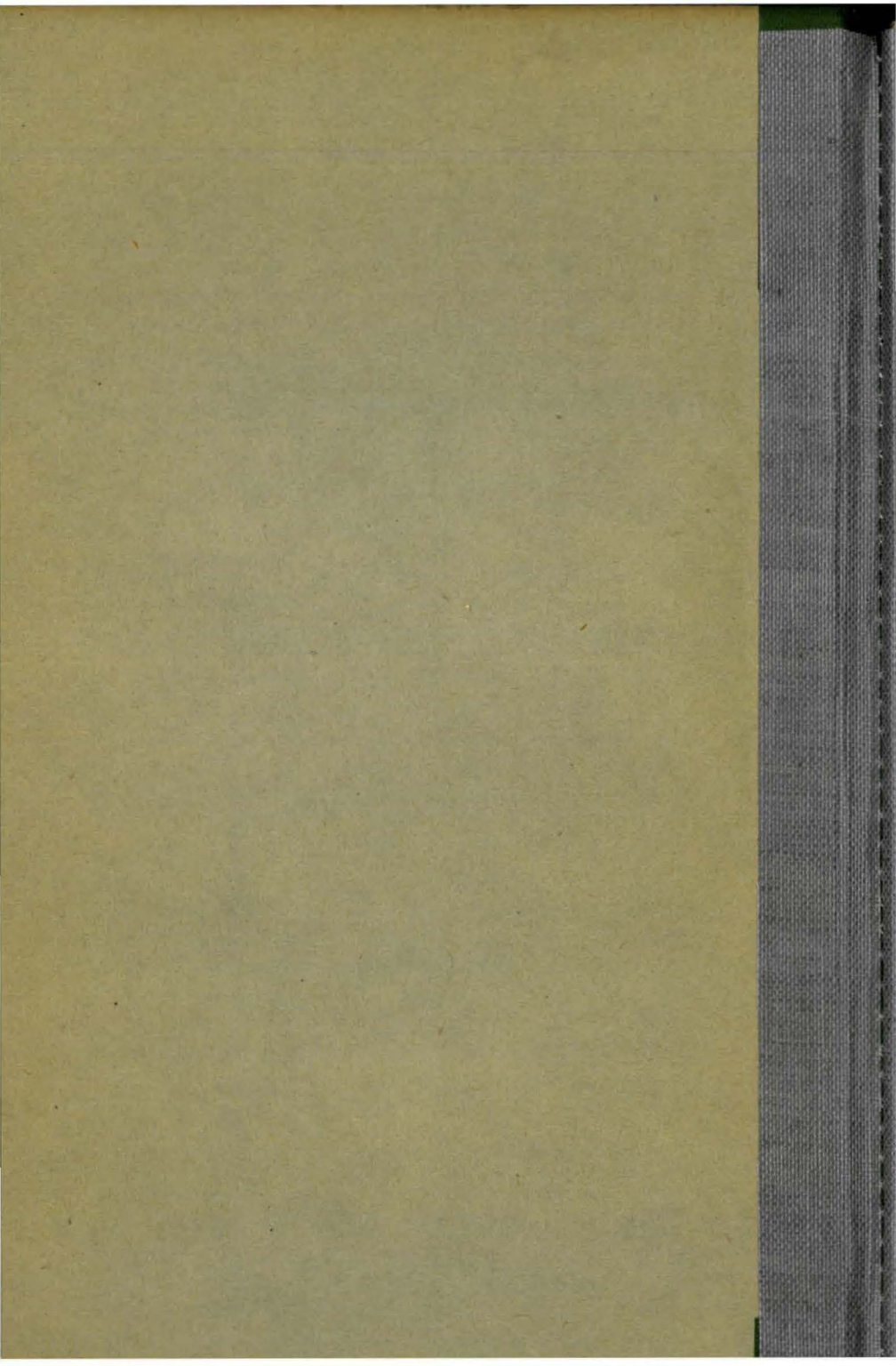




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A

LECTURE

ON

SECRET SOCIETIES

BY

JONATHAN WEAVER.

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR AT THE U. B. PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT,
DAYTON, OHIO.
1862.

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THE LECTURE.

It is not without due consideration that I have consented to undertake a task which is likely to insure me the disapprobation of a host of persons. Nor is it because I am the personal enemy of any man, or any number of men, that I rise to discuss the merits of secret societies, and of Freemasonry and Oddfellowship in particular. I trust that I am actuated by a higher motive than feelings of personal ill-will or unreasoning prejudice. I claim the common right guaranteed to every man by the Almighty,—a right to speak, to think, to reason; to choose, to refuse. Yet the attitude in which I appear before the public, at this time, has not been assumed without some struggle of mind; but I have allowed *a conviction of duty* to prevail, as I trust I ever shall. The God before whom we must soon appear, and in whose presence the secrets of all hearts shall be divulged, will determine as to the rectitude of my purpose.

I believe that persons professing godliness commit a great error when they form an alliance with secret societies. I impugn no man's motives, nor is it men that I shall contend against, but principles. It is important in this, as well as all other matters of life, that we should remember that we are playing a part in the drama of human contest, that shall be investiga-

ted, when and where the drapery of human seclusion shall be entirely removed, and the character of each person tested, not by its apparent, but its real worth. Our efforts to conceal from human observation, either our character in itself, or our acts, are but as phantoms, cooped within the narrow limits of time. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be bad."

The question has often been asked, "Why does the Church of the United Brethren in Christ oppose secret societies?" This question I propose in part to answer. It is not possible, however, that I could in a single lecture even approximate to all the reasons for her present position. I shall give but a few of many. But before entering directly upon the affirmative of this question, it may be proper to state, *what are not the reasons* for the position taken by the church, in relation to secret societies.

It is not popularity. Who does not know that all those churches that do not make this a test of membership, especially in large towns and cities, are far more popular? It is not numerical strength she seeks, nor is it ease or opulence. If she sought for these things, she would throw open her doors and receive into her connection members from all these societies. The reason must be found elsewhere.

That I may not be misunderstood, I will also state distinctly, that it is not men of the world to whom I shall have reference. If those making no profession of the Christian religion have a mind to form themselves into such combinations it is far less objectionable. I believe this, however, that the world could very well afford to dispense with all such combina-

tions. It is to those who profess to be followers of the meek and adorable Redeemer, to whom I shall address myself more particularly.

Allow me to state some general principles. The Christian religion is pure and spotless, and will not mix with any thing unlike itself. The spirit of compromise is not in it. It is from above, pure as its author, and open as the sky. Sin is its only enemy. It is in harmony with every thing that is good, whether in heaven or on the earth. Man, depraved and corrupt, has sought to make her kneel at the shrine of folly, and wed her to almost every vice and abomination. But she shrinks from their touch. From her sacred chambers, however, wicked and designing men have stolen her outer garments, and thrown them about their persons; and thus arrayed, have pressed into society, claiming to be inwardly in substance what they are outwardly in appearance. In this way she has been shamefully misrepresented. Judas like, they have said, *Hail Mistress! and kissed her*, while murder was in their hearts.

Every principle of duty and interest, alike demands, that whatever lays claim to public confidence should be thoroughly investigated, that its good may be more clearly seen, and its evil more certainly detected. Before any man, professing the pure and holy religion of the Bible, consents to form any alliance whatever, he should be sure that the motive prompting to that act is pure, and that the alliance itself is such as Christ would approve. He should, from a clear conviction of conscience, be certain that he is divinely bid, and directed, in his course. To go where Christ will not, or has not authorized, is to go away

from him. It is supreme foolishness, yea, downright wickedness, for any man to form an alliance, on any other grounds than that of promoting his own spiritual interests, and the interests of the cause of Christ generally. We must, as the professed friends of Christ, make every act of our lives, whether public or private, harmonize with the law of the gospel: otherwise it is sin.

