"History teaches us that the bloodier every recourse to arms and the longer its duration, the greater the danger it brings with it of a reversion to savagery, since war destroys at a single stroke associations that are the product of a long and laborious development. Yet we should not have believed it possible to-day that a struggle between civilized peoples would have brought forth, at the very outset, such a flood of meanness, falsehood and infamy. Whoever tries to keep a level head, not accepting every bit of sensational news as true as they whirl through the air by hundreds, but rather refusing to believe them in spite of a seeming probability until they have been sufficiently established,—he will find himself compelled to discount much of what even in Germany is accepted as true regarding our enemies. With what absolute assurance, even in the early days of August, 1914, and countless times since then, it was related how in every one of our hospitals there were wounded men whose eyes had been prodded out! But if one questions an eye-specialist the answer is that all this is fiction, and that hitherto only a single case has been authenticated.

"In like manner rumor, enhanced a thousandfold by the imagination of the masses, has exaggerated other things both great and small. Abroad—and unfortunately not only in the enemies' countries—such sensational reports concerning ourselves seem to be far more widespread. Nor do they necessarily originate from deliberate falsehoods. Whoever knows the liveliness of the childish imagination will not at all be surprised that in the excitement of war elements which are a sheer product of the unbridled imagination should creep into the beliefs of one people concerning another, when even in times of peace these beliefs contain so much that is erroneous.

"In many a German newspaper to-day our opponents are being accused at every move of conduct and intentions of which we do not always possess sufficient evidence. Because some French officers in Alsacian cities behaved like Huns we are far from being justified in believing that all their comrades sank to the same level. Because the *Times* lies in many matters, we must by no means conclude that

every English newspaper is filled with falsehoods—indeed not even that the *Times* always avoids the truth. Because the Cossacks have caused boundless desolation in Eastern Prussia we are not justified in believing straightway that the whole Russian nation is so far removed from all semblance of civilization that our wounded and prisoners in that country are exposed to the basest treatment. We are quick at making generalizations which have no logical foundation and are morally unreliable.”

The same writer dwells elsewhere on the very real dangers to civilization in the present state of strife and hatred among peoples:

“We are facing a most solemn time. If we look carefully we can discern on the horizon of humanity the possibility of a lapse into barbarism. This danger can scarcely be overestimated. If we look into history we shall find numberless examples of the rise and decline of peoples, even of mighty and gifted peoples. But if we look more deeply we shall see the causes which have led to the disintegration of great nations. Some of these are well known: lack of population, whether caused by protracted wars or by a steady falling off in the birth-rate; senseless luxury and absurd high living; but most often moral weakness. There are other factors less frequently cited, but among them I shall single out one diabolical force which has occasioned untold evil, namely, hatred among nations

“Civilized nations must learn to bury race hatred, instead of allowing it to thrive and become powerful, or even to become the prevalent habit of mind. This feeling of hatred springs from three essentially different sources; first, the conceit of being a kind of chosen people; second, the feeling of aversion for all that is foreign; third, the remembrance of wrong suffered, and the thirst for revenge nourished thereby. The last two causes are the most dangerous, especially the third; and this is always tremendously augmented by a war.

“In this way even the Greeks themselves brought about their own ruin. Although far overshadowing all other Mediterranean peoples in gifts and cultural attainments, they allowed the hatred which ranged one state against another to become more and more ferocious and destructive from generation to generation. And its cause lay not in their deep-rooted tribalism; for often did Ionians rage more furiously against Ionians than against Dorians, while the Lacedemonian Dorians, in turn, were exterminating the Messenian Dorians—just as in the present war all community of race has been lost. It was terrible how the quarrels of the Greek cities

became more and more frequent, the intervals of peace shorter, and the possibility of an amicable settlement ever more remote. But the most terrible feature of it all was that the period of the greatest culture should also have been that of the most widespread war and the most merciless tactics. And it is actually a matter of history that once when the people gathered in public assembly to take counsel as to the means of rendering several thousand prisoners of war harmless, it was decreed that their thumbs should be cut off, for then, although they would still be able to row, they could no longer wield the spear. . . .

