

THE SCRIPTURALLY CORRECT AND
EVANGELICAL PRACTICE IN DEALING WITH
LODGE MEMBERS IN OUR CONGREGATIONS

By Edgar Hoenecke, Pastor

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Michigan District Pastoral Conference*

Although it is quite commonly asserted that we of the Synodical Conference are in agreement as to the theoretical position on the lodge question, and although this treatise is to be of a specifically practical nature, we deem a brief restatement of the case of the true Lutheran Church against the lodge to form an essential premise and foundation for the thorough understanding and full appreciation of the Scriptural principles concerning the correct and evangelical practice in dealing with lodge members in our congregations.

From the following, direct quotations the position of our church against the lodge is clearly evinced:

The following quotations are taken from the "Acimnos Ceihpr," which is a transposition of the letters of the words "Masonic Cipher." This constitutes an authentic and authoritative presentation of the "Correct and Complete Work, and in addition thereto, *printed in full*, are the Monitorial Instructions for all degrees; then twenty-five ancient Landmarks of the Craft, and an appendix of valuable information consisting of test oath, prayers, odes, charges, addresses, soliloquies, etc. — published by the W. W. Daggett Publishing Company, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 1922." Albert G. Mackey, noted Masonic author and authority, compiled the ancient landmarks from which we first quote. He explains that "landmarks are unwritten laws or customs of Masonry . . . their antiquity . . . and the peculiarity that they are unrepeatable . . . are their essential elements."

Landmark 11th: "The necessity that every lodge, when congregated, should be duly tiled, . . . arises from the esoteric character of Masonry. As a secret institution, its portals must, of course, be guarded from the intrusion of the profane . . ."

Landmark 19th: "A belief in the existence of God as the Grand Architect of the Universe, is one of the most important landmarks of the order. . . . denial . . . is an absolute disqualification for initiation.

Landmark 20th: "Subsidiary to this belief in God . . . is the belief in a resurrection to a future life . . ."

Landmark 21st: "It is a landmark that a "Book of the Law" shall constitute an indispensable part of the furniture of every lodge . . . a Book of the Law, because it is not absolutely required that everywhere the Old and New Testament shall be used. The Book of the Law is that volume which, by the religion of the country, is believed to contain the revealed will of the Grand architect of the Universe. Hence, in all lodges in Christian countries, the Book of the Law is composed of the old and New Testaments; in a country where Judaism was the prevailing faith, the Old Testament alone would be suf-

ficient; and in Mohammedan countries, and among Mohammedan Masons the Koran might be substituted. Masonry does not attempt to interfere with the peculiar religious faith of its disciples, except so far as relates to the belief in the existence of God, and what necessarily results from that belief. . . . The Landmark, therefore, requires that a Book of the Law, a religious Code of some kind, purporting to be an exemplar of the revealed will of God, shall form an essential part of the furniture of every lodge."

Landmark 23rd: "The secrecy of the institution . . . (is) . . . most important. . . . Not secrecy in the sense that its members are unknown, that it produces its results in darkness. . . . Its design is not only publicly proclaimed, but it is vaunted by its disciples as something to be venerated. . . . It works for a result of which it boasts: the civilization and refinement of man, the amelioration of his condition and the reformation of his manners. . . ."

Landmark 24th: "The foundations of a speculative science upon an operative art, and the symbolic use and explanations of the terms of that art, for the purpose of religious or moral teaching, constitute another landmark of the order. . . ."

Landmark 25th: ". . . these landmarks can never be changed. . . ."

Oaths and Obligations: Entered Apprentice Degree: "I, A. B., of my own free will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God and this Worshipful Lodge, erected to Him and dedicated to the Holy Saints John, do hereby and hereon (the candidate is made to kneel before the altar of Masonry, his left hand supporting the Bible, on which lie the square and compasses, and his right hand resting thereon) most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear . . . binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by its roots, and buried in the rough sands of the sea at low-water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate this my solemn oath and obligation as an Entered Apprentice Mason. So help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same."

The Oath and Obligation of a Fellow-Craft Mason is similar to the above, varying in this that in several ways the candidate obligates himself to aid and relieve the brethren, and "not to cheat, wrong or defraud a lodge of Fellow-Crafts, nor a brother of this degree, knowingly . . . binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my left breast torn open, my heart plucked out, and given as a prey to the wild beasts of the field and the fowls of the air . . ."

The Oath and Obligation of a Master Mason is again similar to those above with addition and variations, as also this: "furthermore, that I will not have illicit carnal intercourse with a Master Mason's wife, mother, sister or daughter, I knowing them to be such; nor suffer it to be done by others if in my power to prevent it. . . ."

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Binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken from thence and burned to ashes, and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven, so that no more trace or remembrance may be had of so vile and perjured a wretch as I, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate this my solemn obligation as a Master Mason."

Appropriate Address to Candidate, p. 182: ". . . Here, in this house of God, this temple of brotherly love, and around this sacred altar, we make our fraternal vows. On it rests the Holy Scriptures, which is the textbook of our faith and an emblem of our principles. It points to our coming end; it reminds us of our approaching destiny, and it admonishes us that our conduct should come with clean hands and a pure heart . . ."

Address on the "Great Light in Masonry," p. 186: "I particularly direct your attention to the great Light in Masonry, the Holy Bible. Howsoever men differ in creed or theology, all good men are agreed that within the covers of the Holy Bible are found those principles of morality which lay the foundation upon which to build a righteous life. . . ."

