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Holiness Writers

SECRET SOCIETIES

By

Rev. Mr. Beverly Carradine

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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SECRET SOCIETIES

Are They Right or Wrong

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED
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BY THE PASTOR, REV. B. CARRADINE D. D.

SECRET SOCIETIES:

ARE THEY RIGHT OR WRONG? ARE THEY A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

The explanation of this scene is in order. Why is it that there are a number of strange faces here today? Why is it that there are reporters from the newspapers here taking down each word? It seems that two weeks ago, standing in this pulpit and preaching on the subject of kindness, and allowing myself, as I always have since a minister, to be the champion of the home, by my life and word trying to secure the happiness of the wife and child there, I pointed out the enemies of the home and drew a picture that God blessed to the melting of the entire audience, and to my own melting,--of the wife and child left alone at home; of the little boy asking for his father, saying, "Where is papa tonight?" of his kneeling down and saying at the knees of his mother, "God bless papa;" later still asking, "Will he come home tonight?"--finally going to bed and dreaming of his absent father, who is gone night after night. It would be impossible for me to reproduce the scene that I drew in the glow of the occasion and the inspiration of the moment. But I noticed that God blessed it all over this audience. Then I suddenly arraigned the saloon and the political party and the secret society as striking at the happiness of the American home.

I arraigned the secret fraternity as standing next to the saloon and being the curse of the home, the one feature in my mind being the loneliness of the home; the one thought in my mind being, what is it that takes men away from the family circle? It was not an analogy that was to run side by side with the saloon. No man in sanity of mind would run the two institutions together as an analogy side by side; but the only thought in my mind was, what is it that is emptying our homes of men? and then in that burst of feeling I arraigned secret fraternities as being the cause of the loneliness and the curse of the home next to the saloon itself. I have more to say about societies now than I had then; but that was all that was in my mind on that day.

Let me say that I do not speak for the Methodist Church here. I am not indorsed by my official board at all. I have not asked their endorsement. I have never asked any man to endorse me. I stand indorsed by God in my sermons and in my remarks. In regard to this speech of mine today, let any antagonism I may awaken or any opprobrium that may come from these remarks-- let it come to me. You never saw a man in your life that could stand more abuse and be happier than the man that is before you. [Sympathetic rustle in the audience.] These views I speak from the depths of my heart; they are the result of long observation of these fraternal societies, and they have been gradually accumulating until they have formed this argument which I bring out before you this morning.

1. The first point I make is, that the excitement and anger of the fraternities over my remark is to be constructed unfavorably to them.

We should remember that conscious innocence is always quiet. There is nothing more tranquil under heaven than a man who feels that he is full of integrity and innocence to the bottom of his heart. How often is the church of Christ blasphemed and attacked on the streets of St. Louis! You notice that we do not reply in the papers. We do not condemn the men who attack us. Do you know why? Because the church of Christ knows that it is true. Can you tell me why it is that for two weeks I have felt so quiet and peaceful in spite of the attacks made upon me? It is because I knew I was innocent of the things said about me.

Now, when a single sentence can stir up societies and fraternities all over the land in a spirit of anger, I cannot but argue that somebody certainly has been hurt. Suppose you pass your hand over a beautiful horse. How a horse loves the stroke of his master's hand if he is well and sound! But the instant you touch an unsound spot on the back, he flinches! If I threw a rock down the street where there were twenty or thirty gentlemen, and I saw one throw up his hands and halloo, I am just as certain, that I hit him as that I live. The other gentlemen are quiet, and I say that I did not hit them. My friends, in all kindness I say to you that somebody has been hit in the last two weeks as certain as I stand here. [Sensation in the audience.] When I said these fraternities struck at the happiness of the home, that language struck somebody certain. Bear in mind that I did not mean to say that every man that belonged to a society treated his family wrong, but what I intended to convey was that the result of such a life was to strike at the happiness of the home.

One day, at the plantation of my aunt in Mississippi, there came a man along and asked for work, and we hired him and put him up in the gin, raking cotton. About two weeks afterward a gentleman came along the road, and I noticed in his overcoat a pistol, and he asked me if we had hired anybody lately. I said, "Yes." He said he would like to see the man. He walked up into the loft of the gin, and when his eyes fell on this man we had hired he said these remarkable words to him, "Forty-nine, do you know me?" And you never saw a man so astounded in your life, and the surrender of the man was evident. His loins gave way and his ankle-bones failed him, and he melted in his tracks, as it were. Forty-nine was his number; he was an escaped convict. If he had said, "One hundred and eighty, do you know me?" it would not have moved him; he knew that was not his number. Do you begin to take it in? When I said the other day that the fraternities of our land were striking at the happiness of our homes, from the agitation that resulted from that remark I judge that I must have called somebody's number. [Sensation.]