I am aware, that in this country, and at this day, there are many efforts put forth to unite the church and the world. There is a strange commingling of good and evil, of the sublime and ridiculous. There is scarcely a step between the visible church and the world. If we were to speak of the fashions and maxims of the world, we would strike into the very bosom of the church; even now, she is but a step in the rear. If we were to speak of the amusements of the world, the church is in that very whirlpool. In a word, there is scarcely an evil, except it may be murder, but that is tolerated somewhere or other within the pale of the visible church. It is a saying peculiar to this day and country, that we must keep pace with the times. The church is but too anxious to join hands with the world, and share with it in the spoils of vanity, and self-aggrandizement.

God speaks to his church in unmistakable language—"Awake, awake! put on thy strength, O, Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O, Jerusalem. Shake thyself from the dust: arise, and sit down, O, Jerusalem." Again he speaks to his ministers: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a

pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, *nor sworn* deceitfully.”

Freemasonry, and Oddfellowship, are either right or wrong. There is no middle ground. If they be right, then they must be made to harmonize with the gospel of Christ. Mark this closely. We can not determine as to the right or wrong of any thing, by our own simple notions—we must come to the gospel of Jesus—and whatever does not find a divine sanction there, is necessarily wrong. Jesus says, “He that is not with me, is against me.” Any thing and every thing, that is incompatible with the doctrine and spirit of Jesus, is sinful. The Bible must be the standard of proof and appeal, and whatever I may say, that is contrary to the teachings of that book, I hope you will reject. I will now enter upon a course of argument, setting forth, in as clear a light as possible, some of our objections to secret organizations.

I. *We object to them, because they render themselves justly liable to the suspicion of the good and virtuous.* This objection we urge more particularly, because their operations are concealed under the vail of secrecy. We ask you to consider this matter impartially. See with what vigilance they exclude all but their own members. Who are those that seek most to cover their actions under an impenetrable vail? Are they the good and virtuous? Are they those who most seek the real good of others? Who are those that paint their window glass, and obscure the light by screens? Are they not the retailers of ardent spirits, and such as delight to do evil? We suspicion them, and we have reason to do so; and especially

those who not only must have the light excluded, but the doors guarded by ever-watchful sentinels.

Christianity disclaims the principle of secrecy, as having any place in the religion of Jesus. In proportion as she exerts her influence upon the world the command is obeyed. "Arise! shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." He whose name she bears is "the Sun of righteousness—the light that lighteth every man." "Her children are the children of light." The path in which she leads them on to glory is "as the shining light, which shineth more and more, even unto the perfect day." The panoply in which she has arrayed them, is "the armor of light." And the sinless inheritance to which she will at last bring them, is the inheritance of light. The spirit of darkness that reigns in the lodge-room, can not be associated with the ever-blessed light that emanates from the religion of the Bible. The principles of the Christian religion never can be cooped up in a lodge-room; they never will evade the light; it is their nature to court investigation. We have the Bible, that ever-blessed book. Every page is spread out for examination and criticism. It invites every man to search for himself. It courts investigation. No sentinels guard the door of entrance. Come rich and poor, high and low, young and old, maimed and dejected; come and see, come and read; all are welcome. Come without GRIP, SIGNS, or PASS-WORD. "For the Lord has made unto all people a feast of fat things." "Come, for all things are now ready." "And you that have no money come." "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

How unlike, the selfish proclamations of the Masonic order. Read, for example, on page 23, of the *Craftsman and Freemason's Guide*: "No person can become a Mason, consistently with the ancient and salutary usage of our order, unless he be free born, and at least twenty-one years of age; of a good moral character. He must be of sufficient natural endowment to be respectable, and must have, entire, all the faculties and senses of a man. He must have an estate, office, trade, occupation, or some visible means of acquiring a livelihood." Compare this with the glorious institution of the gospel, and tell me how much of the genuine spirit of our holy religion it possesses!

It may be said, however, that families, business firms, church councils, legislatures, and cabinets, have their secrets. Very well, but none of these are secret organizations; and there is an essential difference between the secrecy in the one case, and secrecy in the other.

Where is the family that enjoins secrecy upon its members? or upon those it admits as members? Suppose a servant or hired man, in becoming a member of a family, should be compelled, by a strong obligation, backed by a terrible penalty, to keep the doings of that family secret; would he not have reason to suspect that all was not right? No honest, upright, respectable family would do this.

Public bodies have their secrets, and secret meetings, but it is well known when they close their doors, that something is wrong—either that a member of the body has been guilty of gross misconduct, or that some end is to be accomplished, in order to reach which, it is necessary to take advantage of the ignor-

ance of others. What are we to infer, when we see a band of men, night after night, making arrangements about their lodge-rooms, and placing their sentinels so as to secure themselves against eavesdroppers? Are we not to infer that there is *always something wrong*? or that the intention is to take advantage of the ignorance of others, the majority of whom never can know what they are doing? for they never can become members on account of bodily infirmity, age, or sex. What would we think of a church that would hold its meetings in a similar way, and receive into their connection only such as are received into secret societies? Would we advise men to join that church? Would ministers, who are now members of secret societies, advise converts to join such a church? No; the whole Christian church would denounce such an ecclesiastical organization. Are not the principles of secrecy, as connected with all such combinations of men, unworthy the support of a Christian gentleman? Is it worthy of gentlemen, not to say Christians, to form such alliances?

Let a man act upon the principle of secret orders in private life, and you will very soon find in what light his conduct will be regarded, by honorable men. Let us turn to the Bible, for which Masons and Odd-fellows profess so much regard. Hear what God says: "Woe to them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, *and their works are in the dark*; and they say, who seeth us, and who knoweth us?" Hear the emphatic words of Jesus: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the

light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." Again: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may SEE *your good works*, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." Once more upon this, Jesus says: "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in your synagogues, *and in secret* have I said nothing." Let your minds dwell for a few moments upon these passages of scripture; and then ask yourselves this question: Is the principle of secrecy as practiced by Oddfellows and Freemasons, in perfect harmony with the teachings of the Bible? In the face of these plain, and unambiguous texts of scripture, and in the name of the Bible, I enter my protest, now and forever, against all combinations of men, whose whole existence, as an organization, depends upon secrecy. As a Christian, I disclaim the principle of secrecy as having any place in the religion of Jesus Christ.

The existence of those secret societies depends upon secrecy; take that away and the whole organization will be dissolved. They can not live even twenty-four hours without it. In proof of this we quote from the Craftsman and Freemason's Guide, page 216, section third, of "Ancient Constitution." The author says: "The *virtue indispensably* requisite in Masons, is *secrecy*. This is the guard of their confidence, and the security of their trust. So great stress is to be laid upon it, that it is enforced under the strongest *penalties* and *obligations*." Two facts are plainly set forth in this section of their Constitution. First, that secrecy is not only to be considered by the order as a

virtue, but the *principal* virtue—the virtue *indispensable*. All other virtues, if there be any, are inferior to this. The second fact stated in this section is, that secrecy is enforced under the strongest “*penalties and obligations.*” Some pretend to say that there are no penalties worth naming in secret societies; but here we have it stated, positively, that there are not only penalties, but the “*strongest penalties,*” which will, beyond a doubt be enforced upon all who venture to reveal the secrets of the order.

There is danger in the dark; and all who seek to cover their acts, throw themselves justly liable to the suspicion of the wise and good. The *Daily Times*, of February 1st, published in Cincinnati—the organ of the Know-nothings in the day of their power—had an article on the National Government and Secret Societies, in which it makes the following pertinent and wholesome remarks: “The conspirator against good government, like the thief, works in the dark. Treason dare not expose itself to the light of day, and reason, until it is ready to strike the fatal blow. Of late years we have had numerous secret political societies in this country. *Their influence has invariably been pernicious.*”

Any Christian, who will voluntarily throw himself under the influence of a secret society, and place himself under the strongest penalties and obligations to keep their doings secret, violates, in my judgment, the principles of the religion of the Bible. And it is impossible, as it seems to me, from the nature of the two things, to be a consistent member of Christ’s Church, and at the same time a consistent member of a secret society. He must violate the rules of one or

the other of the institutions. The one is free and open, and the other is covered under an impenetrable veil.

