

Written for this Paper

SECRET SOCIETY VS. CHURCH.

All organizations presuppose the right and power of self regulation. Rules and order are as necessary as they are absolute, and no individual member can be allowed to discriminate personally as to what stand he shall take against any regulation prescribed by competent authority. That changes, modifications or improvements may be made in the general structure even down to detail, may be permissible, but there is a proper and an improper way of reaching this. Individual protest may in time, through agitation and conversion of others, bring this to pass; but meanwhile none are so influential as to set aside or ignore a regulation until it is officially repealed.

In a fairly perfect association, the right to its privileges and benefits may be withheld for cause; and this may involve deprivation and real loss to the offender, if such understanding was part of the contract, and was understood as among the penalties; then forfeiture is as inevitable as that standing is secure and invulnerable when all the conditions are maintained.

Human nature is so volatile in many things, so restless and changeable, that disintegration would overtake any combination of men almost, unless the pressure of honor, interest, or advantages of some kind outranked that restraint and rule which is everywhere implied. There must be an acceptance by individuals of principles represented by the organization, whether social, political, beneficiary or religious; and if laxity in discipline is countenanced, if neglect of duty is permitted, if membership is allowed to become purely nominal, an element of weakness enters into the constitution of the body which militates against its perfect health and vigor.

Nominal, and at times honorary membership are formal aids or influential factors, as is supposed; but in the majority of cases, save in a land of caste and privilege, this is an error, and it is certainly inharmonious with a living democracy like this irrepressible nation of ours.

If it is deemed desirable by any organization that its members should declare allegiance to any other whose tenets and practices are inimical, the law of self-preservation would justify this, particularly if special and exhaustive inquiry had established such fact beyond dispute, and the private opinion of an individual would cut no figure in any controversy with such official conclusion.

This preamble is based in part upon the attitude assumed by papal authority in regard to secret societies, which are, as is well known, now multiplied *ad infinitum*. The question has been agitated for many years. Ecclesiastics of every grade have studied these and their effects, not always with unanimity either, for eminent authorities have been defenders as well as opponents. Many years ago the Masonic order was placed under the ban, the pope himself, after consultation with the college of cardinals, issuing his edict in condemnation thereof. Considerable fluttering resulted from this, for the order included in its ranks in Europe men eminent in every direc-

tion, from royalty through the so-called superior or upper classes; its membership was quite exclusive and influential, the middle class, to say nothing of others, finding entrance almost impossible. The Catholic church denounced the Masonic organization and forbade its members religious rites and privileges if association was continued.

It might have been assumed by the members of the church that the greater included the less, and that similar unspecified organizations were equally under that ban. Now, however, comes a papal decree extending this condemnation to three quite prominent societies hitherto unmentioned, viz: the Odd Fellows, the Sons of Temperance and the Knights of Pythias. Now it cannot be that the Romish church is indifferent to the philanthropic, self-preservative idea which is made the prominent one with these societies. The Catholic church believes in thrift, in making provision for sickness and death, in antipolating and preparing safeguards against poverty or calamity. So there must have been presented to the assembled ecclesiastics of that church something more than appears on the surface, ere they decided against these societies and forwarded the recommendation to Rome that they be included with the secret societies of which masonry was the highest type.

In the proclamation of the condemnatory edict all the old diplomacy is exhibited, it being acknowledged as "a delicate subject," and "special reasons were assigned why the authorities here should refrain from saying anything more than that the societies were condemned because the archbishops evidently held that they were antagonistic to the church,"—a conclusion accepted after a long and exhaustive examination in Rome, then ratified and promulgated by Pope Leo XIII.

Had the Mormon Church fulminated an edict of this character, the world would have rung with vehement accusation against its illiberality, and probably hardly a paper that is now silent but would have had its say in the matter, although as a point of church discipline they might not have had anything to do with the subject.

As a religious question, however, this increased membership in secret societies is assuming much importance, and argument after argument is presented to demonstrate that the two should be kept very widely apart. It was always assumed for Mormonism that it contained within itself all the power, vitality and appliances for any possible demand of mankind, religious, social, mental or industrial. The first named being the prime mover in all plans of philanthropy and schemes of salvation—the acknowledged brotherhood of man aided by the divine spirit adapting itself to any call and every emergency.

The fundamental thought of gathering, too, was an assurance of the fall of Babylon, and consequently that any alliance with her or her institutions could be but transient, and so hopes or anticipations based thereon would be doubtful as to realization.

These ideas have not become quite obsolete, although many members of the Church belong to outside organiza-

tions, most of those being for pecuniary or of a beneficiary character. It is generally known that the Mormons receded from that society first denounced by the papacy, it having, through its members, participated in the assassination of the Prophet, and through its society, which neither denounced the villainy nor aided in bringing the perpetrators to justice; then, when the first lodge was instituted in this city denying and excluding Mormon masons in good standing from participating in the privileges of the lodge.

It is related of General Booth, that when asked by a representative of the N. C. A. "What is the position of the Salvation Army as to freemasonry?" he replied that, so far as he knew, there was not a freemason in it; that when men joined the army they dropped freemasonry, and that he himself is opposed to it. If this is true of that great working agency, of a benevolent yet emasculated Christianity, what might be supposed the position of a Latter-day Saint would be, with his plenitude of agency and appliances in the Church itself?

Many of the brethren have been allured into spending a great deal of their time and not a little means for their standing in certain lodges, may be more than they ever gave to their own ward, quorum, Sabbath school, Mutual Improvement association, or even social entertainments which encourage unity and intimacy with their co-religionists. Some have their time taken up by more than one such society, ostensibly for wage protection, trade purposes, or for beneficiary ends; and it may be said of them, as was said by a weary wife, "Since my husband joined two lodges he has entirely lost his interest in the Church; before that he was a zealous member and always on hand." The associations of the lodge room wear a man away from duty; they mar his example with his family; while time spent there, and benefits expected, libel the sufficiency of religious institutions and the Church, besides exhibiting a lack of faith in that overruling Hand which brought so many of us from far-off nations and has preserved us here.

From the Catholic standpoint of organization the pope is right; the ecclesiastical authorities of his church are right; the Catholic church is right. The drift of all the counsel given to the Saints is right; General Booth is right. Neither Catholic, Salvationist, nor Mormon is called upon to seek fellowship with the secret society organization. True religion, at least in this dispensation, provides or admits of all good on earth and heaven either by revelation or appropriation; but it can be obtained without going beyond the specially designed organization of the Church.

FOR THE SUGAR FACTORY.

PAYSON, Jan. 21, 1896.

I have a few ideas and suggestions to offer as to how the sugar factory at Lehi, also others that might be built, could be made a success financially, as the Lehi institution has been in other respects. It seems in order to manufacture sugar that it needs a great amount of capital invested in build-