Charge to the Lodge, p. 197: ". . . With the trowel, spread liberally the cement of brotherly love and affection; and circumscribed by the compasses, let us ponder well our words and actions, and let all the energies of our minds and the affections of our souls be employed in the attainment of our Supreme Grand Warden's approbation. Thus, when dissolution draws nigh, and the cold winds of death come sighing around us, and his chilly dews already glisten on our foreheads, with joy shall we obey the summons of the Grand Warden of Heaven, and go from our labors on earth to the everlasting refreshments in the Paradise of God. Then, by the benefit of the pass, a pure and blameless life, with a firm reliance on Divine Providence, shall we gain ready admission into that celestial lodge above, where the Supreme Grand Warden forever presides, forever reigns. When, placed at his right hand, he will be pleased to pronounce us just and upright Masons, then shall we be fitted as living stones for that spiritual temple, "that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Apron Addresses, p. 198: "apron . . . emblematical of purity and all perfection. . . . Let its pure and spotless surface be to you an ever-present reminder of an unblemished purity of life and rectitude of conduct; a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for purer actions. . . . And when at last your trembling soul stands naked and alone before the Great White Throne may it be your portion, oh my brother, to hear from him who sitteth as the Judge Supreme, the welcome words: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Symbolism of the Third Degree, p. 204: ". . . the secrets of nature and the principles of moral truth were there unveiled before you. You learned to place a just estimate upon those wondrous faculties wherewith God

has endowed the creatures formed after his own image, and you feel the duty he had imposed upon you of cultivating those divine attributes with unremitting care and attention, that you may thereby be enabled to glorify him and render yourself a contributor to the happiness of mankind. To the man whose mind has thus been molded, Nature presents . . . the knowledge of himself. . . . she finally instructs him how to die. She leads him to reflect upon his inevitable destiny and prompts the inward monitor to say that death has no sting equal to the stain of falsehood, and that the certainty of death at any time is preferable to the possibility of dishonor. . . . To the careless and thoughtless the lesson would end here, but the upright and true . . . will pursue it further, and apply it to the eternal salvation of his soul. . . ."

Obligation and Oath on Initiation into the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine: ". . . I do hereby, upon this Bible, and on the mysterious legend of the Koran, and its dedication to the Mohammedan faith, promise and swear and vow on the faith and honor of an upright man, come weal or woe, adversity or success, that I will never reveal any secret part or portion whatsoever of the ceremonies I have already received, that are about to be communicated to me or that I may hereafter be instructed in, to any person in the world. . . . I will protect and defend the unsullied honor of any Noble of the Mystic Shrine, when absent, if assailed; and now upon this sacred book, by the sincerity of a Moslem's oath I here register this irrevocable vow, subscribing myself bound thereto as well as *binding myself by the obligation of the prerequisite to this membership, that of a Knight Templar* (N. B.: The so-called *Christian* degree.) or that of a thirty-second degree A. and A. Scottish Rite Mason. In willful violation whereof may I incur the fearful penalty of having my eyeballs pierced to the center with a three-edged blade, my feet flayed and I be forced to walk the hot sands upon the sterile shores of the Red Sea until the flaming sun shall strike me with livid plague, and may Allah, the God of Arab, Moslem and Moham-medan, the god of our fathers, support me to the entire fulfillment of the same, Amen, Amen, Amen." N. B.: Some of the details of the horse-play that follow after this horrible obligation in the course of the initiation are unprintable because of their obscenity.)

The following quotations are taken from the works of the Order of Oddfellows. Rev. A. B. Grosh, Past Grand and Past Chief Patriarch, writes in his Manual, p. 34: "The order as founded by brother Wildey (1819) was simply a humane institution; its main objects were to relieve the brethren, bury the dead and care for the widow and orphan. But gradually there was infused into its lectures and charges much moral and unsectarian religious instruction; and at each revision these principles were increased, and deepened and strengthened, until its beneficial and relief measures, from being ends, have become means to a higher and greater end — to improve and elevate the character of man to imbue him with concep-

tions of his capabilities for good; to enlighten his mind; to enlarge the sphere of his affections, and thus to lead him to the cultivation of the true fraternal relations designed by the Great Author of his being. . . ."

Grosh's Manual, p. 181, is found a Christ-less prayer, with the following note: "Adopted by the Grand Lodge of the United States, to exclude prayers offensive to members of the order, — the same spirit as observed in the foregoing, shall be *strictly* followed by the officiating clergyman or chaplain."

Official Ritual, p. 13: "The lodge at its option, may open and close with prayer, but, if prayer is used, only the forms here provided may be used."

Grosh's Manual, p. 90: "Our institution has instinctively, as it were, copied after nearly all secret associations of a religious and moral character."

Rite of Initiation: Chaplain: "Almighty and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth, — with reverence we come into thy presence in behalf of this our friend now about to unite with this lodge and order, and dedicate his life to works of charity, love and peace. Guard him, we beseech thee, from all the perils of his way. As thy hand his hitherto led him, so may thou continue to watch over him in the hours of darkness and of light.

As in the presence of these witnesses he assumes the obligations of this brotherhood, may he also here consecrate himself to thy service and to the cause of humanity. Create in him a generous self-sacrificing spirit. . . . May he live thy law, the law which commands us to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. And when, after life well spent on earth, he shall pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and cross the silent river to join the loved ones gone before, may he meet thee, his father, and hear the welcome plaudit: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Grosh's Manual, p. 161: "The Bible: — Emblem of revealed, spiritual truth. . . . Its teachings of God and his Fatherhood, of man and human brotherhood, — as well as 'the first and great command' and 'the second which is like unto it' on which 'two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets' give this emblem peculiar value to all Oddfellows of every sect and every creed. And in view of our certain mortality, all need its teachings as to a future life. Assured that man must die, we desire to be assured that the ever-living God is our Father, and will make us the sharers of his immortality and eternal life, as revealed in that Book of books."

Initiation into Royal Purple Degree, p. 269: "The Tables of Stone, Cross and Crescent, Emblem of Divine Government: — It represents the common basis of the three great religions of the world (Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism) which recognize the One, only-living and true God, — and the foundation of all governments which acknowledge God as the ruler of nations, and the interests and welfare of the human race as their

end and aim. This Law is a constantly operating fact in the progress of religions and human governments among men, teaching us faith and trust in the Divine Ruler.

This common basis of religion and of morals teaches Christians that, having received so much through the Jew, they may well bear with his supposed deficiency (N. B.: The reference here is indisputably to the Jew's denial of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ.) until they can impart to him again; and the Moslem, that the foundation on which he stands is also common ground to the others; and the Jew, as his Law progresses among the nations moulding legislation and elevating morality, even while he is without a national home, it instructs in patience and in hope and to follow with his love wheresoever his Law goes in blessing and in triumph.