Whatever may be said of secrecy *per se*, does not change its nature in relation to voluntary associations, especially *where the whole existence of such associations is made to depend upon that virtue*. Also, when at least three-fourths of the family of mankind, are, by positive law, forever excluded from becoming members.

Because secrecy *per se*, is not sinful, it by no means proves that it may be used with impunity, and especially by voluntary associations, whose very existence is made to depend upon it; and so much importance attached to it, as to make it necessary to "*enforce it, under the strongest penalties and obligations.*"

In the midst of the troubles in which our country is now involved, we are beset on every side with members of a secret organization, whose aim is the overthrow of this government. This organization is known by the name of Knights of the Golden Circle. My object in introducing the name of this order is, to show what use may be made of secrecy, as a means to accomplish a certain end. For the benefit of such as may be unacquainted with this order I will here give their principal oaths, as given by Mr. Samuel Cheney, of Marion, Ohio, October 3, A. D. 1861. Sworn to before J. R. Garberson, Mayor of the incorporated village of Marion, Ohio.

FIRST OATH.

"I do trust and solemnly promise and swear that I will not reveal any word, either directly or indirectly,

of what I am about to receive except it be to some true and faithful brother of this order, and not unto him or them until after strict examination I shall have found him or them as justly entitled to the same as I myself am about to be, under the no less penalty of having my body severed into four parts; the first part cast out at the North gate, the second part at the South, the third part at the East, and the fourth part at the West gate. I furthermore promise that I will always hail and answer all signs and signals that are given to me by a brother of this order if in my power to do so; and I furthermore promise and swear that I will protect and defend all Constitutional Democrats, their lives, property, and personal liberty from mob violence, during this Southern insurrection, so long as they obey the laws of the C. S. A., let it come from whatever source it may; this obligation to be binding on me as long as this war shall last."

SECOND OATH.

"And I further promise and swear, in the presence of Almighty God and the members of the Golden Circle, that *I will not rest or sleep until Abraham Lincoln, now President, shall be removed out of the Presidential chair, and I will wade in blood up to my knees, as soon as Jefferson Davis sees proper to march with his army to take the city of Washington and the White House, to do the same.* So help me God, and keep me steadfast to do the same."

Secrecy is a principal virtue with thieves, robbers, and pirates; but we do not justify the use they make of it. It is also the principal virtue in the Inquisition of Rome; but we do not on that account say that they

make a proper use of it. Secret societies must not suppose, that because it is not sinful in the abstract, they make a proper use of it. The use that secret societies make of it, on account of the abuse that others have made of it, throws them justly liable to the suspicion of the good and virtuous.

II. *We object to secret societies, because there is in the pledge given, an abuse of the ordinance of an oath.* Some persons deny that the obligations invoke in them an oath. It will therefore be necessary at this place to determine as to what constitutes an oath. Mr. Webster defines an oath to be, "a solemn affirmation or declaration, made with an appeal to God, for the truth of what is affirmed." The essence of an oath consists in an appeal to God for the truth. The Craftsman says, as heretofore quoted, "that the secrets of Masonry are enforced under the strongest penalties and obligations." The strongest obligations under which either God or man can be placed is an oath. If, then, secrecy is enforced under such obligations, it must involve in it the very essence of an oath. The strongest penalty of which the Constitution speaks, must be death, for there is no stronger. Even this without any further reference, gives us a clue to the abduction and murder of Wm. Morgan. He, like all other Masons, had placed himself under the strongest obligations and penalties, to keep the secrets of the order. But, he revealed them, at least in part, and was torn from his wife and children, and brutally murdered!

John Quincy Adams, in a letter dated September 21, 1831, enumerates the crimes committed against William Morgan, as follows: "*Fraudulent abuse, infamous slander, conspiracy, arson, fraud, deception,*

treachery, kidnapping, MURDER!" All this, my friends, grows out of those strong penalties and obligations. No intelligent Mason of the present day pretends to deny the murder of Morgan. And now we are asked why a Christian may not form and sustain an alliance with an organization, whose obligations and penalties are of such a startling character. We answer, for the same reason that a Christian might not become a member of the Inquisition of Rome.

We turn to the Oddfellows ; and to their well authenticated Manual, page 306. In speaking of the degree called "the Grand Encampment Degree," the Manual says: "The receiver of this degree appeals to heaven and earth to witness the fidelity with which he will represent the interests of his subordinate, and at the same time faithfully preserve the secrets, advance the interests, and promote the welfare of his Grand Encampment. May the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, aid him, and keep him true and pure, as a fellow patriarch, with those who have preceded him into the true rest." Here we have it expressly asserted that there is an "appeal to heaven," and whoever appeals to heaven, appeals to the God of heaven. According to the definition of an oath as given by Webster, and also the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter xxii, it consists in nothing more nor less than a solemn appeal to God, to witness what is asserted. Is it not reasonable, my friends, that any, and every conscientious man, having in his mind and heart the solemnity of an oath—a solemn appeal to heaven—would, before connecting himself with a society in which this solemn appeal is recognized, make it a matter of serious consideration? Before any man

connects himself with a secret society, he should ask himself some such questions as these :

1. Are the transactions of those societies of such vast importance as to justify me in placing myself under such "strong penalties and obligations," or in making a solemn appeal to heaven? This inquiry surely ought to be made by every professing Christian. It is not a matter of small importance, for a Christian voluntarily to place himself under the solemnity of an oath, to keep hid, even from his own family, the transactions of those secret meetings.

2. A second inquiry is this: By what authority am I required to take this solemn oath—make an "appeal to heaven," or place myself under such "strong penalties and obligations?" It should be a matter of weight and moment. Have these societies a right to demand an oath? Who gave them such authority? It is neither from Church nor State. It is an assumed right, or authority, by secret societies, and hence is a reckless use of the solemnity of the ordinance of an oath.

I wish at this place to ask a serious question, and I desire you to weigh it well. Let conscience do its work for one moment. I ask you as gentlemen, and Christians; I ask you, who with myself, must soon stand in the presence of the great God of the universe, what right has any man, much less a Christian, to make a vow, take an oath, make an appeal to heaven, or place himself under strong penalties and obligations, to keep a secret not yet revealed to him? Is it not a fearful thing for a man to make a solemn vow never to reveal a matter, not yet communicated to him? Hear what God says, Leviticus, v. 4, 5:

“If a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these. And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing.” Here we have a positive prohibition against any man’s taking upon himself an obligation to do a thing before he knows what it is. Whether it be good or evil, it is no matter, it is a sin, according to God’s word. No man is allowed to run such a risk. Every Freemason and Oddfellow, is guilty in this very particular. They can not get away from God’s word.

Now, let me ask, in the name of reason, what right has any secret society to require of its members, or those who propose to become its members, to make this solemn appeal to heaven? Whence did they derive their authority? I conclude my argument upon the abuse of the oath, by an extract from a work entitled “The Oath a Divine Ordinance, and an Element of the Social Constitution.” By Rev. D. X. Junkin, pp. 190, 191.