“Vain were the efforts of those who pleaded for moderation. When in the Peloponnesian war the Syracusans had killed 18,000 Athenians and had made prisoners of 7000, including two generals, one of the most distinguished popular leaders proposed that the generals be put to an ignominious death, and that the rest of the prisoners be treated with extreme cruelty. When Hermocrates opposed this demand and sought to show that mercy on the part of conquerors is even greater than conquest, the people raised an uproar and refused to listen to his admonition. Then Nicholas, an old man who had lost two sons in the war, mounted the platform, supported by two slaves. He gained a hearing immediately, for the people thought he was about to speak against the prisoners. But instead he pointed out the great advantages of conciliatory treatment and the absolute necessity of avoiding a perpetuation of hostility and hatred between peoples. His speech, preserved for us by Diodorus, is of special interest and significance to-day. But the Syracusans, like nearly all the Greeks, were too lacking in political discipline for the counsel of moderation to prevail. They preferred to keep alive by every available means the reckless irreconcilability of their more and more brutal and excessive hate.

“The ancient Greeks had purposely erected their memorials of victory out of imperishable material, and Greece later teemed with indestructible monuments and votive offerings perpetuating the triumphs of Greeks over Greeks. Greater magnanimity and foresight, however, were evinced by the Macedonian kings when they purposely dropped this custom. They knew that the continual remembrance of defeats would render difficult for them the ultimate and real conquest of their neighbors. In all Greek cities, on the other hand,—with the single exception of Corinth—the monuments of this senseless popular hatred outlasted even the state itself. But even before the fall of the states themselves the cultural efflorescence had perished of all those states which hoped to become

greater and mightier through the working of hatred against their neighbors, while they were but digging their own graves.

“From such considerations we find ourselves facing the twofold problem: (1) to strive to act in such a way that the people of other countries will not receive absolutely wrong impressions of Germany, its ideals and conduct, its soldiers and citizens; and (2) among ourselves, to see that the mental attitude of the German people, in spite of the provocation to which they are subjected by the military tactics of our opponents, remain worthy of the nation of thinkers and writers to which they belong. . . .

“What we really know to-day concerning the causes of this world-war is that it was kindled by some half dozen vain diplomats and generals while the greater part of each people desired peace. That to-day there seems to be nothing but bitter hostility and seething popular hatred is no refutation of this. These feelings have been artificially created since the outbreak of the war by false news concerning its causes, and by the rousing up of base passions, while into all this fire was poured the boiling oil of the cry for patriotism.

“Is the danger of an excess of hatred between peoples any less to-day than in Greek antiquity? We have no justification for thinking so. The boundless hatred which has become manifest in this war exceeds all that we thought possible. Daily we see the war fever fanned not only by the dumdum bullets which lacerate the bodies of our soldiers, but by the poisoned arrows of falsehood and calumny shot off by the thousand. So we must be on our guard—and not alone against the fruits of such slander in foreign countries, but we must also guard against the infection among ourselves.”

Another Freemason writes from the field to an official publication of German Freemasonry as follows:

“What a hatred among men! Yes, but in what does this hatred really consist? I have heard and seen a great deal about hatred in this war, but I have seen no hatred between man and man, nothing worthy of the name. England is hated. Indeed! But it is not Carlyle or Ruskin, Milton or Shakespeare, that is hated. It is the hypocrisy of English politics. Russia is hated, but we do not hate Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy or Turgenieff. We hate the brutal ambition of an outward expansion which has no corresponding inner necessity. Toward France we do not feel hatred but sympathy because of the bitter woe she is compelled to suffer for the sake of a delusion. The individual may feel otherwise. The soldier in the shock of battle, in the instinct of self-assertion, may hate the enemy

that would kill him; but the people as a whole, the great magnificent German people in arms, as in their unshakable fidelity they have proved themselves true, know but one hatred, the hatred of what is bad, of what hampers life, the hatred of lying and treason.

"Let our hate be the hate of love. While we fight for our German homes against half the world, while we conquer and kill and die, we are preserving our interests and at the same time the truest interests of our enemies. For it is—however strange it may sound—in the highest and truest interest of our enemy to be conquered and subdued by the German people. Whoever cannot believe this has certainly allowed his humanitarian ideal to come to grief.

"It is well for us that we can believe in this with our hearts. After this war a new humanity will be constructed and it will be a blessing to this future society if English and Russian imperialism have been destroyed. The German ideal, however, the ideal of a world leadership on a moral basis, brings into power what in all times has united the best in all nations."

