

JUNE 25, 1892.

A PROTESTANT'S VIEW OF MASONRY.

In order to show that Catholics are not the only ones to recognize the evils of Masonry we here give an address delivered by a distinguished Protestant, Charles A. Blanchard, President of the Chicago Protestant Theological Seminary:

Secret societies are out of the characteristics of the age in which we live. Within a few weeks I gave an address in a town where there were three churches, all of them weak and living by permission of the world, while at the same time, in that town, there were said to be sixteen different secret orders. In another town where I recently spent the Sabbath there were two churches, both of them largely sustained by men who do not profess Christianity, and ten secret lodges of various kinds. The Masonic order claims in the United States more than six hundred thousand members. The Old Fellows of Pythias claim more than half that many. These are but three out of scores of different orders, some of them professing good objects, some of them composed exclusively of men, and all of them drawing money by hundreds of thousands of dollars from the earnings of the people.

In Chicago there are reported in the directory something like a thousand lodges. There are, I believe, counting everything that pretends to be religious, only about three hundred churches. The figures in New York, Boston, New Orleans, Cincinnati and St. Louis will not differ materially. I think it safe to say to-day that in the United States there are four lodges to every church. I do not affirm this, for it would be difficult to make the count, but from facts known this would seem to be a fair inference.

Counting, as they do, their membership by hundreds of thousands, their revenues by millions, and lodges, chapters, councils, commanderies, etc., by tens of thousands, it is obvious that they are one of the great forces affecting men for good or evil. It is apparent that these organizations can be known by persons who choose to inform themselves. The public services which they hold, the literature which they put forth and the testimony of conscientious men who, having united with them in ignorance, have come out from them and borne their testimony against them, afford a full and complete guidance for every honest man who desires to know the truth concerning them and to act as Christian duty requires.

Availing ourselves of these sources of information, there are several facts which we think the candid observer will speedily arrive at. In the first place he will see that while the names, rituals, forms of obligations and non-essentials generally of these different organizations vary, their principle is substantially one. There is no way in which a person can consistently justify one of them and condemn the rest. Even a secret temperance order involves all the essential principles of Free Masonry, and the man who is a faithful and enthusiastic member of one of these organizations cannot be a consistent enemy of the rest, nor any of them.

In the history of the Grange, for example, we are told that the persons who organized that fraternity were Masons; the Knights of Pythias are, in our cities and towns in general, promoted by a little circle of Free Masons and Odd Fellows, and while largely different in membership from the Masonic order, they nevertheless have a little circle of influential men who are members of both organizations. This is true, so far as I am informed, of all modern secret orders.

Another fact which will very pleasantly appear to the candid searcher after truth, is that these organizations are religious in character. While this is true of all of them, it is in a marked degree true of Free Masonry; and as this organization is mother and model of other lodges, a detailed examination of its professions and claims in this regard seems needful.

In the first place, the mere looker on who had never read at all would arrive at the conclusion that Free Masonry was a religious organization. The various Masonic bodies have chaplains, prelates and priests. All of them have what they call an altar. One of them has a baptismal service, by which the children of members of the organization are in a sense inducted into it while yet in infancy. The burial services which are prepared for them in case of death of members of the organization intimate that the person who has belonged to it and died, is sure of an eternity of happiness, because of his relation to the order. So clear is this impression that ordinary Masons who have no interest in denying the truth, say without hesitation that the man who lives up to his Masonic obligations is sure of heaven. Or, as they more frequently put it, "Masonry is good enough religion for me."