“The right to demand an oath of an individual pre-supposes a right to place him *sub-pœna*—to call him to testify a promise under penalty—and this involves an exercise of supreme authority. No higher authority can be exercised upon earth, than that which summons the individual into the presence of his God, and calls him to perform any social duty under oath. Two sovereignties of the same kind ought not to exist; an *imperium in imperio* is always dangerous. And if voluntary societies may demand an oath in one case,

they may do it in another; and thus exercising the highest prerogatives of Government, their authority may come in conflict with "The powers that be." The church of Christ has a right to require her own members to swear in courts ecclesiastical—the commonwealth has a right to require the citizen to swear in courts civil; but if this right be extended to other societies at all, the authority of the church or of the state may be impaired, and the right of the individual infringed. I owe no allegiance to any society except those under whose authority my God has placed me; nor have I a right transfer the allegiance which I owe to them to any voluntary association of men; and if I yield to such an association the right of tendering to me an oath, I permit it to usurp a prerogative of the state. This usurpation becomes peculiarly dangerous, when the society employing the oath is secret, and employs it to bind its members under an allegiance to the society which may be incompatible with allegiance to the commonwealth. We deem it, therefore, an abuse of the oath to employ it in any such way."

III. *We object to secret organizations, because a connection with them violates the right of conscience.* Under this proposition we shall not dwell upon the abuse of the oath, but the abuse of conscience, by forcing upon it, obligations, the nature of which can not be known before hand. Will any man pretend to deny that a promise of secrecy is exacted before the mysteries of the order are revealed to the candidate? We challenge such a denial. What Christian gentleman, with a clear and tender conscience, will not shudder at the thought of placing himself under vows,

penalties and obligations, to keep the secrets of an order, before he knows what those secrets are?

What would be said of a church, organized upon that principle? Suppose a church organized in your midst, should require secrecy of all their members; suppose they should require such a pledge of every applicant for membership; suppose they should hold all their meetings in secret, carefully guarding the doors by sentinels; admitting none at any time, but their own members, unless they would by a solemn appeal to heaven pledge themselves to keep the doings of the church a profound secret? What would churches say? What do they now say of the Inquisition of Rome? Now, I assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that if it is wrong for a church to be organized upon that principle, it is also wrong for a church member to form an alliance with any voluntary society organized upon that principle. Suppose a family would move into our midst, which was known as a secret family, and would require secrecy of every one admitted into that family, would not public sentiment crush that family?

Any and every man before binding himself by promise, even where there is no oath, ought to have a clear view as to the nature of those obligations which he assumes. He surely ought to satisfy himself, that the obligations do not involve in them any violation of the law of God, or his country. But how can he know this, seeing that the obligation comes first. Secrecy is the principal virtue of the order—the chain that binds them together; break that and the whole machine will instantly fall to peices. “Is it right for a person to connect himself with an organization, as

one of its members, ignorant as he must necessarily be before this act of connection, of those very mysteries which give to it its distinctive character, and not only so, but come under a solemn vow to preserve those mysteries inviolate? We say it is not right. Such an act is unworthy a rational, intelligent being, and is in our apprehension inconsistent with any proper sense of the law of Jehovah, as imposing upon him paramount obligations. ”

I respect the opinions of the wise and good, but I must reserve for myself alone the government of my own conscience. I will not yield such a right even to the church of God. In entering into a lodge I may be told to give myself passively into the hands of my guide, to lead me whithersoever he will, just as the church of Rome may lead its deluded votaries ; but all this would not clear my conscience, in placing me under vows and obligations to keep inviolate secrets yet to be revealed to me. As a Christian, I dare not do it. Let me have the facts first, and then, if they are not incompatible with the law of God and my country, I may embrace them. But the facts I can not know, in entering a secret order, until I have made my solemn appeal to heaven not to reveal them ; and even then I only know in part ; for those who have taken higher degrees, know what I can not know ; and if I would advance, I must at each step make another appeal to heaven, I must increase the number of “ obligations and penalties ; ” and so as I am approximating the ineffable degree, I must heap one abuse after another upon my conscience. God forbid that I should do this.

It is often said, however, that the individual may

dissolve his connection with the order, whenever he discovers any thing wrong or inconsistent with the divine law. Very true; and so may any man leave the church of Rome, after he has connected himself with it. A Mormon, a Mohammedan, or a Jesuit, may use the same argument. But is it right to form such connections? We say it is not. It is by no means likely that a person who has formed this connection, will take the liberty of absenting himself; he may do so, but in nine cases out of ten, there still remains that inking to press upward; or, rather, let me say, *downward*. There are always influences thrown around the initiated, that render it doubtful whether he will ever escape from their power. The attractions to which the very idea of secrecy and mystery gives rise, and which were in the first place strong enough to induce him to take the first step, will likely induce him to take a second, a third, and so on, until he has reached the last step on the mystic ladder.

The reasons against a probability of an individual severing his connection with a secret association may be thus summed up. First, the act of leaving is equivalent to saying that he did wrong in forming that connection. Second, the obligations, penalties, and vows under which he placed himself, will be likely to trouble his conscience. Thirdly, the simple act of leaving, by no means frees him from the obligations to keep inviolate the secrets of the order. He is responsible until he goes down to the grave. Weigh this matter, my friends, carefully, look it in the face. When you form a connection with a secret society, it is a lifetime business, so far as the secrets of the order are concerned. You may dissolve your

connection, but that by no means frees you from the obligations, nor secures you against the penalties. You may even be expelled from the order, but still, upon the peril of your life, you must never reveal the secrets of the society. It will haunt your steps to the latest period of your life. Right or wrong, you must keep it sacred. Here let me ask in all candor, is it not submitting conscience to a fearful risk, to force upon it obligations involving responsibilities that never can be thrown off, without a violation of a pledge made, under a solemn appeal to God? It is not likely, therefore, that in view of the nature of the alliance, an individual would dissolve his connection, unless it might be under the influence of the most favorable or pressing circumstances? In the fourth place, he would have to tear away from associates to whom he had bound himself by covenant. He would expose himself to the reproaches of the order; and being a secret and powerful order, ramified into all the departments of society, its opposition is by no means a trifling affair. In the fourth place he would lose any benefit which might accrue to him from the expenses to which he had subjected himself. I have heard this argument more than once. From these four facts the probabilities of a separation from the order are by no means favorable.

It becomes us as rational, intelligent beings, to use all diligence in guarding the conscience—the vicegerent which Almighty God has placed in the soul. When its authority is impaired, or its exercises suspended, we throw ourselves from under the moral government of heaven, and sink into the character of a mere creature, controlled exclusively by circum-

stances. "If we take a step in the dark, under the impelling force of self-interest, or curiosity, our whole moral frame may receive a shock from which it will never recover." If the acts of men were bounded by the narrow limits of time; if they had no possible influence upon their future destiny; if it were all of life to live, and all of death to die; if association and obligation had no influence over moral character; if God had not given man a revelation of his will; if there was no God, neither angels nor spirits; then any thing, and every thing, might be indulged in with perfect impunity. But there is a God; we have his Bible; it is a plain book; its principles are open for investigation. How unlike the hidden mysteries of the Inquisition of Rome. How vast the contrast between its teachings, and the inclosed and well-guarded lodge-room.

IV. *We object to secret societies, because their religion, in the main, is a Christless religion.* Do not discredit this proposition, however startling it may seem. I think I can clearly demonstrate it, not from mere outside talk, but from their own standard books. I will first call up the Masonic Order; and that I may not misrepresent it, will quote from the *Craftsman*, page 263: "But though in ancient times, Masons were charged in every country to be of the same religion of that country or nation whatever it was, yet it is now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that religion *in which all men agree*, leaving their particular opinions to themselves, that is, to be good men and true, or men of honor and honesty, by whatever denomination or persuasion they may be distinguished, whereby masonry *becomes the center of*

union, and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must have remained at a perpetual distance. ”

This, my friends, is a part of their fundamental law, their Ancient Constitution ; and what think you is the religion it teaches ? Is it the religion of Jesus Christ ? Certainly not. What then is it. Why the Constitution says, “ it is the religion in which *all men agree.* ” All men do not agree as to the religion of Jesus Christ. All men believe in the existence of a God, of some sort or other, but God in Christ, all do not receive ; hence, the religion in which all men agree must be a Christless religion. A Jew, though he steadily denies Jesus Christ, may be a Mason, and many of them are such. Mohammedans, Pagans, and Deists may be Masons, for they all believe in the existence of a God. Masonry is now flourishing in Turkey, right in the hotbed of Mohammedanism. One of two things must be true ; either they do conform to the religion of the country where they exist, a thing which the Constitution denies, or, else, the religion of the order is Christless.