2. The feature of secrecy is objectionable.

I am not thinking of any one in particular now. I am just taking up the fact of secrecy. However desirable and necessary it was to have secret associations fifty years ago and a hundred years ago and in the Dark Ages, I cannot recognize the need in the light of the nineteenth century. I have belonged to secret political organizations, and therefore I speak advisedly when I say that I do not feel that the necessity exists today for secrecy in orders. You say your orders are benevolent. If they are benevolent, what is the use of their being secret? What is the use of signs and grips, and passwords to cover-up these things and make mystery! What is the need of it? If it is something more than

benevolence, then have you ulterior purposes, and you are not what you seem; therefore in the sight of God you stand as not being true; you stand, in a measure, as being deceived and deceitful. The very fact of the secrecy of orders disposes me against them. If you recall their history you will remember that the blessing of God never was on them. I do not know that they ever succeeded in the ends they aimed at. I could call your attention to a secret organization that once flourished in London. I could tell you of the religious secret society called the Jesuits, that was expelled from one country to another. I could tell you of a secret corporation in the city of New Orleans, but God forbid that I should compare the Louisiana State Lottery with any fraternity in my own country. We are talking about secrecy now. That was a corporation that was secret, for we never could get the names of the stockholders.

Where a body of men are banded together for a purpose which is unknown to a great portion of the community, it creates uneasiness in the community and a feeling that the welfare of the public is in danger. The effect of these organizations is, I say, to produce a general uneasiness and unrest throughout the land. Yes, you say, but you are not conscious that you had any purposes that were like the organizations I refer to. I did not say that you had. But this I do press upon you: if you are a benevolent organization, why should it be a secret one? My friends, if we have got the truth on our side, we have got God on our side, and we need fear nothing. The very fact of going into secrecy is an acknowledgment of weakness and looks suspicious

3. The method of initiation is wrong.

I do not mean to say that all of these fraternities have what you call ridiculous initiations, but many of them do. One of the noblest orders of our land today has a degree in which that is the main feature, and the result is hilarity. Many of these fraternities are now defunct, and their peculiar courses and methods are known. There has crept out a general knowledge of these things in the public, so that you must not suppose that I am stating to you a single fact that I have obtained in secrecy, as God is my judge: I now use no knowledge of my own, but simply the general statement and general knowledge throughout the land in regard to the fact of a man being made the butt of ridicule for half an hour by fifty or a hundred of his fellow creatures.

I have great veneration for the human body, for it is the temple of the Holy Ghost. I venerate man because he is made in the image of God. When you strike at a man you strike at the image of God. This is the awfulness of murder. You say the Bible says that there is a time to laugh; but the Bible does not say there is a time to laugh at people. The spirit of the Bible is against making man the object of ridicule, sport and butt of people. At college, in one of these secret fraternities where I belonged, a number of which have been suppressed since, one young man never recovered during the whole time of his collegiate course from the treatment he received; and the wonder of my heart is how a minister of the gospel can ever consent to come into a fraternity where he is thus made ridiculous; and the wonder to me is how men who belong to these fraternities can ever venerate him the same after looking at him for half an hour thrown into the most absurd and ridiculous positions. He is a man of God, and as such should be considered holy and sacred. I might look for boys to indulge in such absurdities, but for bearded men to be found thus engaged excites my unqualified wonder. Paul says, when he was a child he spake as a child and thought as a child, but when he became a man he put away childish things.

4. A forcible objection is the costliness of these orders.

It costs you \$10 to \$125 to get in. I can mention a lodge where it takes \$125 to get in. O my sister, how it would make your heart sing for joy if that were laid down in your hands! [Stir among the lady members of the congregation.] Then comes the costliness of association and fellowship necessarily created by being cast with men after that order. Then there is the costliness of attending upon the distribution of your benevolence. From the United States statistics of 1883 I get this: A fraternity of 550,000 members in it received \$5,000,000; \$2,000,000 of that were given to the poor and the sick, the afflicted and the troubled, and it took over \$3,000,000 to meet their regular expenses, so that it costs that fraternity \$3 to give away \$2. [Sensation.] If our church did that way there would be a laugh all over the country.

If you look at the missionary enterprises of our church, we get \$100,000 given to benefit and lift up the heathen, and it costs us just exactly \$5,000 to get that \$100,000 in operation and apply it; that is, it costs us 5 cents to distribute a dollar; and it costs that fraternity, according to the United States statistics, \$3 to give away \$2. Now, if you come to a consideration of the poor in our church, it costs not a single cent to distribute all the gratuities and contributions that our church makes to the poor. Just contrast the two.

