

ther the good Templar, lays too much stress upon his one idea, and overlooks the true and universal aim of the Craft. He, too, soon drops out, unless he is convinced of better things, and becomes imbued in course of time with the true spirit and noble genius of Masonry.

But a great deal worse than all these is the religious enthusiast who insists that every man, especially every member of his lodge should accept his theory and his theology. This often breaks out in unexpected spots; it is sometimes found on election nights, sometimes it stares at you from the ballot-box, and often creates an uncomfortable feeling among the brethren when once aroused.

Some years ago, not a thousand miles from Brooklyn, a brother, an eminent divine, conceived the idea of founding a new lodge, the members of which should all belong to his church, or at least certainly to his denomination; it was to be known and recognized as *the lodge par excellence*. All the Christian virtues in the universe should centre in and around the members of this model lodge, and none but the truly good and virtuous, and especially none but those confessedly and actively affiliated with some church of "our" faith should be admitted. This lodge was successfully launched upon a poor and unsuspecting and sinful Masonic community, the Master was the class leader of the church, the Senior Warden was the pastor, the superintendent of the Sunday school "took" the South, while the sexton figured as Secretary, and three good and pious undertakers were chosen as the three Trustees.

For a while things went along smoothly, and the new lodge flourished like a hot-house plant, fostered by a powerful Christian denomination and backed by a strong and wealthy church. But soon, *very soon*, all the good material was exhausted, and they were looking around and

into other churches to find members. These were not quite so good as those coming from their own fold, still they were *good* men, and were accepted. Then here and there an outsider was proposed, but he was obliged first to join a church and serve six months on probation, and it was thoroughly understood that no one could enter this heavenly lodge except through the door of a church. However, these good people overlooked one important matter. In framing their by-laws they made no provision as to what should be done with backsliders, and here was a rock upon which these unco good people shattered all their hopes; for the human race is very largely composed of backsliders; and then a very wealthy member of the congregation died, and each of the three Trustees was eager to take charge of the funeral arrangements, and this created a jealousy and ill-feeling in the board, which soon spread among the members; for it is a well-established fact that when you touch people's pockets, Christian or heathen, Jew or Gentile, you touch a very gentle spot, much more susceptible than the mythical conscience. Gradually it was found that some members of the lodge did not attend church service, evinced no interest in the Sunday school, and it was suggested that charges be preferred against them. In the meantime a man became Master of the lodge who had "backslided" several times, and this broke them all up, at least as far as their usefulness as an adjunct of the church was concerned, and now, if I am rightfully informed, they are reorganized upon a more worldly plan.

Many instances could be cited where clergymen are made chaplains of lodges, and with all due respect to the cloth, I would say that I have often heard them pray *at* instead of for the brethren, and often also bring their peculiar doctrines or favorite dogmas up to the lodge where they are so out of place.