It is said, however, that no man can be a good Mason unless he is a Christian. This is a false assertion. Are all the Jews bad Masons ? Are all the Mohammedans bad Masons ? Are all the Deists who are Masons, bad Masons ? Are all in America, who make no profession of religion, bad Masons ? Surely they must be, if the assertion be true. What does it take to constitute a man a good Christian ? We answer, obedience to the requirements of the gospel of Christ. What is it that constitutes a man a good citizen—answer, obedience to the civil law. What

constitutes a good Mason? We answer, obedience to all the requirements of that order. Does the law of that order require as a condition of membership, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? No. What then does it require? Why, so far as religion is concerned, that a man simply adopt "that religion in which all men agree." One is not so much as required to believe in the name of Jesus Christ; if he were, neither a Jew, a Deist, nor Mohammedan could be initiated. Therefore the conclusion is irresistible, that any man may be a true and faithful Mason, and not be a Christian.

The religion of secret societies, is, in the main, Deistical and not Christian. The name of Jesus is virtually excluded from the lodge. And yet we are asked to take this cold, heartless, Christless institution into our arms and baptize it in the name of the holy religion of the Bible. Masonry, as expressed in their Constitution, is designed to become the "center of union, and the means of conciliating friendship, among persons that must have remained at a perpetual distance." Well, it may become the "*center of union*," since it has no principles to sacrifice in forming that union. It bows at the altar of Mohammedanism and Judaism, and tramples the name of Christ in the dust. It kisses the Koran in Turkey, and caresses the Shaster in India. "It is the center of the union, and invites persons that must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance." And why not? There is not a reason under heaven why it should not thus unite. It is flexible as the lash of the whip. What a glorious union. Listen to the first three lines of one of their odes:

“Hail mysterious, glorious science,
Which to discord bid's defiance,
Harmony alone reigns here.”

But we are told that they have the Bible in their lodge-rooms. Very true. Voltaire, Hume, and Bolingbrooke had the Bible. What have they in Turkey? Answer, the *Koran*. What have they in Hindostan? Answer, the *Shaster*.

We are often asked, whether there is any thing in the Bible against Freemasonry and Oddfellowship. Are those persons aware that there is such a passage in the Bible as this: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” But the name of Jesus is not in those institutions; it is *purpose*ly excluded. A minister, who with the name of Jesus on his lips, prays in secret, in his family, in the sanctuary, and on public occasions, must, when he enters a lodge composed of Jews, as chaplain, ignore that dear name, or violate the rules of the craft. Follow such a minister from the lodge-room to the pulpit. He takes for his text the blessed words of Jesus: “No man cometh unto the Father but by me,” and, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name believing ye shall receive.” He declares to the people that there is no other name given under heaven, nor among men whereby they can be saved, except the name of Jesus.” He asks his congregation to sing that ancient, and soul-enrapturing old hymn:

“Jesus the name high over all,
In earth, or sea, or sky;
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly.”

LECTURE ON

In the language of Dr. Joseph Cooper, "I call upon you, as professing Christians, seriously to consider this matter, for it is a matter involving interests of infinite moment. By prayer we place ourselves in the presence of a Being of spotless holiness, and inflexible Justice, and Almighty power. And shall we who are sinners—we who have violated His law, and exposed ourselves to His everlasting wrath—appear before His 'awful throne' without a Mediator? O! let this presumption never be mine! Let me point the steel to the lightnings of heaven, but let me not present a Christless prayer to Him at whose power the hills smoke, and at whose touch the earth trembles."

What I have said in this connection, touching the religion of the Masonic order, is strictly applicable to the Oddfellows, whose religion is as Christless as that of the Freemasons. But we are told there is nothing in the orders that is wrong. Well then, there must be a great deal of good. Jesus says: "He that is not with me is against me." There is no middle ground. We are either for Christ or against Him. All societies and combinations of men are either for Christ or against him. There is no middle position—no neutral ground. Are secret societies, as such, for Christ? I answer, no. But why are they not for Christ? I answer, for the same reason that a Jew or Mohammeden is not for Christ. Now, if they are for Christ, then secret societies, as such, are for Christ. I speak not of individuals, but of those societies as distinct organizations.

V. *We object to these societies, on account of the assumption, by its members, of high-sounding names. Take*

for example the Oddfellows. A number of them meet together, and they begin to say one to another, in this wise: "You must be the Grand Master," and you the "Grand Sire," and you the "High Priest," and you the "Right Worthy Grand Treasurer," and you the "Right Worthy Grand Corresponding Secretary," and you the "Right Worthy Grand Recording Secretary," and you the "Right Worthy Grand Guardian," and you the "Right Worthy Grand Chaplain," and I the "Right Worthy Grand Patriarch," &c., &c.

This may suffice from that department. We will turn to the Freemasons, and what do we hear in that quarter. "Most Excellent Grand High Priest;" "Deputy Grand High Priest;" "Grand Master;" "Most Worshipful Master;" "Grand Marshal;" "Most Worshipful Grand Lodge;" "Grand Sword Bearer;" "Grand Secretary;" "Junior Grand Warden;" "Senior Grand Warden;" "Deputy Grand Master;" "Most Excellent Master;" "Royal Master;" "Royal Arch;" "Grand Royal Arch;" "Grand Captain of the Host;" "Grand High Priest;" "Grand Principal Sojourner;" "Deputy Grand High Priest;" &c., &c. Were we to witness a company of little boys at play going through with such antic performances; the one professing to be the "Grand Captain of the Host," and another the "Most Excellent Grand High Priest," and another the "Right Worthy Grand Corresponding Secretary," and so on, each dressed with white aprons, and other regalia suited to the dignity of his order, it would doubtless greatly amuse us. But to see men—young men—men of middle age, and men of hoary locks,

going through with such performances, and using such high-sounding titles, is well calculated to excite our risibilities, and sometimes our disgust. Were we to see the like for the first time, without knowing from whence it came, we should very much question the sanity of the performers. Are not such performances utterly inconsistent, with that simplicity and gravity which should ever characterize full grown men! "Just think; a company of men, with aprons, and ribbons, and rosettes, and other tinsels fastened about their persons, and having drawn swords in their hands, marching along our streets." Paul says: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

But who are those, that parade our streets and are called by such high-sounding names? Are they the lower class of society? by no means, then it could be accounted for. Are they the profane and reckless? not entirely so. Are they the poor and infirm? not at all. Who, then, are they? We answer, that many of them are our leading professors of religion—yea more, ministers of the gospel of Christ; followers of the meek and holy Redeemer; who professedly glory in nothing save in the cross of Jesus Christ; who "have counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge which is in Christ Jesus the Lord;" "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit;" "whose lives are hid with Christ in God;" whose "conversation is in heaven;" who "mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate;" who "are clothed with humility," and "stand not in the place of great men;" who "walk not in the way of

sinner, nor sit in the seat of the scornful;" whose "delight is in the law of the Lord." These men, professing a religion, so pure and holy, are seen parading the streets, with all their imaginable dignity, clothed in regalia which would better have become the attendants of the Cæsars, than the followers of the meek and holy son of the Virgin Mary.