I might mention the costliness of the uniforms of your order. One order costs \$35, and another order \$75. Just think of it! God knows I am speaking not for popularity today, but because I love the truth and because I love you. To think of a man walking around the streets a mass of fluttering feathers and the tinkle of glittering buttons, in all the paraphernalia of a gorgeous uniform costing \$75, and his wife wearing calico of the price of \$1.50 at home. [A suppressed titter through the audience]; and when she walks the streets in the \$5 dress she has got on, she is a wonderfully favored woman. Look at the man who is now a member of a benevolent society, walking around fluttering in feathers, with nearly \$100 on him, who says, "I am in a benevolent society." I never shall forget the story that I heard of the man who sold coal for a living. One bitter, bitter cold morning in winter his clerk came into his office, and he say, "Is it very cold outside?" The clerk says, "Yes, sir; it is very cold." "Is it free zing outside?" The clerk says, "Yes." Then he says, "Is it cold enough to make a fellow's fingers ache as he walks?" "O, yes, sir; colder than that, sir." "Well," he says John, raise the price of coal 10 cents a bushel; the Lord help the poor." My brethren, as you put on your uniform costing \$75, and after adorning your bodies, walk out into the streets, how does it appear? Just such a contradictory and inconsistent life. Here, give me a fine uniform to wear--the Lord help the poor.

5. The political influence of secret fraternities.

Now this point I make, and that is the question of political and municipal influence born of these societies. I make this charge on no society here, when I tell you that I got an official envelope that long and that thick [indicating] the other day; and if I were to speak about the tremendous influence of the fraternities in our courts of law here you would open your eyes. In the matter of the acceptance of jurors and the rejection of jurors, and in appointments, this magical word is wonderful in its influence: "That man don't belong to our lodge." Why, that was one of the things that aroused us in Louisiana to such burning indignation, when we found out that the lottery company was tampering with our courts; that it was exerting its influence where it ought never to have been felt.

There are two places that should be signally free from a banded outside influence; where no man should be known after the flesh, and where rich and poor, and high and low, should be dealt with exactly alike, without partiality and without favor. One of these places is the church of God, and the other the temple of justice. In the courts every man should stand on his merits; and when secret orders and fraternities begin to encroach there, and make themselves felt, they are striking at the integrity of the home and trampling under foot the rights of the American citizen.

6. The secret fraternities are rapidly becoming clubs and convivial gatherings.

No matter what was the object for which they started, they are evidently going in this direction. Now, you all know what a club is. I never heard of a man getting converted in a club in my life. I never heard of a man getting religion in a club in my life. I never heard of a man called of God to preach from a club in my life. A lady told me in New Orleans-- and I will never forget her look--she says, "We women have been 'clubbed' to death." Under that witticism I read the wail of a woman's broken heart. Is it so that our fraternities and societies are drifting in that direction to become clubs? I left a pile of letters at home which I received. I have made no efforts to get facts. I have not appealed to the public, as some have, to get facts. But how much has voluntarily come to me! One letter that I have got, if I were to read it to you, would startle you, if I could get my own consent to read it.

Did you ever hear of such a thing as banquets in connection with these fraternities and societies? What happens at a banquet? In many, many of the fraternities there is, as far as I can hear, wine and beer flowing freely. When it flows freely you know what happens. An article in the Evening Chronicle the other day said these fraternities were to build up humanity. Now, look at a man as he comes from banquet late at night and see if he is built-up humanity.

7. Secret fraternities strike at the happiness of the home.

This is done in several ways, but I mention but one. This way is seen in the frequent and protracted absence from home; it is a devoted connection which the fraternity brings about. Night after night the father and husband is away from the family circle, and this continues for years. It was just here that I drew the picture of the little boy asking for his father, that so affected the audience two weeks ago: "Will papa come home tonight?" "Will he be back soon?" Then at his mother's knee he prayed, "God bless papa." And that night he dreamed of his father.

This picture, which I fully drew at the time, the papers have made much sport of by saying that the same thing could apply in regard to a man's absence at the frequent meetings of the church. That the child would ask just as eagerly for his father and be told that he could not see him on account of his being present at the social and religious meetings of the church. Thus I myself was guilty as this parent. All this sounded very plausible, but will not bear inspection. I call your attention to its weakness. In the first place a man can carry his wife and children to the church meetings with him, but they cannot so accompany him to the lodge. Again, a man can return from the church in the early hours of the night; but the hours of returning from this meeting of secret societies are far from early. As far as my personal case, which demands frequent and protracted absences from my family both day and night, let me say that mine is a vocation. I am called of God for a peculiar work. My life is

bound to be a sacrifice for the sake of my fellow men. I love my home; I delight in the companionship of my books; I love to be with my wife and children, but all these I have to forego at the call of duty as a minister. At any hour, at all hours, day or night, the people can claim my time, by virtue of the peculiar office I fill. This is not the case with you. You are not thus called to leave the family circle for a fraternity circle; there is no mighty necessity, no divine call thus laid upon you. It is in these absences of the father and husband from the little group, where he is so much needed, that I saw the happiness and the well-being of the home assailed.