Similar belief in the divine mission of the Fatherland and praise of self-sacrifice in its behalf are found in the following passage:

"Scarcely ever before has the consciousness been so mightily present among our people that the meaning and mission of their lives consists in complete sacrifice for the good of the Fatherland; that in these troublous times they must defend it to the utmost with their lives and resources; that on it they must help to rear, through bitterest struggle, a glorious German life for coming generations. Brother Masons, a public spirit conscious of its royal creative power has prevailed in this time of moral upheaval and self-mastery of our people, over that dwarfed commonplace against which in days gone by the healthy idealism of our Freemasonry has had to battle at every step in practical life."

German Freemasons are keenly alive to the host of problems and duties which have been created by the war. They believe, as Mr. Schultze declares, that "the world will be in still greater need of Freemasonry, in its international capacity, after the war than ever before," and that "the most fruitful means for the German people to gain the good-will of foreign nations is to be found in the very ideals upon which Masonry is founded."

"The world war confronts Freemasonry with greater tasks than it has ever before attempted. Far around in a bewildering panorama extends the vista, now even greater than before, of the duties and opportunities of our order. And first among these is

that which has ever been dear to all Freemasons, viz., good-will and mutual service:¹ . . .

"True to the fundamental principles of our society, and as members of our circle, we indeed scorn the idea of entering the limelight. So it is impossible to know with certainty what is being accomplished by Freemasons. . . .

"Unfortunately we have hitherto made the unaccountable mistake of thinking that our consciousness of our own worth and the conviction of our own blamelessness were sufficient to impose the same view on the whole world. In practical social psychology we have still well-nigh everything to learn. If in court we do not think of relying on our own guiltlessness instead of offering proofs for it, we must admit that in international matters the same principle holds. Indeed it is even more true when we are dealing with nations, for in this case the judges are often prejudiced if they do not belong to the people in question, or are unrelated to or unconnected with them. Thus we have underestimated the psychological influence which our occupation of Belgium has had on all other peoples. That our own conscience suffered under this merciless necessity was indeed clear from the words of our Imperial Chancellor at the memorable session of the Reichstag on the fourth of August. Nevertheless we must not forget at the same time that our enemies scornfully sneer at the honorableness of this explanation, and also that in neutral countries sentiment has for the most part been against us. If fair judgment were a requisite in international relations there would be less talk among neutrals about Louvain and more about Eastern Prussia. But since an ethical demand cannot be enforced, we must in every future reckoning take all the details of the given psychological situation into consideration, even when they rest on ignorance or ill-will.

"If we wish to win our due place in the esteem of nations each German individually must do his part in the cultivation of the good-will of foreign peoples, while for the performance of this function for our people as a whole we have *institutions* to create, *departments* in the state machinery, which, in the history of nations, are evolved for this purpose. That our diplomacy has not accomplished this, indeed that it has not even taken the trouble to make us understood by others, the war was not the first occasion to bring home to us with terrible distinctness. But we are not going to dwell here

¹ For the general problems which the war has created for Germans, and especially for German Freemasons, see the writings of Diedrich Bischoff, *Deutsche Gesinnung* (Eugen Diederichs, Jena, 1914), and *Freimaurers Kriegsgedanken* (Bruno Zechel, Leipsic, 1914).

on the need of reform in our department of foreign affairs; we wish to speak of the role of German Freemasonry in its endeavor to gain the good-will of foreign nations.

“Are there reasons which render it desirable for us Freemasons to become active in these fields? Three such reasons present themselves. In the first place by its nature and plan our society is an international community which, though it has indeed suffered many a wound by the war, should nevertheless exert every effort to heal its wounded members. We cannot here go into the question of a lasting union in spiritual intercourse among the lodges of the present warring countries after the conclusion of peace. In the second place Freemasonry, from the fact that it has neither political nor economic interests of any kind, can exert a peculiarly strong spiritual influence abroad for good in every time of national trial. For this reason its utterances and pleading in many cases carry much more weight than is the case with bodies more or less dependent on the guidance of the German empire or of certain interested groups. Last, but not least, Freemasonry can and must see to it that in cultivating the good-will of other nations, we do not lose sight of the all-important thing, viz., the magic power of moral worth.”

The following extracts give expression to the broad ideal of human brotherhood which is one of the cardinal doctrines of Masonry.