These religious officers and implements, together with the impression produced upon common men by the services of the order, are two proofs that this lodge is religious in character. But the most decisive evidence is contained in the statements of the learned and influential men of the order. For example, we find in Mackey's Lexicon of Free Masonry, page 369, an article entitled "Prayer." The author says: "All the ceremonies of our order are pre-arranged and terminated with prayer, because Masonry is a religious institution." Mr. Daniel Sickels, a thirty-third degree Mason, who has occupied many if not most of the offices in the higher bodies in New York State, says, in his notes on the third degree: "We

now find man complete in morality and intelligence, with a state of religion added, to insure him the protection of the Deity and to guard him against going astray. These three degrees thus form a perfect and harmonious whole; nor can we conceive that anything can be suggested more, which the soul of man requires." These words are found in his "Free Masons' Monitor," on pages 97 and 98.

Persons, however, who are conversant with the writings on this subject, will understand that while Masonry distinctly claims a religious character, and professes to send those who conform to its obligation to what they call "the Grand Lodge above," the organization is, clearly and distinctively, not only non-Christian, but anti-Christian. This is evident, in the first place, from the titles and regalia which are used by the fraternity. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is humble, serving and aspires to be useful to others. The religion of Free Masonry is proud, vain and loves display. It is fairly stuffed with such titles as Worshipful Master, Grand Master, Grand High Priest, Grand King, Prelate, Prince, Sovereign, etc.

The fact that the religion of Free Masonry cannot be Christian again comes out in the membership of the order. A man may unite with the Church and be a bad man, but he must also be a hypocrite, for he must at least profess sorrow for his sins, love for God, love for his fellow-men and a purpose to live a holy life. No Church will receive a man unless he so covenants, but men are received into the Masonic church on the payment of the initiation fee and the taking of the oath, without any purpose expressed or understood to live a holy life. The prayerless, godless, profane, drunken members of the lodges do not break any part of their covenant if they continue in their vices and sins.

In fact, strange as it may appear, Masons seem quite proud to say that pirates, savages, robbers and murderers are members of their order in good and regular standing. The book entitled "The Mystic Tie," containing facts and opinions illustrating the character and tendency of Free Masonry, edited by Albert G. Mackey, whose Lexicon of Free Masonry has already been mentioned, contains, we believe, something like nine different articles showing that pirates, savages, robbers, murderers, or men combining two or more of these characters, have been Masons in good standing and have promptly recognized their Masonic obligations when called upon to do so. It does not require argument with intelligent persons to show that an organization admitting persons of these classes, without any professed purpose to change their actions, is not Christian.

Still further, the explicit statements of the later Masonic writers contradict directly the earliest authors who claim the Masonic religion is Christian. Webb says, in the quotation above made, that Christians, Mohammedans, Jews, Buddhists, Parsees, Confucians and pagans in general, are all eligible to Free Masonry.

On page 402 Mackey's Lexicon of Free Masonry, above quoted, under the article "Religion," the author says: "The religion of Free Masonry is pure theism, on which its different members may engraft their own peculiar opinions; but they are not permitted to introduce them into the lodge or to connect their truth or falsehood with the truth of Masonry." This statement is of high authority, and its purport is perfectly plain. The Christian who joins the Masonic lodge may engraft his belief in Christ on the deism of Masonry, but he must not introduce his Christianity into the lodge nor connect his truth or falsehood with that of Free Masonry.

The article, "Blazing Star," on the 61st page of this same Lexicon, says: "Formerly the blazing star was said to commemorate that light which appeared to guide the wise men of the East to the place of our Saviour's nativity; but this allusion, however beautiful, interferes with the universal character of Masonry, it is now generally omitted, and the blazing star is said to be an emblem of Divine Providence." That is, formerly the ritual of the lodge contained here a recognition of our Saviour, but as this would interfere with the universal character of Masonry, it is to be stricken out. In Chase's Digest of Masonic Law, on pages 207 and 208, the writer says: "The Jews, the Chinese, the Turks, each reject either the New Testament or the Old, or both, and yet we see no good reason why they should not be good Masons." In fact Blue Lodge Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Bible. It is not founded on the Bible. If it was, it would not be Masonry. It would be something else.