Followers of different teachers, ye are worshippers of one God, who is Father of all, and therefore ye are brethren. As such, charity, and speaking the truth in love, should prevail among us, — unity in good works, wherein all agree; toleration in opinions, wherein we differ."

At this point we would call attention to the fact that in all of these secret societies each candidate, previous to his initiation into the secrets and mysteries of the order, is required to obligate himself either by oath or by his sacred word of honor to the conscientious observance of all the principles and tenets of the order; and that hereby each members of a secret order has made himself voluntarily responsible for all that the lodge represents, and has added to the confession of the deed also his willing confession of the lips for the doctrines, principles and practices of the lodge.

We now add to the evidence above a rather lengthy quotation from the pamphlet of Elijah Alfred Coil, Unitarian preacher and member of the Masonic order:

"It is becoming more and more clear to me, as the facts relating to the subjects are brought out, that the fraternities, and the churches called liberal, have been working along parallel lines for years; but because the one put the chief emphasis upon the Fatherhood of God, and therefore emphasized theology, while the other put the chief emphasis upon the brotherhood of man, and therefore emphasized sociology, they have not realized that they were occupying practically the same ground. . . . Evidences of a better understanding are now appearing, and there is promise that real cooperation will ensue. —

"I have often thought, in recent years, that I should like to organize a Sunday School class, and use as a textbook the monitors of our leading fraternal orders, and show the members of these organizations the logic of the principles to which they, in their lodges, are pledged. *Nearly all of these monitors have as their very heart the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, immortality and salvation by character*, principles very familiar to every Unitarian Sunday School scholar who has been properly taught the fundamentals of our faith. —

"That the fundamental difference in the principles embodied in the historic creeds of Christendom and those of our modern secret orders has not clearly been thought out is indicated by the fact that many pledge themselves to both. There are lodge men who, in the churches, subscribe to the doctrine "that we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings," and enthusiastically join in the singing of hymns in which that idea is embodied. Then in their lodge meetings they just as enthusiastically assent to the following declaration: "Although our thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from the eyes of men, yet that all-seeing Eye, whom the Sun, Moon and Stars obey, and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions, pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits." (N. B. This taken from the third section of the Work on the Master Mason's Degree, MC, p. 150.) *A little child, once its attention is called to the matter, ought to be able to see, that it is impossible to harmonize the creed statement here quoted, with the declaration taken from the monitor of one of our greatest and most effective secret orders, and found, in substance, in the liturgies of nearly all the others.* If "we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings," then it cannot possibly be true that the all-seeing Eye "pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits." *One of these declarations excludes the other.* Men cannot consistently subscribe to both. They do, however, subscribe to both and are thereby led to inconsistencies which they do not discern. — . . . The fact that they do this does not indicate that they are deliberately inconsistent, but rather that they subordinate reason to sentiment and emotions on such occasions. That confusion and weakness are resulting from the course many are now pursuing in thus pledging themselves to one set of principles in their churches and to another set in their lodges, is so apparent that all who see conditions as they really are should count it a privilege to help clear the atmosphere and bring about a more consistent course. —

"If ever there was an age in which clear thinking and conscientious action were needed, it is the one in which we live. *The inadequacy of the dogmatic and ceremonial forms of religion is being more clearly shown every day. That is why I say a new compact is needed, and it should so be formulated that the good people of all lands, races and forms of religion can unite upon it.* As conditions now are, earnest men are anxiously inquiring: "What must the Church do to be saved? . . . The time has come when men should be taught, in no uncertain terms, that they cannot bring on wars with their awful consequences, promote drunkenness, traffic in vice and the hundred other things being done which degrade humanity and intensify suffering, and then be saved through the

merits of another and not for their own works and deservings. It should be made clear to them that we are all children of one Father, and that, as members of a common household, we cannot escape sharing in the conditions which we help to create in this world, and that our harvest "Over There" will be determined by just what we sow here. *This is what the liberal churches and most of our fraternities are trying to impress upon the world.*

"Fraternity men, interested in the welfare of their children, should be informed that in the liberal churches their children will be trained in principles which they will not practically have to deny should they become members of the lodge. This is something of a far greater importance than it may at first seem.

"To develop the noblest type of manhood and womanhood, and insure the best possible society, a beginning must be made at the cradle.

"Now I am ready to make my appeal to you. I want you to realize that to neglect the moral and spiritual training of the young, or to teach them principles so out of harmony with the general trend of thought, that they are almost sure to be held indifferently or given up entirely in later life, is to invited moral and religious calamity. . . . They (the liberal churches) have championed and advocated the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man, immortality and salvation by character, and these are the very principles for which nearly all the great fraternities stand. Taught these principles in childhood, as they should be taught in the Sunday schools and churches, people will not have to unlearn or deny them should they choose to identify themselves with almost any of our present-day fraternities, as those brought up in 'orthodox' Sunday Schools and churches have to unlearn, deny or ignore much that has been taught them if they become members of a lodge.

(To be concluded)

WORLD EVANGELIZATION OPPOSED BY SATAN

If there is one thing the devil does not want, it is world evangelization. You start out to-morrow to win souls, and the devil will suggest a dozen different things for you to do, good enough things if he can only take you off your job. On the mountain top he showed Jesus the kingdoms of the world and he promised him all these if instead of following the path of the Cross, he would yield homage to him. The devil ever since has been trying to keep people from doing those things that will mean the conversion of man and the propagation of the Gospel throughout the world. He has done everything he could in the missionary movement to do very good things, but secondary things. But he is desperately active to keep us away from the vital things.

—Thomas Cochrane.

peace, no rest. The lusts which tempted them promised liberty, but in the yielding reaped corruption. A sad lot.