VI. *We object to these societies, because they falsify their own pretensions.* I shall speak of the Oddfellows first, and show the grounds upon which this proposition is based. I presume it is well understood that this order makes great pretensions to benevolence. We hear it asserted that "its charities are as universal as the human race." To convince you that we do not misrepresent that society, we will quote from the Oddfellow's Manual, page 80. The author says: "This internal, truly living spirit of love and of *universal* fraternity, pervading all our rituals and ceremonies; recognized in emblems, colors," &c. Again, the same author says: "To extend our operations, and increase our advantages and usefulness together, we have united all those lodges in a general order, which we desire to render *universal as the family of man on earth.*" On page 103, the author says: "Oddfellowship is a miniature representation, among a chosen few, of that fraternity, which God has instituted among men. . . . The principle is wide enough for all. On the broad platform of brotherhood, all nations, parties, and sects can meet, As all men have God for their Father, all are brethren, and we would illustrate this great fact in all our offices of mutual aid, relief, sympathy, and benevolence." Again, on page 177, the author says: "For

the entire human race is but one family, not only physically but spiritually. Each member therefore is bound to aid the rest. Our mission is not a narrow one. 'No man of us liveth unto himself.'"

What are we to expect from a society making such world-wide pretensions? Are we not to suppose that its benevolence is very extraordinary? We have said, however, that it falsifies its own pretensions. We shall now adduce the proof.

Nearly one half of the human family is by positive law purposely rejected. We allude in this to the female sex. The Constitution says: "No person shall be admitted to membership, or be initiated into the mysteries of the order, *unless* he be a male." The Degree of Rebecca, or Ladies Degree, is only a mere appendage, so circumscribed, that it forms no part of the real order. According to the Manual, the "Ladies Degree" was adopted by the Grand Lodge of the United States, at its session in September, 1851, and went into operation in 1852. It seems that the founders of this glorious society, based as they say upon the principles of universal benevolence, and brotherhood, never once thought of the sisterhood. Moreover, the Manual informs us that it is only the wives of members who can be admitted, and that not the wives of all the members, but only those who belong to the Scarlet Degree. We are informed farther, that, "the continuance in good standing of the ladies of this degree, depends entirely upon the good standing, morally and pecuniarily of their husbands." Females, even the few that are admitted, are not known as members having any rights worth mentioning. "They are permitted

to come in along with their husbands, that they may perform certain duties in which it is desirable to have their services." "It is not in virtue of the relation which they sustain to God, as the subjects of his moral government, or to their fellow beings as members of civil society, that even any of them are admitted to the knowledge of those *eternal principles of universal friendship, philanthropy, and beneficence*, upon which 'Oddfellowship is based,' and which constitute its glory." The exclusion of almost the entire female portion of the human family, is one proof that the order falsifies its pretensions. How can its *benevolence become universal as the family of man*, when there is such a positive prohibition?

But this is not the only evidence we have. By the provisions of the constitution, "all who are under twenty-one years of age," are prohibited. Again, in the fifth section of the second article of the By-laws of the Lafayette Lodge of the State of Pennsylvania, it is stated that, "No person shall be eligible to membership, who, at the time of his application, may have any bodily infirmity, so as to render him incapable of following his usual occupation, or being over fifty years of age." Here, again, we have another large class positively prohibited from that society which is "*based,*" as they say, "*upon the principles of universal benevolence.*"

We have seen that females are by positive law prohibited. Also, that the young, under twenty-one years of age, are rejected. We have seen, too, that the aged and infirm are purposely excluded from the benefits of that society which, we are told, "desires to make its benevolence as universal as the family of

man upon the earth." Once more, upon this point. On the 49th page of the Digest of Laws, it is expressly declared that "no person is eligible to membership in any subordinate lodge, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the United States, or of the Grand Lodge of British North America, or of any of the Grand Lodges, by either of the said supreme bodies established, *except he be a free white man.*" Now, compare this with what the author of their Manual says, page 103: "On this broad platform of brotherhood, all nations, parties, and sects can meet, and freely mingle, in offices of needed kindness and mutual well-doing." It seems that the "eternal principle of universal philanthropy," of which this order boasts, reaches not to the slave. Indeed the whole African race is excluded, if we are to believe their law.

Now I am not complaining of the order, on account of their excluding the characters referred to. They may exclude whoever they please. My object is to show that they falsify their own pretensions. This, I think, I have clearly shown. No man, in the face of their own laws, can deny this without violating the rights of his own conscience. Instead of being universal, it is so circumscribed in its principles, as to exclude four-fifths of the family of man; and mark this closely, it is not on account of character that they are excluded.

What I have said of the Oddfellows, is in the main applicable to the Freemasons. They, too, exclude the young, the aged, and the infirm. Their Constitution says that, "No man is capable of becoming a Mason, unless he is *free born*, of mature

and discreet age, of sufficient natural endowment, and the senses of a man." Now, after you exclude all this class of persons from becoming members of the lodge, you will not have perhaps more than one-fifth. "The lords of creation" may enter in, but the very ones that most need aid are kept out. And yet, they have the audacity to talk of the glory of the order, the excellency of its sublime degrees. They talk of its being the center of union, of brotherly love, of truth, justice, love, temperance, and prudence; of faith, hope, and charity; when from the door of their lodge-rooms they coldly and heartlessly drive the needy away. Tell me, gentlemen and ladies, do they not falsify their own pretensions?

Suppose a church, professing to be of God, (the Masons profess to be of God,) would rise up in our midst, excluding by positive law the class of persons excluded by Masons and Oddfellows, what sort of influence would they exert? What would ministers say? even those who are now all covered over with the glory of the sublime degree? Would they not thunder from the pulpit, in unmistakable tones of disapprobation? What would the church say? What would the public say? What would we say?

But we are told they are not the church, nor in the room of the church. Very true; and I thank God that the Church of Jesus Christ is not built upon any such foundation. We see no reason, however, why a person might not become a member of a church based upon such principles, as well as become a member of an organization, even though it might not be the church, nor claim to be equal with the church. We claim for the church that

it is based upon the principles of the gospel of Christ; and any independent society based upon any other principle, is wrong, necessarily wrong, and never can be right. The gospel system in its wide range of benevolence, is as universal as the family of mankind. This glorious proclamation has gone out into the world, that "whosoever will may come and partake of the waters of life freely."

A man may be poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind, yet he is not excluded from the bosom of the church of Christ. Freemasonry would have excluded Lazarus, and received Dives. Poverty has its inconveniences, its afflictions, its sorrows, but the church of Jesus is an asylum for the poor and unfortunate. Not so with secret societies. The rich, and such as may not have met with misfortune, can find a retreat there; but those who most need sympathy and aid are coldly driven away. They never can climb the mystic ladder, nor feast their souls on the hidden manna of the sublime degree. Suppose three men, living in this, or any other town where there are lodges. The first makes no profession of religion; the second and third are members of the same church, meet in the same class, kneel around the same altar, sing and pray together, and they rejoice with each other. But, unfortunately, one is poor, and has suffered the amputation of an arm; yet he is a Christian, good enough to be a member of the church. All believe his name is written in heaven, and that he will reach the home of the pure and holy. These three men send in their names for membership. The first is received, though he makes no pretensions to religion. The second is admitted, but the third is exclud-

ed. But, why excluded? Simply because he is poor, and has been unfortunate. More yet; Jesus, the hope of the world, dwells in the heart of that same poor man; but all this will not do, he must be excluded. The first man, though a Mohammedan or a Jew, enters in, and is welcomed by the brotherhood. We hear some talk about the Grand Lodge in heaven; but I am of the opinion that there will be a slight difference between the Grand Lodge in heaven, and the lodge on earth. I conclude the line of distinction will vary somewhat. Jesus says, "the pure in heart shall see God." Tell me not of the benevolence and philanthropy of a society based upon such principles; they enter not into the holy religion of the Bible. Boast ye of the excellency and glory of those societies, and yet exclude my Christian brother, he in whom the Son of God dwells, and around whom the the very angels of heaven encamp! The same spirit would have excluded the Son of God, who said he had not where to lay his head. Sirs, I envy not the boasted glory of those societies from which my afflicted and infirm wife must be excluded. Can I give my influence and countenance to an order that, hereafter, may coldly drive my children away, along whose path of life misfortune may scatter its bitter fruits? Nay, if there be good in it, those nearest my heart must have the privilege of enjoying it, or else I will not.