If it be true that Free Masonry is a religion, and that it is not the Christian religion, it is evident that it is a false or idolatrous religion, and the hundreds of thousands of men who are profaning the Sabbath and attending to their lodges, are in danger of losing their souls. They are simply pagan worshippers in a Christian land. They share the advantages of a Christian civilization, but they do not contribute to the progress of the Christian faith which alone renders a Christian civilization possible. While it is true that Free Masonry is less than two hundred years old, it is also true that organized religions essentially the same in character have been in the world for thousands of years. The mysteries of India, Egypt, Greece, were all of them similar in character to the lodges which are now meeting over stores,

blacksmith shops, and in costly temples which their members have erected all over our land. The effect which these lodges are producing on society is like that which the old lodges produced on the society of their day; and it is certain, either that the men of our nation will become separated from these secret pagan religions, or our nation must cease to be Christian. It would seem to be almost unnecessary to ask what should be the attitude of the Christian ministry and the Christian Church toward the rival and antagonistic religions which are springing up on every hand, and which are withdrawing members and money from the Church. If it is a duty to seek to convert the heathen in Asia and Africa, it is certainly a duty to seek to persuade our neighbors and friends from being deceived by similar false religions to abandon their lodges and attach themselves to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the ministry and the Church do not exist for this purpose, what are they for?

As Lincoln said: "This country cannot continue to exist half slave and half-free," so it is evident that it will not permanently continue half Christian and half pagan. An honest and intelligent person on the part of the ministry of our land will save tens of thousands of traps and pitfalls, will strengthen the Churches, and aid in forming the public sentiment which in God's good time will sweep the whole list of secret orders from the earth.

What A Child of Mary is at Lourdes.

It is not easy to be a "Child of Mary" at Lourdes, for the name stands for a nearly perfect being, one whose life is as devoted and self-sacrificing almost as that of a professed religious. Only unmarried persons and children are admitted to the membership in the sodality and the duties are not few or easy. It is the duty of the Children of Mary to take care of all the altars of the parish church—eight in number—with the exception of the high altar, which is in the special charge of the Sisters of Charity of Nevers, the community to which Bernadette belonged; to visit their sick; to bury their dead; to visit the bereaved families, even if they be otherwise quite unknown to them, save as members of the Sodality; to assist at a certain number of Masses for each departed soul of the first year of each departed soul of a "Child of Mary, besides the funeral Mass. And it does not suffice to present oneself in the church on the occasion, it is *de rigueur* to go to the house of mourning, afterward to the church and thence to the cemetery. The *cure* once touched sharply upon the habit of certain members of his flock who, while following the remains of a deceased brother or sister, did not hesitate to talk loudly of their own affairs, being as it were, present there in the body, but not in the spirit, while the soul which they might help by their prayers, was virtually forgotten, even before the mortal remains were consigned to the earth.

There are other duties of the Child of Mary. The Children of Mary must punctually attend, instructions for festivals, their hours of Adoration, for all must also belong to the Perpetual Adoration. They must contribute within their means for certain objects, they must wear blue sashes, after the fashion of those familiar to us in the Statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, white veils ample enough to cover them from head to foot, blue ribbons and, on certain occasions, be all in white; besides observing other rules and duties that are intended to advance the glory of the Immaculate Mother and further the good of the Sodality.

But there must be abundant compensation for all this, judging from the enthusiasm of one and all who are privileged to belong to the Sodality. They all seem to realize the consoling assurance of St. Bernard: "A Child of Mary shall never perish."

The Pity of it.

Do you know, said an old bartender recently, that every time I sell a drink to a man I feel like a criminal? I have been doing it for over twenty years and have never known the taste of liquor in my life. But I have seen men drink it to their ruin, and never one to his good. It actually makes me angry to see men stand up at a bar and drink liquor. I have often been thought surly, but it was not surliness, it was anger, that made me seem so. I am not a prohibitionist and would not vote that ticket under any circumstances, because I know enough about the business to know that an attempt to enforce such a law simply means that you make liars and sneaks out of all drinking men. But I know that a drinking does no man good and the man is a fool who says that a drink when he is feeling badly is just what he wants. I have seen those men turn drunkards. For he who loves the danger shall perish in it.

