

Sensible Service

by Rev. M. W. Bagley*

Jesus has made a very clear statement about Christian service. He said "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Some thought that the word Mammon referred to a false Syrian God. However, we have no proof of this. But Augustine said that "Mammon" is a Punic word signifying "gain." The word was used in later corrupt Hebrew for "wealth." In the Sermon on the Mount, it is personified by Our Lord as the rival of the true God—an antigod of this world. It is the supreme dollar of the day. The master of our hearts might rightly be termed the love that reigns in it. We serve only that which we love supremely.

Jesus has revealed to us the utter impossibility of loving the world and loving God at the same time and then immediately He tells us the way in which we can begin sensible Christian service. He refers to the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field which in their own realms co-operate with the laws of God governing nature. They have no power of will to do otherwise. But we are called upon to notice the result of their obedience. They are cared for and properly clothed. Jesus, by those two illustrations from nature, is showing us how much more beneficial it would be for us to make a personal commitment of faith to him.

Were I to ask you if you would rather serve God or the Devil, without a doubt your reply would be "Oh, I'll serve God." The sad fact, however, is that so many cannot seem to realize that it is impossible to serve both at the same time. That's the standard of Christian service described by the Christ himself. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Now, let us pursue the line of thought a bit farther. Since we cannot serve two masters at the same time then either one or the other must actually be controlling our lives.

We rebel at the thought of the Devil controlling our lives. And indeed we should. For, suddenly we remember that he has us deceived and that eventually he will damn our souls. Now, turning in our Bible to Romans 6:16 we find another startling statement relative to service. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Hence, we see, that we are not saints and sinners at the same time. The writer of the Epistle to the Romans rejoices that those to whom he is writing were delivered from sin by obeying the doctrine of repentance and as a result of that they were delivered from sin and became the servants of righteousness. Now, we see clearly that sensible Christian service entails righteous living as well as lives free from sin.

When Satan was tempting Eve in the garden of Eden he attempted to instill within her thinking an unholy fear of God and Holy living. He still attempts to convince us that it is impossible to live a radiant Christian life. The Devil would suggest that if we were to become Christians we would starve, or that we wouldn't continue and thus would only make a fool of ourselves if we tried.

Jesus, knowing the subtlety of Satan's suggestions removes the cause of fears by saying, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Real faith and trust in what Jesus has told us frees us from fear and delivers us from worry.

How are we ever to enter into such a relationship with God that will accomplish so much in our lives? Jesus told

The King's Highway

Secret Orders

By W. T. Purkiser

Editor, The Herald of Holiness

One of the cardinal principles agreed to in the Pilot Point union of 1908 was the denial of "membership in or fellowship with oath-bound secret orders or fraternities."

Two passages of scripture were quoted in relation to this position: "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" (James 4:4); and, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:14-17).

This has been the long and unbroken position of the Church of the Nazarene since that day. Nor is it our position alone, for other holiness churches have taken the same stand, and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, with 2,391,195 members—refuses to admit to its ranks those who hold membership in the lodges.

"Oath-bound secret orders of fraternities" covers a wide range of groups including such diverse organizations as the typical lodge, the Knights of Columbus, the Ku Klux Klan, and most university fraternities and sororities. All share in common secret initiation rites and ceremonies, and the taking of solemn oaths of mutual fellowship and support.

Naturally, an outsider is at a disadvantage in discussing rites and oaths which are guarded with great secrecy. Some of the secrets have "leaked," as they are certain to do sooner or later. But there is no assurance that in any case all have become public knowledge.

As a matter of principle, there is first off a question as to "Why the secrecy?" If the objectives and positions of the organization are honorable and commendable, why should it be necessary to shroud them in an aura of mystery and seclusion? If such objectives and positions are not honorable and commendable, they should be condemned. If they are, they should be made known.

Such secrecy as is involved in the oath-bound secret order or fraternity appears either sinister or silly. Which it is, one uninitiated may never know—but in either case, there is little to commend it; and from the point of view of the Church, much in it to condemn.

Beyond such considerations as the secrecy, there are the frequent claims to religious instruction and authority made particularly by the lodges. Included, for example, are printed rituals, prayers, ceremonies for burial, altars, chaplains, the solemn oath, and in many cases an implied promise of heaven as the reward for following the principles of the order. Included here also is an intimate

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Nicodemus that he needed to be born again. That is what we also need. And that will come as a result of our repentance and seeking the Lord with all our hearts.

There was a time in the history of the Israelite nation when they appeared to be quite religious but the practise of their religious rites did not produce practical results. Consequently God sent a message to them by his prophet. The message was simple and to the point "Ye seek the Lord but ye shall seek the Lord and find him when you seek the Lord with all your hearts."

We shall only know the fullness of God's blessing when we serve him with all our lives and hearts.

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