“In Freemasonry the problem of internationalism gains a new significance. Are we a society whose goal lies in the brotherhood of all humanity—or are we not? The question formerly so often propounded to meet this is now no longer heard, viz., Can one reconcile with a Freemason’s duties toward his fatherland the fact that he is striving toward an ideal of humanity which involves to a mild extent the slighting of his duties toward his fatherland? While this old question has been disposed of, a new one raises its head demanding an answer: Would it not be wiser for the Freemasons of each country to limit themselves to their national boundaries and to drop all relations with their brothers in other lands, or at most to carry them only so far as the community of scientific endeavor or vocation might perchance lead?

“If we acquiesced in this answer to the question we should sacrifice one of the most treasured principles of our order. We should immediately have to strike from our rites some of the most beautiful words and symbols. No longer could we utter as our desire and our goal:

'That the human race become
 One united brotherhood,
 Sharing truth and light and right.'

[Dass das menschliche Geschlecht
 Eine Bruderkette werde,
 Teilend Wahrheit, Licht und Recht.]

"We could then speak only of our own people, no longer of mankind. We should have to drop the cherished vessel in which our brothers of the eighteenth century have handed down to us through long generations the deepest and noblest possession of our order, crashing and scattering its contents or distorting them to a formless mass. . . .

"Are we justified, because Freemasonry was unable to prevent the war, in robbing it on this account of its ideal of the brotherhood of man? That would be the worst sort of fallacy. Neither in Germany nor in England does Freemasonry possess political power. In Russia it ceased to exist over a century ago. And if it seeks political power in Latin countries its ambitions are confined to home politics and have scarcely anything to do with foreign relations. Freemasonry in these countries directs its aim rather at the social question which, according to the striking presentation of Brother Bischoff, "is not conceived essentially as a problem in good-will but rather as one in justice." Brother Bischoff is also right when he says² that French and Belgian Freemasonry developed a thoroughly earnest and well-meant activity for the creation of harmonious international relations. Now we must by all means take into consideration that with the peculiar temperament of the Latin peoples, the inclination to a continuance of these efforts will be very slight in the two above-named countries, in the event of a war ending unfavorably for them. Perhaps years even may elapse before an echo is heard of those friendly relations between German and French Masonry for which Brother Bernardin of Nancy and our own Brother Kraft of Dresden so successfully paved the way in 1911. But even this would as little relieve us of the duty of later undertaking our task anew, as the many miscarriages of foreign Masonry during the war justify us in desisting from it at present.

"The very differences among the branches of Masonry of different countries makes it all the more clearly evident that the one

² Diedrich Bischoff: *Freimaurers Kriegsgedanken*. p. 12. The whole section, pp. 10ff, is important for the forming of a proper estimate of Freemasonry in foreign countries.

affects the other. Most indispensable is such a fructification in the case of English Freemasonry, as we know not alone from the public utterance of Amptill. But if English lodge life has lapsed too much into mere ritual and sociability, that of the Latin countries, and not less that of Germany, need the influence of foreign brothers in order to advance. . . .

“If we Freemasons understand aright the tasks we shall have after the war, it will be to point mankind to higher guiding stars, striving, in spite of all obstacles, toward an inner union, and combating all barbarity and malevolence. Zschokke, a century ago (1817) expressed the duties of our order in the following magnificent terms: ‘Conceive for yourself an image of mankind in its coming perfection; all nations, without distinction of color, speech, mental make-up, religion or political relations, fused into one brotherhood; all freed from the prejudices of locality, position and vocation, without national or religious hatred; all united in brotherly equality and love, around the Father of all; all esteeming service and virtue above outward rank or the accident of birth or fortune; all emulating one another in humility, love and truth in the creation of their common happiness; all ministering to one another with unequal gifts; all, though endowed with unequal powers, wishing one another well; tolerant in the presence of differing views and judgments; all mutually honoring one another; nowhere despotism, nowhere servitude.’

“These aims have lost nothing in significance through the war. On the contrary, they have become dearer to us after all the ugly things we have had to experience and which, in this period of highly developed civilization, have pained us the more. Whoever takes the tasks of Freemasonry seriously will not allow himself to become disheartened though the work before us has now become more difficult. Without doubt the bulwarks of humanity are being ravaged by the flood, but we shall work all the more diligently for the restoration of what has been lost. As soon as peace makes an end to the clash of arms and allows us once more to look toward the future, we shall undertake with swelling breast new and greater work to prepare for all future generations a sure foundation for human society.”