

of money was made up, by which I was enabled to travel several months in the company of my mother, and until the horrible impressions of that premature interment faded from my mind.—*Keystone.*

CAN A MAN BE A CHRISTIAN AND BELONG TO ANOTHER SOCIETY?

BY BRO. GEO. FRANK GOULEY.

In propounding this question we ask to be understood as taking the creed of the Roman Church as the definition of Christianity for the purpose we have now in view, for the reason that it claims to be the Mother Church, within whose realm is included all the true and essential dogmas of the Christian religion.

Whether this claim be true or not, it is not our purpose or province to discuss in a masonic journal, as that is a question for different churches to settle between themselves, but as our ancient Fraternity has been systematically attacked by several denominations as being anti-christian and therefore to be crushed out, we are now driven to defend ourselves by an honest and just comparison between our Institution and the christian church alluded to, and we wish to say at the very outset, that in mentioning the terms church, or christianity, we have reference only to the Roman hierarchy, unless otherwise called by name.

That church began its crusade against Freemasonry early in the 14th century, and by a close analysis of the reasons which first brought it out against us, we find that it arose from the fact that christians who belonged to masonic lodges were brought daily into fraternal contact with men of other religions, and that in the lodge, in order to preserve peace and harmony, all religious questions were ignored, and no particular dogma was taught. The church apprehending that the permission allowed its members to mingle with other so-called christians and to recognize them as such was nothing less than the recognition of heresy, determined to put a stop to it by crushing the lodge unless it could prevent its own members from attending. The latter course was adopted, but not being entirely successful the full powers of damnation possessed by the church were brought into requisition, as it was claimed by the Roman bishop that whatever he damned on earth was damned in heaven, and whatever he loosed on earth, was loosed in heaven, so the church blazed away with one bull after another, without, however, effecting any particular result beyond scaring its own feeble minded members from becoming Freemasons, and thereby cutting them off from all the light and knowledge of a generous and liberal train of thought. This, however, was a great deal gained, for each ray of light let into the dark sink of bigotry was like an arrow to the heart of the bishop.

Clement the XII, in 1738, on the 28th of April, said :

"We have learned that several societies, vulgarly called Freemasons, each day make new progress, in which association men of all sects, affecting an appearance of natural honesty, array themselves together in an impenetrable pact."

Here was the great trouble in the mind of that priest, viz.: that "all sects" could come together in the compact of BROTHERS. This was too much for his christianity, hence Pius the IX, the present presiding priest at Rome, in exhorting his faithful followers, says of Clement's article :

"He proscribed their meetings under whatever names they might be held, and he ordered all and each of the faithful to absent themselves from everything done by these societies under pain of incurring excommunication."

He also says :

"Benoit XIV, his (Clement's) successor, repeated and developed this command in his encyclical letter of 13th of May, 1751, by which he confirmed the decrees and penalties proclaimed by his predecessor."

Within the lodge and upon the altar lay the Holy Bible open for every member to read, and in it could not be found a law for the adoration of the Virgin and of saints; no power of a priest to absolve crimes and sins for a financial consideration; no power of the Roman bishops to depose kings and rulers, and to collect tithes from an over-taxed people to keep up church establishments in which revelled debauchery and licentiousness in the name of religion, hence the lodge must shut the Bible or shut its doors against the faithful. Every device capable of production by mortal man, was invented to get the lodge to refuse admittance to members of the church, but in vain, those who were intelligent enough let the priest hurl away his anathemas, then Pius IX tried on the doge of great mercy in his epistle to the Bishop of Olinda, saying :

"We, however, considering that these criminal sects unveil their mysteries only to those who by their impiety appear ready to accept them, exacting from these adepts a solemn oath by which they swear never to make known, at any time or in any case,