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THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIENCE.

Without revelation how shall we know anything about God? We reply by the study of man himself. It is manifest to reason that man must have had an intelligent cause—an allwise and Almighty Maker. The argument from design is a good one. To say that man originated by chance is simply absurd. What is chance? It is either an intelligent agent or it is not. If it is not an intelligent agent it is nothing, and of course is not capable of originating anything, much less of adopting means to an end and showing evidence of design. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* If chance in an intelligent agent capable of originating creation and especially man so fearfully and wonderfully made, then you may as well call that cause God as to call it chance. The name is not of so much importance as the thing.

Not admitting that the constitution of human nature shows forth an intelligent Creator who does that constitution teach us of His character and of the corresponding obligation of man? The wonderful complication of man's physical system, which has been compared to a harp of a thousand strings all designed with admirable skill to produce complete harmony of result, of course indicates infinite power, infinite skill and infinite benevolence. This evidence is greatly increased when we consider the connection of the soul with the body—the complete man made in the image of God.

But what is particularly worthy of our notice is the fact that man is made with a moral nature. That is, he has been endowed by his Maker with a faculty, an instinct of whatever name you may please to give it, which distinguishes between the right and the wrong of actions.

Some would persuade us that what we call conscience is the result of education. But the question naturally arises, How can you educate an idea into a man before the idea exists? The idea of right and wrong must have been implanted in human nature, or education in that idea would have been impossible. Conscience is aptly called the voice of God in the human soul. The fact of its existence in the soul shows conclusively that God must have placed it there. What is the meaning of it? Why, evidently that God designed and wills that we should do some things and avoid others.

Cardinal Newman, in his Grammar of Assent, says: "I assume, then, that conscience has a legitimate place among our mental acts; as readily so as the notion of memory, of reasoning, of imagination or as the sense of the beautiful; that as there are objects which when presented to the mind cause it to feel grief, regret, joy or desire, so there are things which excite in us approbation or blame and which we consequently call right or wrong; and which experienced in ourselves, find in us that specific sense of pleasure or pain which goes by the name of a good or bad conscience. This being taken for granted, I shall attempt to show that in this special feeling which follows the commission of what we call right or wrong, lie the materials for the real apprehension of a Divine Sovereign."

The inevitable conclusion, then, is that the Being who made us is a Divine Sovereign who will hold us accountable for our actions. That voice of God in the human soul says distinctly, if you do certain things you shall be rewarded; if you do certain other things you shall be condemned.

But how shall we know what things to do and what not to do? The decisions of conscience are not always uniform. One man will feel justified in doing what another condemns. Let us not mistake the real office of conscience. Newman says we should consider conscience not as a rule of right conduct, but as a sanction of right conduct. Conscience needs to be educated like any other faculty of the mind. Newman says, further: "Conscience has both a critical and a judicial office, and though its promptings in the millions of human beings to whom it is given are not in all cases correct, that does not necessarily interfere with the force of its testimony and of its sanction—its testimony that there is a right and a wrong, and its sanction to that testimony conveyed in the feelings which attend on right or wrong conduct."

But the important question arises, how shall the conscience be educated? Where shall we seek for a rule of right conduct? Undoubtedly there are certain great principles of justice and right which are the dictate of reason. For instance, reason teaches that we have no right to violently seize our neighbors goods, or to injure him in his person. Yet we know that these dictates of reason are constantly violated, so that we need not only a definite code of morals but also an external authority to bind us to the performance of what is prescribed. Reason is not sufficient either as a guide or as a sanction. The faculty or sentiment of conscience, which constitutes the foundation of our moral nature, is closely allied and gives rise to a class of feelings and aspirations which we call religious—feelings of reverence, of worship, of sorrow for sin, and desire for pardon, which prompts acts of sacrifice to placate the offended Deity.