The Apostle Paul writes to Titus, "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." This then was also our misfortune — condemned and dying. No help, no rescue, eternal ruin and perdition. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The apostle continues in writing to Titus, "But after that the kindness and love of our God toward man appeared and according to His mercy saved us." He saved us from this wretched state, delivered us from this power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His Son, in whom we have the redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sin. They whose love is weaker than circumstances, do not love at all. God's kindness and love toward man in giving His gift, Jesus Christ, to the world and with Him redemption and salvation rises up to the circumstances, yea far transcends them. Therefore His love is true love, love in its full capacity and true essence; love in true reality; love that cleanses, purges, purifies, and saves to the uttermost. Here there can be no question of adjusting a machine that is just out of gear, of harmonizing elements, salutary in themselves, though imperfectly combined. The mass may be originally good, but that does not alter the fact that it is now evil, incurably so. A little washing and rubbing here and there is not enough to make it desirable or even useful. A flood must sweep over it and wipe out every feature. A washing of a foul world like ours must do no less than wipe out ourselves — must rub off the whole self. It must be a washing of regeneration. A washing, first of all a death unto sin and birth unto righteousness. The love of God to man is the cure for the moral evil. Not sound moral advice, too good to be followed; not earnest moral efforts, which the sinful soul is unable to make or sustain. It must be supernaturally, miraculously, divinely, undeservedly delivered from its evil past. This the love of God alone is able to do. Now he comes with His all-healing grace. The grace of God bringing salvation hath appeared unto all men teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ who gave himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. The grace of God in Jesus teaches us, it quickens and gives the power to deny ungodliness and live godly. If the true religion does not enter into man's life then all his doings, his talk, his wishes,

his work and his recreation, will still be utterly inoperative. The grace of God changes all this. By faith we are engrafted into Christ. "If we are a graft, then a spirit, a sure influence, an empowering, vigorating, propagating principle has flowed and is always flowing from the Father through the Son into your heart, just as the sap from the root through the stem into the little branches. The sap must run when springtime comes. Grace must flow in its season, and when the sap runs, it must deposit itself and the deposit must become fruit, and so the grace must turn itself into good works."

"Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." Rom. 13:11-12.

— E. E. Kirst in The Evangelist.

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(Concluded)

"Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we are brethren." That should be our cry to the world. We are all brethren, and our father has provided abundantly for the whole household. Once we recognize his goodness, and our relationship in such a practical way as the *salvation by character* implies, the implication of which is the reproduction in our lives, of the reverence, love and service that so wondrously characterized the life of Jesus of Nazareth, mutual respect and helpfulness will become universal, and we can then truthfully and triumphantly sing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

From the above direct quotations cited from authentic and authoritative lodge sources we establish the verdict of the true Lutheran Church on the lodge:

First: *That the lodge is an esoteric brotherhood whose purpose and aim is the secret cultivation and insidious dissemination of doctrines, principles and practices which are in contradiction to the Word of God and at variance with the principles and practices of the Lutheran Church, for the social, moral and religious betterment of man and for his ultimate attainment to eternal life; and*

Secondly: *That the lodge, as the chief exponent and champion of the religion and morality of this world, is earnestly and determinedly moving forward to the attack upon the true Christian Church: and has already reaped a deplorably great harvest from among the members of the Lutheran Church.*

No longer secretly and hesitantly, but boldly and brazenly they confess their religion to be an open denial of all that Christ and the Christian Church represent for the child of God. Defiantly they challenge us to forsake the faith of our fathers and to make common cause with them, because "the inadequacy of the dogmatic and ceremonial forms of religion is more clearly shown every day."

Are we going to be intimidated by their attack? Are we going to strike the flags of our Scripturally dogmatic confession of faith because of the inroads which they have already made into our ranks? Are we going to flee from the conflict, because we fear and dread the heat of the fray? Are we going to flinch in our duty as soldiers of Christ, because we wince at the thought of the cross we must bear? Are we going to let physical comfort and convenience, indolence and indifference keep us from engaging in battle, when the priceless souls entrusted to our care are exposed to ruthless attack; when the thieves have already broken into the Lord's vineyard? Are we going to vacillate and temporize until the faithful ranks of the Lutheran Church are utterly routed?

Or are we, as the "watchmen unto the house of Israel," going to assert our proper places at the head of the battle formation and to raise the cry of Moses: "Who is on the Lord's side, come unto me." — Ex. 32, 26? How dare we refrain, as the true, spiritual sons of Levi, from rallying to the cause of our Lord, taking unto us the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, advancing, fearless and reckless of all consequences, upon the votaries and followers of the Golden Calf, the religion of this world and the lodge?

Woe unto us if we fail our Lord in this battle! Woe unto us if we fail to testify emphatically and predominantly to-day against the evil of the lodge! The Lord will deny those that deny Him before men, before His Father which is in Heaven. He has spoken to Israel of old: "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." (Jos. 7:12.) And to the Church of the New Testament Jesus has said: "So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:16.)

Thus for the sake of the truth of the clear Word of God and the eternal welfare of the blood-bought souls of men, above and at the beginning of all our dealings with members of the lodge, must stand this sentence: *No lodge member can become or remain either a communicant or voting member of a Lutheran congregation.*

In the matter of dealing with the individual lodge member in our congregations the Word of God to Ezekiel must be indelibly impressed upon the conscience of every prophet who would take upon himself the responsible ministry of a "watchman unto the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 3:17-19).

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the Word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

"When I say unto the wicked: Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.

"Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

We now propose to show from the Word of God that a lodge member cannot become, be or remain a communicant member of a Lutheran congregation. But before we approach the practical application of Scriptural doctrines concerning 'communicant membership' to the case of the lodge member in our congregations, let us briefly consider the question which must necessarily form the basis for any such practical application:

For Whom is the Sacrament of the Altar Intended?

(Other than the preached or written Word or the Sacramental Word in Holy Baptism, the use of the Sacrament of the Altar is restricted by the Word of God. For the sake of clarity, the answer follows in outline.)

A. From the manner of the institution of the Sacrament by our Lord Jesus in the intimate circle of His disciples, from the fact that the early Church ever celebrated the same privately, as also from the fact that faith is presupposed in the participants is clearly evinced that the Sacrament of the Altar is intended only for Christians.

B. But its use is still farther restricted by the Word of God to those Christians who are able to examine and judge themselves as to their state of penitence and as to their attitude toward the Sacrament itself: 1 Cor. 11:28: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." and 1 Cor. 11:31: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

C. And, finally, its use is restricted to those Christians who are of one, single-minded confession of faith in Jesus Christ, for:

a) Holy Communion is a feast of *unity*:

1 Cor. 10:17, 18: "For we, being many, are *one* bread, and *one* body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" N. B.: "koinownoi" — means "joint partakers, fellows."

