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Church Members and Secret Societies.

[BY REV. N. GEORGE HIDDLE, OF WORCESTER, MASS.]

It is an open question with some very well informed people whether or not the fact of Church members joining or remaining in secret organizations is detrimental to the best interests of society.

With the writer it is no longer a debatable but a settled question, and settled positively and permanently on the authority of eternal truth as revealed in observation, experience and the Word of God.

We grant that the large majority of secret organizations in which our Church members are found are grand and noble institutions, well calculated to accomplish the work of bettering the present condition of fallen humanity and of inculcating the principles of brotherhood, fraternity and charity; we gladly allow all that is generally said in favor of these organizations in preamble, ritual and eulogy, and with these conclusions we still maintain that they are not the place for Church members; and that Church members joining or remaining in them is detrimental to the best interest of the world at large, and to the proper development of the Church and the individual Christian.

It may be asked, If these societies are about so great a work why should not Church members be united with them? which question we shall endeavor to answer by giving seven principal reasons "why not." While we grant that these societies are about a great work, we maintain without a fear of contradiction that the church is about a far greater work—greater in its results and issues in time, and far greater because of its issues in eternity.

It is the special work of the Church to proclaim a "great salvation"—a salvation that saves and cares not only for the body but for the immortal soul. This is not only the work of "the Church," but because the Church is simply an aggregate of individuals it is also the work of every individual Church member. Visiting, nursing and caring for the sick and afflicted is the divinely appointed work of the Church, and Church members should perform this labor of love in obedience to the blessed Master, not as members of a secret society, for fear of a fifty cent fine, but as members of the Church of the living God. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Thus the Word of God gives this work as pure religion, "but thousands of Church members have neglected it altogether unless under the iron clasp rules of some secret society. Let this work be done as God intended by the Church as pure, "disinterested benevolence."

There will be no secret societies in Heaven, neither should the future citizen of that "better country" waste their time in them in this "wilderness of sin." The greater field for doing good is in the Church of God, and it is not in the order of sound philosophy to leave the greater opportunity for the lesser.

I. These societies are of human, and consequently, only temporal and transitory in origin and design. Some one may say, Why, our society dates back to Solomon's time? What if it does? Solomon's idolatry and plurality of wives and concubines date back to his time and

dividual Christian can do far more for the salvation of lost souls by remaining separate from all close alliances and affiliations with them in their lost condition. Jesus is supposed to have known what he was doing when he directed the Apostle Paul to thunder to the Corinthian church and to us "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 Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel, and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Therefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing and I will receive you, and will be a father to you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

III. Church members should not belong to secret societies because from the nature of things they are almost invariably out-numbered and out-manoeuvred in them. "The world" certainly will always furnish the best generals in worldly things; many who have stood up in the Church and public congregation and on the river-bank and renounced the devil and all his works, are soon after found serving on committees of balls, dances, and the "revelings, banquets and abominable idolatries" that often characterize the private and public entertainments of these societies. The influence of the Church members in these organizations is curtailed and impaired not only in the lodge room, where their mild and supine protests against sin are as "idol tales," but in the Church and society at large.

Who cares for a compromiser? The glory of Sumner and Wilson and Phillips and other anti-slavery leaders was that they would not compromise with the slave power; so the strength of Christian man and womanhood is found not in secret societies but in the Church with those who make no compromise with the world. How can a Church member invite a lost soul to Christ at the Friday evening prayer meeting after having debated with him the price of a ball ticket at the Monday evening lodge meeting?

Those who have once professed godliness, joined the Church and "run well for a season" and then fallen back in their old ways, according to the true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. ii. 22) generally seek and find admission in the secret society, trying by activity therein to fill the void left by the departed spirit of godliness. Like Solomon's foolish son Rehoboam they substitute brass for the gold that they have taken from them. Call the roll of your secret societies and see if your most active members are not backsliders from the pure religion of Christ, vainly endeavoring to silence an awakened conscience with works of the flesh, forgetful of the eternal truth that the heart must be right with God before our works can be acceptable with Him.

IV. The great work of saving souls, of definitely and specially assisting men in their preparation to stand before a holy God does not enter into the thought or design of the secret society. Their work is all confined to this brief exercise; "but what shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" what is benevolence,

time, and talent and substance that rightly belongs to him; they are but rewards and their whole living, time, talent and substance belong to God, to be used not in their way, but in the Divinely appointed way. They are "called with an holy calling" to work in his vineyard in the saving of precious souls; called to separation from the world while working for the salvation thereof.