We are told, however, that there is nothing of importance going on in the lodge; that the secrets would not amount to a straw, or the snap of your finger. Very well; suppose we admit this; what, then, are we to think of the course pursued by the

members of those organizations? What mean the closely-curtained windows? What mean the inside and outside sentinels? Why, if we are to believe the oft-repeated sayings of some of the members, it is to guard the lodge for nothing; to keep the people from knowing nothing. What an insult to common sense. It reminds me of a little boy who was observed putting stones in his pocket. A passer-by asked the little fellow what they were for. Well, he said, he wanted them. But, what do you want them for? The boy supposing that he had found a solution, raised himself up, and replied, "*O, sir, they are good to have.*" So, I suppose, these sentinels are good to have.

To see men, old men, who have been members of the lodge for many years, also ministers, and members of church, meet, night after night, in secret, and spend hour after hour away from their families; and then to hear them say that there is nothing of importance in the secrets of the order, that it would not amount to a straw, impresses the mind with the fact that they either intend to falsify their pretensions, or else make a great ado about nothing. I care not which position they take.

VII. *We object to secret societies, because they form an alliance positively forbidden in God's word.* Here, my friends, I come to you bearing the ever precious and living words of Jehovah, by which we must either stand or fall. In order that I may not be misunderstood, I will state distinctly that the question now under consideration, is a Bible question. Does the Bible justify such an alliance as is formed by secret societies? The question is, not, does the Bible

allow Christians to cherish feelings of benevolence toward ungodly men? The question is not, does the Bible allow Christians to have a certain degree of intercourse with such persons, which may be necessary in the ordinary intercourse of man with man, as members of civil society? The question is not, does the Bible allow Christians to associate themselves with such persons, for the defense of their rights? The question is this: Does the Bible allow Christians to enter into covenants of love and friendship with those making no profession of the Christian religion; even such as deny the fundamental elements of the religion of Jesus? Now, it should be remembered that members of secret societies do, most positively, enter into covenants of friendship and love with each other. They form one brotherhood. The Masonic order, as expressed in their Constitution, "becomes the center of union, and the means of conciliating true friendship." It calls itself one brotherhood. Whether they be Jews, or Mohammedans, or Christians, it matters not. The same is true of the Oddfellows. They desire to make their Society as universal as the family of man on the earth.

Let us look into the lodge-room, and see whether the Order, as such, is for Christ. Jesus says: "He that is not with me, is against me." Are secret societies, as such, with Jesus Christ? I affirm that they are not. What is it to be with Christ? Is it not to incorporate *in toto* his holy religion? I answer, it is. Now, I ask in God's name, do secret societies incorporate the religion of Jesus into their Constitutions and By-laws? I answer, they do not. They virtually exclude the name of Jesus. How can they

do otherwise, since it is obvious that they have hundreds of members in good standing in their orders, that deny his very name? Here, then, we have a Christless society—or rather Christless societies; and as such, they can not, in the nature of things, be with Christ. The name of Jesus—precious name—name ever dear—the name to sinners given—“Angels and men before it fall, and devils fear and fly;” this God-given name is virtually excluded from societies in which His professed followers love to mingle. Even ministers sit with them—those who in the presence of the great congregation declare their attachment to him, and their purposes never to deny him—and then go straightway and mingle in a society from which His name is excluded. Tell me not of a religion without the presence of the bright and morning star! Tell me not of the excellency of a society in which He whose name shall be called Wonderful is excluded! Boast not of the glory of degrees from which the glory of the first-begotten Son of God is excluded! Nay, rather let me be with Lazarus at the rich man’s gate, with Christ as my friend, than feast with a Christless Dives.

Jesus says: “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” “If ye deny me before men, I will also deny you before my Father and His holy angels.” I will here repeat what I said heretofore, that secret societies must either exclude the name of Jesus, or else conform to the religion of the country where they sojourn. If they do this, then their religion is all sorts of a religion—every thing in general, and nothing in particular.

There is not one fundamental principle in the

creeds of these orders, that can in any way separate its members from the world, which is represented as lying in wickedness, over which the prince of this world reigns. If there is, let it be shown. The truth is, these societies form a complete union between church members and the world. They call themselves "the center of union." In the formation of this union, they violate many plain and unambiguous texts of Scripture. In the language of the Grand Master of the Right Worthy Grand Lodge of Southern New-York, in a speech delivered on the 3d day of August, 1853: "Its broad platform receives all classes and creeds who love their fellow-men." This he calls "the proud position of the Odd-fellows." (Golden Rule of 1853, page 103.) This, my friends, is indeed a proud position—*all classes and creeds received on one platform*. But pause a moment, I call upon you in the name of the Bible! How can you step upon that platform; you who profess the holy religion of the Bible? How can you form an alliance with all "classes and creeds," without violating your Christian profession?

The names "companion," "brother," and "beloved brothers," with the motto, "Friendship, Love and Truth," so frequently recurring in their lectures, and set forth in so many emblems, prove beyond a doubt that the members of secret societies are very closely allied to each other; each society forming a brotherhood under covenant pledges. Remember, the question before us is strictly a Bible question, to which we will now make our appeal (Ex., xxiii. 32), to see what God said to his ancient people, in reference to the manner in which they should conduct

themselves toward the wicked nations with which they were surrounded. God said, "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor their gods." In Ex. xxiv, 12, we find a similar prohibition. "Take heed unto thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be a snare in the midst of thee." The same law is repeated in Deut. vii, 2. God most positively forbade his ancient people from entering into covenant with any who did not recognize him as the true God of Israel. "Let those, therefore, who enter into covenants of friendship and love with those who ignore the name of Jesus Christ, look to this law, and reconcile their conduct with it, if they can." Turn to your Bibles and see. Did not Asa sin in entering into a covenant of friendship with Benhadad, the king of Syria? Did not Ahaz sin in entering into a similar covenant with Tiglath Pilezer, the king of Assyria? Did not Jehoshaphat sin in entering into such a covenant with Ahab and Ahaz? Hear what the prophet Jehu says to this king of Israel: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord?" How emphatic the language of Jehovah. Friend, weigh these words of the Almighty well, before you dismiss them from your minds.

We turn to the New Testament; and let him who loves the Bible read what Paul says, in 2nd Cor., vi, 14-18. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Beliel? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of

God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." Gow, my friends, I beseech you look, first on Paul's picture, and then on the picture of secret societies. Read their Manuals, their Constitutions, and their By-laws; read there the endearing name of brother, which must be given to all its members; the covenant, the obligations and penalties, the bond of union; and then ask yourself, between whom does this bond of union exist? Is it among the friends of Jesus? Are they those who profess an attachment to the cause of the Redeemer? Some of them, you say, are the professed friends of Christ. But are they all? Nay, some are Jews, some are Mohammedans, some are pagans, some are infidels. Does any man deny this? If so, what means that language of the Masonic Constitution—"The religion in which all men agree." Infidels believe in a God, but deny Jesus Christ. Jews believe in a God, but deny Jesus Christ. Pagans believe in a God; hence Deism is the religion, and the only religion, in which all men agree. Now, in the name of our holy religion, let me ask you, is not the language of the apostle, positively, against such alliances as are formed by the members of secret associations? Look at the passage: "light" and "darkness" are set before you as opposing principles. What communion hath light with darkness? "Christ" and "Belial" stand as the representatives of systems utterly antagonistic to each other. "In the lodge-room, however, we have seen there is no

Christ. No, the blessed Redeemer is not permitted to have a place there, for all men do not agree that he is the Savior of the world." I know the allegation is stoutly denied; but I challenge investigation. Either the language of the Masonic Constitution is a positive falsehood, or else the allegation is true. Now, the apostle asks, "what concord hath Christ with Belial?" Will you, my friends—you upon whose forehead Christ has written the name of his God, and His new name—you who by your profession have said to Him, I am thine forever—only thine,—will you, I say, attempt to bring these two, Christ and Belial, into a state of brotherly concord?"