1 Cor. 11, 17-22: Paul's criticism of the *lack of unity* and his flat declaration that under the existing conditions of divisions and heresies the Sacrament may not be celebrated, show clearly that the Sacrament is to be a feast of *unity*. N. B.: "ouk estin," in verse 20, with the infinitive "phagein" denotes the impossibility, the unlawfulness, the impropriety of such a celebration.

b) Holy Communion is a feast of *unity of faith*:

1 Cor. 10:16: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of

Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

1 Cor. 11:24, 25: "in remembrance of Me" — "broken for you."

Matthew 26:28: "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

— Which words must be received in *faith*.

c) Holy Communion is a feast of *unity of Confession*:

1 Cor. 11:26: For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

From which follows that the Sacrament is not to be given to:

- A. Those who are not Christians.
- B. Those who are not able to examine themselves; either because of mental incompetence: immaturity, deficiency, or mental aberration; — or because of spiritual incompetence: immaturity in spiritual discernment, impenitence over manifest or public sins.
- C. Those who, though they may be Christians, are yet not of one, single-minded confession of faith:
 - No non-Lutherans are to be admitted to a Lutheran Communion.
 - No member of any organization that either in doctrine, principle or practice denies the faith of the Lutheran Church may be admitted.

According to the Word of God the called and ordained minister of a Christian congregation is to be the immediate arbiter and custodian of the Sacrament:

Ezekiel 3:17: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel."

1 Cor. 5:1: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

Eph. 4:11: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Thus it becomes evident that but the two points, B and C, come into consideration in reference to the admissibility of a member of an anti-Christian lodge to the Sacrament of the Altar. — When one thinks of the gross discrepancy between lodge religion and the Christian faith, and especially, when one recalls the quotation from the pamphlet of Elijah Alfred Coil, Mason and Unitarian preacher: "A little child, once its attention is called to the matter, ought to be able to see that it is impossible to harmonize the creed statement here quoted, with the declara-

tion taken from the monitor of one of our greatest and most effective orders, and found, in substance, in the liturgies of nearly all the others" — one is indeed tempted to apply also the statement under point B concerning *mental* incompetence, were it not for the fact that such apparent incompetence would certainly have presented a definite obstruction for a man to have passed the public examination incidental to confirmation.

The Scriptural reasons which apply to the question of a lodge member's admissibility to the Sacrament are, therefore:

1. Spiritual incompetence; and
2. Disagreement in confessions of faith.

1. *Spiritual incompetence* constitutes an impediment and a definite hindrance for participation in the celebration of Holy Communion, according to the Word of God, whether this be in the form of *immaturity in spiritual discernment* or in the form of *impenitence*.

A. It is well-nigh impossible to believe in the honesty and sincerity of those, lodge member Christian and tolerant pastor alike, who persist in advancing the PET ALIBI: "can't see what's wrong with the lodge," in justification of continued membership with the lodge and uninterrupted participation in Holy Communion because:

a) our confirmed Lutheran Christians are instructed and publicly examined in just those fundamental points of doctrine which are denied by the lodge most viciously. This may be seen by but superficially perusing the rituals and monitors of any of the major lodges, to wit: the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, of the Godhead of Christ Jesus, of the Scripture as the sole revelation of God's will for man's salvation, of the vicarious and satisfactory work of Jesus as the Savior, of the justification by faith to the utter exclusion of the deeds of the Law, of prayer in Jesus' name, and others too numerous to mention; which are denied by the lodges also in the so-called "Christian" degrees.

b) In addition to which the confirmed Lutheran Christian has been warned of the danger and evil of affiliating with the lodge. Though the voice of warning of the individual pastor be ever so weak, and though the position of the Lutheran Church against the lodge may not have been as clearly defined in earlier days as it is now, yet the "antagonistic" position, the "narrowminded intolerance and bigotry" of the Lutheran Church against the lodge are notorious in the world to-day.

B. But where it is true that a confirmed Lutheran member of the lodge "can't see what's wrong with the lodge," that circumstance

a) certainly does not justify his membership with the lodge. In fact, there exists no justified, moral reason for a Christian to enter into or to remain in a lodge. The Word of God gives him the only true

foundation for character formation, as well as for eternal salvation. Thus, for him, as a Christian and a member of a Christian congregation, to seek character formation, a guide for righteous living or eternal salvation in an organization and brotherhood that does not bear PUBLIC testimony for Christ as the Savior of sinners, — decidedly does not constitute a righteous, moral reason for entering into the lodge. Moreover, the reasons for which a Christian enters into a lodge are necessarily unmoral: for social or business prestige, for aid in need, for life insurance, for pleasure and diversion, and so forth. But to join a secret brotherhood, the nature of which is not known beyond the fact that religious, or at least moral matters are involved, for the attainment of temporal advantages, is clearly nothing short of spiritual slovenliness, and in no way can be made to serve as a justified reason for a Christian's entry into the lodge.

- b) Nor does his inability to see "what's wrong with the lodge" constitute a justification of the lodge itself. To state this in argumentation, on the part of the lodge member, as well as to suspend judgment over the lodge in deference to such reasoning, on the part of the pliant and irresolute pastor constitutes the height of illogicality. A man may truthfully assert that he cannot detect any wrong. But the proof thereof is assuredly not to rest upon his opinion but upon the facts in the case. And if these are such, as we see from the above quotations they are, that the lodge is an anti-Christian brotherhood, and a man can still keep a clear conscience in spite of all this apparent evidence of wrong, as a member of the lodge, this circumstance certainly bears almost conclusive witness for his immaturity in spiritual discernment and serves to make his admissibility to the Sacrament a very doubtful matter indeed.

But if a Christian is not immature in spiritual discernment and remains in the lodge only for financial or other temporal advantages, although he well sees and admits the evil of some of the principles and practices of the lodge and denounces the same, and though his membership consist merely in the payment of insurance premiums and dues, he must be considered an impenitent to whom the Sacrament and absolution do not belong.