As a general thing Church members belonging to secret organizations give the society the preference; prayer meetings, covenant meetings, class meetings, trustee meetings, and even revival meetings are neglected for the lodge room. "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few," often because so many of those that were "hired" by Jesus the Lord of the vineyard have thrown aside their "weapons which are not carnal" and have hired out to the world. God is robbed of the time, talent and means that should be devoted exclusively to the spread of the gospel, and men and women are tumbling into hell over lukewarm professors of religion clothed in paint and gilt-edged regalia, who, if clothed with humility and the unspotted robe of a holy, Christ-like life, would be the means of saving scores of precious souls.

Is it possible that there is not work enough in the Christian Church, when there is enough to fill a Saviour's heart and more than enough to fill an angel's hands? are there not opportunities enough in the Church for "doing good"? Is it possible that the adorable Christ is not attractive enough to retain them in His vineyard, that they must "hire" out to the world.

It was considered a crime deserving capital punishment for a Persian to even desire to leave the service of his king; what shall be thought of the subjects of King Emanuel who neglect His service for the vain devices of man? What shall be done with them? What was done with the man that hid his talent in the earth? (see Matt. xxv. 24-30.)

Watchmen on the walls of Zion how can you find time and talent to attend lodge and society meetings while members of your parish are famishing for the bread of life. Paul, after three years labor in Ephesus, could testify and call the Ephesians to witness that he had "abandoned not to declare the whole counsel of God" and that he had taught them "from house to house." He found no time to mingle in the secret societies of his day, neither will we if we become rightly impressed with our responsible position as under-shepherds of the flock. We are here in "Christ's stead," commissioned to feed the lambs and sheep of the flock; think you Christ would join a secret society were He to come to New England in person to-day? would Peter or James or John? would Wesley or Luther or John Knox or the earliest pioneers of our early Church find time for these side issues? proportion to our love for the lost souls in these secret societies should come out of them and in and through the Church labor for their immediate salvation.

Deacons, local preachers, class-leaders Church members, is your God-given commission so unimportant and trifling that you must be initiated into the mystery of these side issues? occupy your time? Are there no souls to be saved? Are you not all ambassadors for Christ? Is it not your duty to live as Christ lived, "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners?"

Holmes of Richmond, Va., will spend the winter with his father. The evening schools are very largely attended by adults.

The marriage of Mr. Charles H. Law son and Mrs. Mary Dettler, called Rev. Gels from Connecticut sooner than he had anticipated.

There are persons in this city who have the ADVOCATE every Saturday before sunset.

THEY SAY

(Specially reported for the Advocate.)

—That people are saying the most ridiculous things that you ever heard.

—That they can't tell the truth to save their lives.

—That they can mind their own business if they can only get a chance to mind some one else's.

—That Blind Bill, a colored inmate of Georgia penitentiary, has a remarkable sense of touch.

—That he can tell any one whom he has met by feeling of his hand.

—That a man whom he had not met for ten years shook hands with him the other day and Bill at once called him by name, though not a word had before been spoken.

—That the frigate bird is considered the fleetest animal that flies.

—That scamen believe that it can start with the peep of dawn from the coast of Africa and following the trade winds, land on the American coast before sunset.

—That it can fly more than two hundred miles an hour.

—That the flower pieces sent at the funeral of the late Judge Rufin were among the most elegant ever seen.

—That the family sent them to be photographed last week.

—That they were so large and so numerous that they completely filled a large express train.

—That the seven-year-old daughter of our ex-representative said while trying to thread a needle, "I fear first you don't succeed, try, try, again, and then if you don't succeed ask somebody else to do it."

—That the way that the turkeys were demolished on Thanksgiving day was a caution to the Jews.

—That the bride and groom from Charlestown dined with their relatives in Acorn St. on Thanksgiving day.

—That the party on Thanksgiving night at Patriarchate Hall was a big success.

—That one of the new grooms looked like a little lonesome without his lady last Thursday night.

—That a thin faced man should support side whiskers to widen his face. That a fat faced man should favor long thin whiskers to lengthen his face.

—That the lover proposes. That divorce disposes.

—That the regalia made by Mr. M. Overton on Washington street show a great deal of original taste and design.

—That the French word for duke is "couperhead." That it is a combination of pur and chic. That it is derived from pur.

—That Rev. Phillips Brooks described the venerable Dr. Cyrus A. Bartol in conversation as a "dear moti-entangled angel."