For these natural religion does not suffice—we need a revelation from the Author of our being. He who has implanted this moral nature in us and really constituted us religious beings must tell us how we may please Him, what He would have us do and avoid, and how we shall approach Him in

order to obtain forgiveness of our conscious guilt and render ourselves pleasing in His sight. In a word, conscience and revelation are intimately and necessarily associated. The very existence of conscience in the original man was a prophecy of revelation to complete the manifest design under which he was created. We believe indeed that there was an original revelation the remains of which exist in the early record of all nations; but the full completion of the design was reserved for that glorious consummation embodied in the revelation of the Son of God, as it exists in the unique and harmonious teachings and immemorial traditions of the Catholic Church. It seems to us that the very existence of conscience in the constitution of man is a loud and emphatic protest not only against the popular naturalism of the day but also against the vague, undefined, contradictory and unauthoritative teaching of sectarianism. A sure guide to conscience must speak not with stammering lips and double tongue but with a clear, distinct, emphatic voice of authority which shall command the respect, the confidence and the ready obedience of the people. Where can that be found but in the Catholic Church?—N. Y. Catholic Review.

Reminiscences of Dean Swift.

Under the heading, "A Celebrated Citizen of Cork," there has been recently published a paper of more than usual interest. It consists of a short correspondence that passed between Mr. Thomas Farren, the then Mayor of Cork, and Dean Swift, in August of the year 1737. The correspondence of the city of Cork had, for some reasons as we shall see left unstated, desired to confer the freedom of their city on the author of "Gulliver's Travels," and had sent the necessary parchment, enclosed in a silver box, by Eaton-Stannard, Esq., the recorder of Dublin, to the Dean, to which the latter sent a reply in which, after excusing the tardiness in acknowledging the compliment on account of ill health, he goes on to say, not without an undertone of sarcasm: "I could have wished, as I am a private man, that, in the instrument of my freedom you had pleased to assign your reasons for making choice of me. I know it is a usual compliment to bestow the freedom of the city on an Archbishop or Lord Chancellor, and other persons of great title, merely upon account of their stations or power; but a private man, and a perfect stranger, without power or grandeur, may justly expect to find the motives assigned in the instrument of his freedom, on what yet I cannot thus distinguish. And yet I cannot discover in the whole parchment scrip any one reason offered. Next, as to the silver box, there is not so much as my name upon it, nor any one syllable to show it was present from your city. Therefore I have, by the advice of friends, agreeably with my opinion, sent back the box and instrument of freedom by Mr. Faulkner to be returned to you; leaving to your choice, whether to insert the reasons for which you were pleased to give me my freedom, or bestow this box upon some more worthy person whom you may have an intention to honor, because it will equally fit everybody."

The Mayor and aldermen complied with the Dean's wishes and had the reasons—"The many singular services your pen and your counsel have done to your country"—inscribed on the casket, which ultimately came to a rather ignominious end, as we find the following "item" in the Dean's last will and testament. "Item—I bequeath to Mr. John Grattan, presiding of Clonmethan, my silver box in which the freedom of the city of Cork was presented to me, in which I desire the said John to keep the tobacco he usually cheweth, called pigtail."

The programme of the Catholic Summer school that will open at New London, Conn., in August announces that among those who have accepted invitations to lecture during the three weeks' session are: Col. Richard M. Johnson, of Baltimore; Brother Azarias, former President of Rock Hill College, Ellicott City, Md.; Rev. Denis O'Sullivan, S. J., of Woodstock, Md.; Prof. Lagard, of Mount St. Mary's Emmitsburg, Md.; and M. F. Morris, a member of the Washington bar. Some twenty other essayists and noted literary men have also accepted.

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