However, to dissuade or deter a man from Holy Communion for any of the above-mentioned reasons involves a verdict on the part of the pastor over the heart, or at least over the status of spiritual discernment and penitence of the applicant. And such a verdict is never reliable, because it must be gleaned from outward indications which,

though they speak ever so loudly, never speak conclusively. Were we to have no better reason for dissuading or deterring a man from the Sacrament, we should far rather admit him to the same out of love, than bar him and load the terrible responsibility of possibly having done him an injustice or of having offended him in his faith upon our souls.

2. But Holy Scriptures gives a definite and conclusive reason for dissuading and deterring a man from Holy Communion who is simultaneously a member of the lodge and a Lutheran congregation, in this that it teaches the Sacrament of the Altar to be a rite of COMMUNION and CONFESSION. Therefore we stated that the Sacrament is not to be given to Christians who are not of one, single-minded confession of faith; nor to those who are members of organizations which in doctrine, principle or practice deny the faith of the Lutheran Church.

Very clearly is the first portion of this principle concerning the non-Lutheran understood and conscientiously is it observed by us. Because of just these two phases of the Sacrament, COMMUNION and CONFESSION, we would no more think of admitting a member of a non-Lutheran church body to the same with us, than we would dream of practicing pulpit fellowship with a non-Lutheran pastor. But the matter appears to become ever so much more difficult, when members of expressedly and admittedly anti-Christian, secret orders are involved; — and the solution of that problem concerns us here.

A peculiar and most important phase of the Sacrament of the Altar is that it has been instituted by the Lord Jesus as a rite of COMMUNION. In it He unites Himself with all the partakers in a most intimate, sacramental manner, and all partakers with one another. Not as though the Sacrament creates an essentially different union between Christ and the believers from that already brought about by faith through the Word and Baptism. Nor does it grant any additional Grace, different from or superior to that given in the Word and in Baptism. The manner and mode, however, of transmitting that Grace, the forgiveness of sins and the blessed union with Christ, is different. In the Sacrament of the Altar the Lord gives us in, with and under the bread and wine, His own BODY and BLOOD, broken and shed for us for the remission of sins, — not with the purpose of inaugurating faith, nor with the purpose of individualizing, as in Baptism, but for the sake of indicating and emphasizing the intimate, sacramental COMMUNION of the partakers with Himself and one another:

In I. Cor. 10:16 this COMMUNION WITH CHRIST is clearly taught: "The cup of blessing which we believe, is it not the COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? The bread which we break, is it not the COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?"

In I. Cor. 10:17 the COMMUNION OF THE PARTAKERS WITH ONE ANOTHER is taught:

"For we, being many, are ONE bread, and ONE body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."

Just as important is the other phase of the Sacrament of the Altar, that of CONFESSION. Although the Lord thus unites Himself with His believers in intimate, sacred communion, He yet does not want His saints alone to profit by this feast of blessed remembrance of His death and vicarious Work on the Cross. The very celebration of the Sacrament is intended to be a mighty sermon and confession of His Church to those who are still without.

In I. Cor. 11:26 this phase of CONFESSION is most explicitly taught: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, YE DO SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH till He come."

Thus the Sacrament is not alone a feast of communion, but also of confession: as it is for the Christian the most solemn and sublime assurance of forgiveness and strengthening of his faith, in the sacred communion with Christ and his brethren, so it is for the outsider the most solemn and sublime confession of Christ in His death of atonement.

Fellowship in Holy Communion is, therefore, openly and publicly indicative of fellowship in faith and confession.

Now let us take the case of a confirmed Lutheran who is simultaneously a member of the lodge. His membership with the lodge, since it came about by his own free will and since he pledged himself to the same with an oath or his sacred word of honor, constitutes a full confession for the doctrines and principles of the lodge, as well as full, moral responsibility for all that it represents. Read the obligations of all orders for further verification of this assertion. And this remains true, though his membership be maintained solely by the payment of dues or his failure to request that his name be stricken from the books of the lodge, and though with his lips he deny and condemn the lodge as vehemently as he will; since the confession of the deed in the case will ever be considered the deciding and determining factor. But we have evinced, beyond the shadow of a doubt, from the utterances and credos of the lodge itself, that it is not only an unchristian religion, but verily the religion of the world and the prince of this world, the devil. Thus the confirmed Lutheran confesses, with the lodge, that he is a follower of the religion of this world and the devil, and that publicly, before the eyes of all men. — And in the Sacrament of the Altar he confesses before all men that he believes in the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, his Savior, as the atonement for his sin, and that he is in holy communion with his Lord and His saints, separate and segregate from this world.

But this situation is unthinkable, impossible, even for an unbelieving Elijah Alfred Coil: "One of these declarations excludes the other." In it exists a contradiction so intrinsic and an antithesis so fundamental that it can-

not be brooked by the mind of man. Nor can it be brooked by Holy Scripture. Jesus says: "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon." And St. Paul wrote: "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? . . . Wherefore come ye out from them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:14) and "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils" (I. Cor. 10:21).

And though the members of these nefarious organizations of Satan come to us, as pastors, standing on their supposed right as voting members of our congregation, with the brazen demand that we admit them to the Sacrament, — shall we then barter with the most holy things of God? shall we sell the Sacrament to a man for his contribution as a voting member of our congregation? Has he, by reason of his voting membership, any greater right to the Sacrament than the lodge member who is still without the church? Does the fact that he, as a confirmed, communicant member of our congregations, is guilty of the lodge evil lessen the gravity of his offence or lighten the guilt of his denial? Is it not written: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required?" (Luke 12:48.)

Do we not realize that the very fact that a lodge member in our congregation demands of us, despite his affiliation with the anti-Christian lodge, to give him Holy Communion with its attendant blessings and fruits: absolution from sin and reassurance of the communion with Christ and with the Christian Church, represents a direct challenge for us to confess Christ? Is it necessary for us to demonstrate that the admission of such a man to the Lord's Table by us involves a denial of Christ on our part and implicates us as co-guilty with him in his sin and offence? (Rev. 2:13-16.)