—That a Boston art critic, who strayed into Trinity Church and admired the huge preacher, and also the huge chancel, describes Phillips Brooks as "a magnificent animal in a semi-circular pen."

—That the more you live within your



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proclaim a "great error" in the notion that saves and cares not only for the body but for the immortal soul. This is not only the work of "the Church" but because the Church is simply an aggregate of individuals it is also the work of every individual Church member. Visiting, nursing and caring for the sick and afflicted is the divinely appointed work of the Church, and Church members should perform this labor of love in obedience to the blessed Master, not as members of a secret society, for fear of a fifty cent fine, but as members of the Church of the living God. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Thus the Word of God gives this work as pure religion," but thousands of Church members have neglected it altogether unless under the iron clad rules of some secret society. Let this work be done as God intended by the Church as pure, "undistorted benevolence."

There will be no secret societies in Heaven, neither should the future citizens of that "better country" waste their time in them in this "wilderness of sin."

The greater field for doing good is in the Church of God, and it is not in the order of sound philosophy to leave the greater opportunity for the lesser.

I. These societies are of human, and, consequently, only temporal and transitory in origin and design. Some one may say, Why, our society dates back to Solomon's time." What if it does? Solomon's idolatry and plurality of wives and concubines dates back to his time also; the pyramids of Egypt are older than he, but they are crumbling to dust like all the other works of man.

The Church is of divine origin, with endless duration as are her chief characteristics. "The Church is the body of Christ" and "He is from everlasting to everlasting;" the Church is the only lifeboat on the sea of time, built after the Divine plan, as the original ark that saved the antediluvian world. In contrast to the works of man, there is none that will last, and there is none that will survive amid human wrecks. The Church is the only lifeboat on the sea of time, built after the Divine plan, as the original ark that saved the antediluvian world. In contrast to the works of man, there is none that will last, and there is none that will survive amid human wrecks. The Church is the only lifeboat on the sea of time, built after the Divine plan, as the original ark that saved the antediluvian world. In contrast to the works of man, there is none that will last, and there is none that will survive amid human wrecks.

II. The Church as a body and the in-

dividuals who make no compromise with the world. How can a Church member invite a lost soul to Christ at the Friday evening prayer meeting after having debated with him the price of a ball ticket at the Monday evening lodge meeting?

Those who have once professed godliness, joined the Church and "run well for a season" and then fallen back in their old ways, according to the true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. ii. 22) generally seek and find admission in the secret society, trying by activity therein to fill the void left by the departed spirit of godliness. Like Solomon's foolish son Rehoboam they substitute brass for the gold that the world has taken from them. Call the roll of your secret societies and see if your most active members are not backsliders from the pure religion of Christ, vainly endeavoring to silence an awakened conscience with works of the flesh, forgetful of the eternal truth that the heart must be right with God before our works can be acceptable with Him.

IV. The great work of saving souls, of definitely and specially assisting men in their preparation to stand before a holy God does not enter into the thought or design of the secret society. Their work is all confined to this brief existence; "but what shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" what is benevolence, fraternity and morality but simply parts of a whole that will leave its votaries still lacking the "one thing needful" for the enjoyment of eternal life.

V. The Church member joining the secret organization thereby depreciates his Church and dishonors his Lord; for he virtually says, "I join here because the Church is not equal to the emergency." With this is not the Church's emergency. Does she not teach true benevolence and charity and fraternity. Must the Church member become allied with corrupt, beer-drinking, policy-playing moral wrecks in order to learn and teach the truths of good Samaritanism?

Church members of secret societies listen and you will hear the voice from heaven "Saying, come out of her my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

VI. Church members in secret societies are harmful rather than beneficial to the non-Church members therein. 1st. By giving them a false conception of true Christianity; exhibiting not the true God, separated, self-denying life of Christ, "peculiar" and holy; but a life of constant self-indulgence with and of the world. 2d. By giving them a false security in reference to the relation between the present and future, they take the word of the professing Christian, that they are bound for Heaven, and seeing them act so much like themselves they are easily persuaded by the enemy of their souls that they are on their way to heaven also, when in reality professor and non-professor are often both going together in the other direction.

VII. Church members in secret societies are robbing God and His Church of

the vain devices of man. What shall be done with them? What was done with the man that hid his talent in the earth? (see Matt. xxv. 24-30.)