Again we turn our eye to the word of Paul; and here we have the "temple of God," and the "temple of idols," as directly opposite to each other, and can not be associated without the grossest profanation. Freemasonry and Oddfellowship are called temples indeed; but what sort of temples are they? Are they the temples of God? Mark this closely! Remember, the "temple of God" is holy. God dwells in his temple. Its altars are holy. Are the temples of Masonry and Oddfellowship holy, around whose altars all nations bow, who merely believe in the existence of a God? Call you that the temple of God? It is a temple indeed; but it is not the temple of God. Will you, my Christian brother, who have entered into the sacred portals, "and have been led by the Spirit of truth to its hallowed shrine, and there had your eyes opened to behold a mercy seat sprinkled by the blood of a crucified Savior, and there consecrated yourself, your soul, body, and your all to your God and Redeemer—will you, I say, attempt

to bring this holy temple into agreement with the temple of idols?"

In this act you labor to bring together what God has put asunder; and if you defile the temple of God, you shall be cut off. Come out from among them and be separate, says God. "Ye are the light of the world;" "a city on a hill;" "come out;" "ye are my witnesses," saith the Lord. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. "That ye may be blameless and harmless the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." But, you say, in reply to these solemn calls of God, Nay, I will be one of them. They shall be my brethren in covenant—like a "bundle of rods" bound together in the strong ties of Friendship, Love, and Truth.

Again, I think, from what I have read in their Manuals, that there is a plain recognition of the principles of universal salvation. Their prayers and funeral ceremonies, all point to the Grand Lodge in heaven; and I do not now remember of meeting in a single instance an acknowledgment of a state of future punishment. All their members that die, are, by their prayers and ceremonies, recognized as being escorted to the lodge in heaven.

We come to you, not as an enemy, not out of any ill will, not to harm a hair of your head; we come with the word of God in our hands, we come to speak to you of things that pertain to man in another world. We are passing away. Soon the cold waters of the river of death will dash against our feet, and their choking damps will steal away our breath. These

forms of ours will be laid away in silence to molder into dust. Around your silent clay your brethren of the mystic order may gather—they may bury you in the honors of the Fraternity. I, in the estimation of the living, may be less honored. A few, and but a few, may follow this form to the tomb. A hymn may be sung at my grave, as the cold ground is falling over this form. But what is that to me? what is that to you? We shall not be there. Our outward forms shall be there, but we shall have gone. We shall be in another and distant world, where our moral worth shall be tested; not by the amount of emblems we have worn, but by that ever living Word of God—that word to which I have appealed this evening.

VIII. *We object to secret societies, because their claims are preferred before the claims of the Bible and the church.* Be not startled at this objection, but let us submit it to investigation. Paul says, Gal. vi, 10: “As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.” Now turn to the Oddfellow’s Manual, page 276. You will find that the author says: “Your brother patriarchs, let them especially share your sympathy and experience your aid.” In the Oddfellow’s Text-book, page 39, it is said: “That the first duty is to its own household.” Now let a Christian form an alliance with this order, and what will he do? The Bible says one thing, and the order says another. If he obeys Paul, he will disobey the law of the order, and so *vice versa*. On page 66, of the Manual, the author says: “We pay the rich members, when sick, the same amount per week that we pay to our

poorer brethren." What sort of benevolence is this? The rich man may need nothing, and the poor member may need every thing; yet they are all paid alike. But let us look at the Manual a little farther. On page 86, the author expressly says that a person "may possibly be insured against sickness as certainly, and more cheaply, in a mere insurance association." Great God! And do the boasts of the order come to this, not even as good as a mere insurance association, and yet all this ado about a mere nothing.

The Freemasons boast less of benevolence, but still are bound by the same principle of law, to meet the wants of the order, rather than the children of God. In this, as we have already shown, there must of necessity be a direct conflict between the law of God, and the law of the Order. It may be said, however, that Masons and Oddfellows may extend their help outside of the Order. Very true. We judge not by what they may do, but by their established law.

Again, at the appointed times for the meetings of the lodge, in towns and cities, even though religious meetings may be in progress, the meetings of the lodge must be attended too. And in not a few instances have I known religious meetings to be dismissed on every evening when the lodge was to meet. In this way the lodge is preferred before the church. So with their sick, and those of their brethren who die. Next to the Savior, the church should be preferred, and the children of God administered to.

If it had not been for taxing your patience to an almost unpardonable degree, I should have introduced several other objections; but I must close my

arguments. Before I sit down, however, there are a few other points to which I will speak. The question has been asked, will this church maintain her position? Had she not better take down her banner? Can she hold out? Will not secret societies ultimately swallow her up?

To the first interrogation, I would reply that so far as I am capable of forming an opinion, I believe the church will steadily maintain her position. She was among the first, if not indeed the very first organized body in America, that took this position. She has stood, and steadily increased in number, up to this date. She is two hundred per cent. stronger now than she was twenty years ago. Besides, she is now joined by other churches, whose influence is no mean thing in her favor.

To the second inquiry, as to whether she had not better take down her banner, I reply that I think not. I see no reason why she should, but many reasons why she should not. The world ought to have a few antisecret and antislavery churches. Those who think that it is not incompatible with the gospel to be a member of a secret society, can find a home in churches that do not make it a test of membership. Besides, there are those who make no profession of religion, who never will unite with a church that receives those into its communion who are connected with secret societies. They ought to be cared for, and this, with some other churches, will be a home for them.

To the third inquiry—can she hold out?—I reply, that if God be for her she can, and will stand; if he is not, she ought to fall. Up to this date God has been

for her. Many sons and daughters who have been born into the kingdom of God, around her altars, have broken the ice and gone to the beautiful land beyond the mountains.

To the fourth and last inquiry, I reply, that if secret societies could not swallow her up when she numbered not more than twenty thousand, it is doubtful if they can when she numbers almost one hundred thousand. My confidence is in God alone. If she is right, and I believe she is, in opposing secret societies, she will stand, despite all the opposition brought against her. If she holds fast to the horns of the sacred altars, and God works through her and by her, as heretofore, she is safe. If she goes away from God, and baptizes herself at the fountain of iniquity, she ought to be scattered and torn to pieces.

In my turn, I have a few questions to ask, which may be answered at the bar of conscience, by those present who have the necessary knowledge and experience. "Let God be true and every man a liar."

"Go to your bosom ;

Knock there ; and ask your heart what it doth know ?"

Have you been a better man since you have joined the Order, than you were before ? Think you that the money, and time, you have spent in the purchase of your regalia, and other fixings about the lodge-room, have added to your religious enjoyment, and made you a more devoted, meek, and humble Christian ? Have you been a better husband, more tender and kind ? Have you been a better father ? Do your children seem to recognize a change for the better ? Are you better prepared to do good than ever before ? Are you a better Christian ? Have you

more of the love of God than you had before? Has your association in the lodge room drawn you nearer to Christ and heaven, than you were before? Call to mind your experience in the lodge. Try its claims by the test, and let conscience answer.

I conclude my remarks in the language of the Rev. Thomas H. Stockton. Chaplain of the House, "Religion is open as the sky and bright as the sun. As a man—an American—and a Christian; I love true manhood, true Americanism, and true Christianity, too much to approve of secret institutions of any kind."

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