But should there still exist, after this, a question in our minds as to whether we might not *temporarily* admit such a man to the Sacrament until, he, too, has seen and understood the evil of his way, let the Scripture tell us again that *his lodge membership forms the insuperable barrier* for his admittance to Holy Communion, and that only with the *removal* of this barrier can he ever be admitted. We read:

Matthew 5:23: "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; FIRST be reconciled to thy brother, and then come, and offer thy gift." Thus speaks the Savior

in reference to the sin of private hatred among brethren. How much more is His command not to be applied to the man who is guilty of denying Christ by his public confession of the deed, and by his giving of public offence to his brethren?

2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15: "Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that ye withdraw yourselves* from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us. . . . And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, *note that man, and have no company with him*, that he may be ashamed. . . . Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." — Thus St. Paul concerning those who walk disorderly and not after the tradition which they received of him. Who should then more logically be included in that group than the members of our congregations who are in the lodge, and who walk not after the traditions which they received of the Lord Himself? Christ says in His intercessory prayer: "I have given them Thy Word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." St. Paul says, in Romans 12:2: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ." James 4:4b: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." And St. John, in I. John 2:15: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." . . . Of these St. Paul says: "Withdraw yourselves from such a brother." And he assuredly does not mean to say that they should withdraw themselves from such a brother merely physically or socially, but primarily in that bond of unity which exists between Christ and His believers in the Communion of Saints and which finds its highest and most intimate expression in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. He tells them to "note that man, and have no company with him." The Greek expression: "mae sunanamuegnuesthai" means: do not mix together, have no intercourse or communion with such a man. Does this then not most evidently refer, before and above all else, to the communion and intimate, sacramental intercourse of the Lord with His own in the Lord's Supper?

I. Cor. 10:21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." This clear Word of God most conclusively bars the members of an anti-Christian lodge that cultivates the religion of this world and the devil, from participation with the congregation of believers in Holy Communion, because it refers directly, both, to the participation in the Sacrament, according to verses 16-18, as also to the lodge itself, since the devil worship here referred to is nothing else than the heathen religion which, with its ungodly "mysteries," the lodge boasts of as being its direct source of origin. Truly, nowhere in the Bible is direct reference made to the lodge

in so many words, and equally as truly, nowhere does the Bible speak so pointedly of a modern evil, as here in reference to the lodge. With holy abhorrence St. Paul cries out against communion of his Corinthians with this impious cult of phallicism: "I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils," specifically he ordains: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" — and we, under the specious subterfuge of practicing charitably, would dare to temporize, compromise or even commune together with members of this abomination?

Have we forgotten that it is written, 2 John 7:11: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, *who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.* Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and *abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son.* If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, *receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: FOR HE THAT BIDDETH HIM GOD SPEED IS PARTAKER OF HIS EVIL DEEDS.*"

These words speak definitely and they speak conclusively. Though we be accused of narrow-minded lovelessness and legalistic practice, when we bar a man from Communion, AS SOON as he becomes known as a member of the lodge, it matters little. What does matter, however, is that the Word of God makes these statements, and that we are but stewards, householders and ambassadors of our Lord who have no choice but to perform His will, and, finally, that it is written: "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:27-28.)

If the practice which is here commanded by St. Paul is legalistic, then the Word of God is legalistic. Which is not the case. For the purpose of this most earnest discipline is the winning of the brother, as St. Paul says: "that he may be ashamed," and as he also writes, I. Cor. 5:3-5: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Is not rather the "tolerant" practice of admitting a man who belongs to an organization which openly flaunts a denial of all things Christian before the world, even temporarily, the height of lovelessness toward him and the entire congregation which is entrusted to my care?

Can I find an excuse for him and for my action in the argument that, according to the Word of God, I must bear with a weak brother, when he is actually not a weak brother according to the definition given by the Word of God itself? Is he a weak brother in the sense of Romans 14 and 15: 1-3, in that he has an erring conscience concerning adiaphora? Is membership with an anti-Christian lodge actually to be held as a matter of moral or confessional indifference? Or is he perhaps a weak brother in the sense of Galatians 6: 1, as one who has been overtaken by a fault? Is his lodge membership actually a fault of such a nature that it may be borne by those who are strong and spiritual in admitting him with them to the Sacrament which constitutes the most intimate communion with Christ and the most sublime unity of confession?

Is not the pastor who but temporarily admits a lodge member to Holy Communion thereby, with his deed and action before the congregation, denying the testimony of his lips against this institution of the devil? Is he not thereby bringing confusion into the hearts of the faithful believers who behold his inconsistency? Is he not thereby giving offence to them and putting a stumbling-block in their way to salvation, and making himself liable to the terrible threat of Jesus: "Woe to the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come, but woe to the man by whom the offence cometh." (Mt. 18: 7.)

But love also demands of the pastor that he explain to the applicant, on the basis of the Word of God, why he is being requested to postpone his participation in Holy Communion. The pastor must remind him of the fact that, as a Christian, his duty is to take concern not alone for his own spiritual well-being, but also for that of his brethren; that he must anxiously beware, lest he give offence to them by word or deed. He must be told that his membership with the lodge involves a public confession for the same, together with its anti-Christian religion, and consequently, a denial of Christ; and that under such circumstances his partaking of Holy Communion would be unworthy. He must be warned that he cannot eat and drink the body and blood of the Lord unworthily with impunity, according to I. Cor. 11: 29-34. Should he, nevertheless, insist upon what he may term his inalienable right as a Christian, the pastor must refuse him, suaviter in modo, sed fortiter in re, with the explanation that, in admitting him, the pastor should be acting contrary to the Word of God which says: "neither be partaker of other men's sins." (I. Timothy 5: 22.)

Thus, to sum up, the second point of the Scriptural practice in dealing with lodge members in our congregation is:

II. THAT WE DISSUADE AND DETER SUCH MEMBERS OF OUR CONGREGATIONS FROM FELLOWSHIP AND PARTICIPATION WITH US IN HOLY COMMUNION, AS SOON AS THEY BECOME KNOWN AS MEMBERS OF THE LODGE.

But under no circumstances may the pastor omit to extend to such a man the invitation, and to urge him in a kindly manner to study the matter with him in the light of the Word of God, for God's Word demands:

III. THAT THE PASTOR THEREUPON INSTRUCT AND ADMONISH SUCH A BROTHER WITH THE AIM OF WINNING HIM FROM THE LODGE AND WHOLLY FOR CHRIST.