Watchmen on the walls of Zion how can you find time and talent to attend lodge and society meetings while members of your parish are famishing for the bread of life. Paul, after three years labor in Ephesus, could testify and call the Ephesians to witness that he had "shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God" and that he had taught them "from house to house." He found no time to mingle in the secret societies of his day, neither will we if we become rightly impressed with our responsible position as under-shepherds of the flock.

We are here in "Christ's stead," commissioned to feed the lambs and sheep of the flock; think you Christ would join a secret society were He to come to New England in person to-day? Would Peter or James or John? Would Wesley or Luther or John Knox or the earnest pioneers of our early Church find time for these side issues? In proportion to our love for the lost souls in these secret societies we should come out of them and in and through the Church labor for their immediate salvation.

Deacons, local preachers, class-leaders, Church members, is your God-given commission so unimportant and trifling that you must be initiated into the mysteries of worldliness in order to occupy your time? Are there no souls to be saved? Are you not all ambassadors for Christ? Is it not your duty to live as Christ lived, "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

What would the Queen think of the ambassadors to her distant provinces if they should form alliances with her rebellious subjects before they threw down their arms? What must Jesus think of his ambassadors here in close affiliation with his enemies?—and all are his enemies—in "rebellion against him, who will not have him reign over them!"

Fellow soldiers of the cross of Christ let us hasten the coming of his glorious kingdom! Having with John heard his farewell words, "Surely I come quickly," let us in action as well as words answer back "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

—That a gentleman who meant to pay a short call on a lady Thanksgiving day, was so absorbed in her and her surroundings that he forgot his dinner hour and came near losing his dinner.

—That people who live in glass houses should be careful how they throw stones.

—That people who have daughters of their own, should be very careful what they say of other people's daughters.

—That the Fraternals Association have decided to have their ball at Horticultural Hall early in January.

—That the whole town of Andover was scared last Friday afternoon.

—That no arrest has been made in Matamoros, Ill., for two years. That the police force has been dispersed with.

—That the largest wooden structure in the world, is said to be the government building in the capital of New Zealand.

—That the block is four stories high, and occupies an area of nearly two acres.

—That the city itself is mostly wooden on account of the earthquakes of the region and is called "the city of packing cases," and "the city of match boxes."

—That the apron sale of the Student Aid Society will occur during the holidays.

—That every family should possess a copy of the Advocate next week.

BERT ISLEW.

—That the seven-year-old daughter of our ex-representative said while trying to thread a needle, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again, and then if you don't succeed ask somebody else to do it."

—That the way that the turkeys were demolished on Thanksgiving day was a caution to the Jews.

—That the bride and groom from Charlestown dined with their relatives in Acorn St. on Thanksgiving day.

—That the party on Thanksgiving night at Patriarchate Hall was a big success.

—That one of the new grooms looked a little lonesome without his lady last Thursday night.

—That a thin faced man should support side whiskers to widen his face. That a fat faced man should favor long chin whiskers to lengthen his face.

—That the lover proposes. That marriage disposes. That divorce exposes.

—That the regalias made by Mr. M. W. Overton on Washington street show a great deal of original taste and design.

—That the French word for dude is "copurche." That it is a combination of pur and chic. That co is added for emphasis.

—That Rev. Phillips Brooks described the venerable Dr. Cyrus A. Bartol in conversation as a "dear moth-eaten angel."

—That a Boston art critic, who strayed into Trinity Church and admired the huge preacher, and also the huge chancel, described Phillips Brooks as "a magnificent animal in a semi-circular pen."

—That the more you live within your income, the more you will save and the further you will get away from the poor house.

—That the young lady, thought to resemble Mrs. Cleveland so much, looks very aristocratic, though and in black.

—That a good, steady, church-going mechanic, farmer, clerk or teacher, without a cent, is worth more than forty loafers or nonproducers in broadcloth.

—That a gentleman who meant to pay a short call on a lady Thanksgiving day, was so absorbed in her and her surroundings that he forgot his dinner hour and came near losing his dinner.

—That people who live in glass houses should be careful how they throw stones.

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Its department of music, fancy work, floriculture, fashions, receipts and household hints are filled each month with articles of great practical worth, and will prove interesting to ladies; in fact, the magazine from its old-time fireplace on its front cover, all through its well-printed and beautifully-illustrated pages, is wholesome and interesting. We are therefore pleased to call attention to the fact that we have made arrangements, so we can offer the Cottage Hearth for a year free, to any one who will send us \$2.25 for a year's subscription to the Boston Advocate, and as ours is a limited offer, our subscribers would do well to order at once. Send for a free sample copy to the Cottage Hearth Co., Boston.

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