A. This instruction proper is to begin after the man has been suspended from Holy Communion, although an explanation must always attend the suspension, for St. Paul says: "withdraw yourselves from such a brother . . . note that man, and have no company with him . . . yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

B. He is to be instructed and admonished as to the evil of the lodge. And let the pastor study that matter thoroughly, so that he may not become guilty of making inaccurate, generalizing statements that are not proven. Let him quote or read his proofs directly from the rituals or monitors of the lodge. Let him show the evil of the lodge and its conflicts with Lutheran doctrine and principle wherever he can, but let him *concentrate on the fundamental evils the denial of Christ and the Christian faith.*

C. Furthermore, he is to warn the lodge member of the danger of denying the truth of refusing to come out from the lodge for the sake of temporal gain. Let the lodge man be shown that the true Christian spirit is this, that one little Word of God is more important than all the wisdom and logic and possessions of this world; that the true Christian speaks with St. Paul: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Phil. 3: 8.)

D. And finally, if the man is still not absolutely convinced, if still he has not the courage to suffer the loss of all things and to come out of the lodge, let the pastor tell him also this Word of God: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." Nor is it legalistic and unseemly for the pastor to employ this Word to induce the man to take a definite stand. Pastors are shepherds. They are to lead and to guide the sheep and lambs entrusted to their care through the devious wilds and entanglements of this world to their eternal rest. The Lord has given them His Word as the shepherd's crook with which they are to achieve this goal. With the Word they are to call, to teach, to console, to reprove, and — to rule. God has called and ordained them to perform this office as shepherds. After due examination, prayer and calling, their congregations trust that these pastors will lead them by the Word of God on the Way to Life. Shall they then betray that trust? Or shall they be accounted legalistic if they use the crook to

tear the straying sheep from the brink of the destructive precipice of apostasy or from the alluring, cool shades and tempting swards of worldliness? Shall they not testify, shall they not fight against false prophets, because the sheep do not discern that inwardly, under the sheep's clothing, they are ravening wolves? Shall they be dubbed legalists, if they rule well with the Word of God, when the Bible has enjoined the sheep to "obey and to submit themselves." Let every faithful preacher of the Gospel ask himself with St. Paul: "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

IV. It is self-evident that, with the removal of the obstacle, that is with his actual break with the lodge, a former lodge member is to be readmitted to the full exercise of his rights and privileges as a child of God and member of a Christian congregation.

V. And it is just as self-evident for Christians that we excommunicate a lodge member from the Christian congregation who has either resisted the disciplinary measures instituted against him by evasion or by ungodly obstinacy has shown himself to be impenitent, because throughout the entire proceedings our position, bound up in the unchanging Word of God, must be: "NO LODGE MEMBER CAN BECOME, BE OR REMAIN EITHER A COMMUNICANT OR VOTING MEMBER OF A LUTHERAN CONGREGATION."

A CALL TO YOUTH

The Committee on Missionary Expansion of the Lutheran Synod of Missouri has sent from its headquarters in St. Louis the following message to the young people of that synod:

"The call of the hour to our church's youth requires our young men and our young women to dedicate their lives to the Cross and to cooperate with God in His eternal missionary yearnings for the souls of men.

"The call of the hour is not for temporal wisdom, but for spiritual power; not for plans but for a passion for souls; not for money but for sacrifice; not for a temporarily-minded youth but for a youth fired with the Spirit of the Living God.

"The call of the hour is a plea for the realization of the Great Commission in the hearts of our youth."

It grows upon me more and more, year by year of experience, how common is the refusal to know the truth about oneself. How few people appear to be ready, frankly, to want to know the truth about themselves. Is there anything so horrible as the thought of multitudes of people waiting to know the truth about themselves till the horrible disclosure after death when they might know it now, but will not?
—Gore.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All congregations are requested to send Christmas Collections without delay, so that the District Cashiers may be able to send to General Treasurer money urgently needed by December 31.

Theo H. Buuck.

FROM OUR CHURCH CIRCLES

Meeting of Synodical Conference 1932

The next meeting of the Synodical Conference of North America is to be held at Mankato, Minn., Rev. A. Ackermann, pastor, August 10 to 15, 1932.

Herm. Gieschen, Sec'y.

Joint Winter Conference of Eastern Nebraska

The Joint Winter Conference of Eastern Nebraska meets January 2 to 5, 1932 (noon to noon) in Immanuel Church (8th and D Streets) at Lincoln, Nebr.

Sermon: Monhardt, Ernstmeyer.

Communion Address: Staehr, Wittig.

Essays: Eggert, Erck, Heinicke, Degner. Baumann, Falkenroth, Saeger.

All pastors of the Wisconsin Synod, residing in eastern Nebraska are asked to attend this conference. Kindly announce promptly to the local pastor, Rev. W. F. V. Baeder.

G. O. Keschull, Sec'y.

Winnebago Pastoral Conference

The Winnebago Pastoral Conference will meet January 25 till January 27, 1932. The first session will be at 2 P. M. The place of our meeting will be at Neenah, Wis., Rev. A. Froehlke, pastor. Papers to be read by Uetzmann, Timmel, Theobald, Schlueter, Reim. A German Confessional address by K. A. Timmel or E. Reim. The sermon will be in German also. Wm. Wojahn or F. Schroeder will deliver the sermon.

Pastor Froehlke begs the brethren to make their announcements early.

Esa. 46: 4.

F. C. Weyland, Sec'y.

J. F. Henning.

Announcement

We are happy to announce that the investigation of the situation at Plymouth, Mich., held by a committee appointed by our General President, Rev. G. E. Bergemann, resulted in a reconciliation between the two factions. The wrongs committed several years ago have been righted by penitence and satisfactory restitution.

The Rev. Chas. Strasen has resigned his pastorate of the newly organized congregation; under his influence that congregation has been dissolved and some of those who left with him have already returned to their former church.

Thus the Rev. Strasen is again a synodical member in good standing and eligible to be called.

J. Gauss, President.