I believe that I speak the sentiment of countless thousands of wives today when I say that they would rather far have the company of their husbands at home than the insurance policy at the end of their lives, if they have to choose between. Ask them now, ask them anywhere, which will you have, the love and presence of your husband or the policy of \$2,000 or \$3,000? and the answer would roll like a tidal wave from every truehearted woman: Give me my husband! Let me have his love and old-time devotion, they would say, and let the money go. Why, for a woman to feel otherwise would be to transform her into a Judas.

Recently there visited my study a lady of most prepossessing appearance. Her name will remain a secret with me, but the confession of a broken-hearted woman I give you. She told me how her life had been desolated. I shall never forget the sorrow of her countenance. She said her husband was absent Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights until 12 and 1 o'clock. Then one night she, with a burst of grief, said to him, "My husband, suppose I should stay from you this late every night; how long would you live with me?" And he folded his arms, looked into her face a second, and replied, "Just about five minutes, madam!" And yet, what he would not endure he expects a woman to stand. The idea utterly escapes the man that there is any suffering upon the female side.

I have a letter from a prominent lady in Chicago that if I were to read would make your heart ache. She attributes a broken heart and a ruined home to the influence of secret fraternities upon her husband. She says she is willing to go before any tribunal in the land, and can substantiate all she says.

8. These fraternities rob Christ of his glory.

We all know that benevolence, or Christian charity, as we see it in its manifold and beautiful forms, is the result of the presence and influence of Christ in the heart and in the world. We fail to see such things in the heathen world. Charity belongs to Christianity. It is the work of Christ. Now, when a man gives, and fails to acknowledge Christ in the gift, he has robbed the Son of God of his peculiar glory.

Let me illustrate: In a certain distant city there exists a newspaper that is anti-Christ, anti-religion anti-everything that is holy. Whenever a case of public suffering comes up this newspaper opens its columns for contributions, and the contributions flow in. Two-thirds of the donors are Christian men and women inspired by the love of Christ; but mark you, a Christless newspaper gets the glory, and not the Saviour.

So you can take the benevolences of all these secret fraternities and Christ is not acknowledged or thought of. One-half of the members belong to the church and give because of Christ being in their hearts and lives, but Christ does not get the glory--instead a fraternity that may be worldly in its name and spirit, gets the honor and credit.

All Christian giving when not done in the name of Jesus Christ is robbing the Son of God of his glory.

9. The fraternity hurts us in the matter of church attendance.

According to my observations the more devoted a man is to his lodge or fraternity the less devoted is he to his church. The claims of a secret society are only too apt to monopolize his time and energies to the slighting, and oftentimes the neglect, of the house of God. I remember a time when I had great difficulty in getting some of my members to attend an important church meeting. One could not come on Monday night on account of his lodge--a second could not appear Tuesday evening because of his fraternity meeting at that hour, and so on through the week. Each one heard a higher call than that of the church, and that higher call was his lodge.

What would you call this? Is it being a rival to the church? Is God grieved at such a spectacle? At one of the churches I once served there was a steward who attended one prayer-meeting only in the month; the other three Wednesday evenings he was attending the meetings of the different fraternities to which he belonged. How did God regard that, do you suppose? The Bible says he is a jealous God. Is there not much in such a life as this to awaken the Divine jealousy and displeasure? By and by this kind of life affects even the Sabbath attendance. The man hardens and becomes careless and indifferent, and then we miss him Sabbath nights, and finally altogether. The influence of the associations and the effect of church depreciation becomes unmistakably manifested.

When God looks down and sees a church-member, who is a fraternity man, failing to come to prayer-meeting and the Sunday-night services, and yet never failing to be present at the meeting of his lodge, then he is bound to be grieved.

10. The fraternity hurts the church financially.

If you knew the whole of the matter you would be amazed. I know a church-member who gives \$30 a year to his fraternity, and nothing to his church. I know another who gives \$120 annually to his societies, and one-fourth of this sum to his church. Still another has given lately over \$500 to his fraternities, and not one-tenth of that sum to his church.

In a large Western city of our country a certain fraternity met, paraded, banqueted and celebrated for three days. In that length of time more money was thus spent in eating, drinking, marching and displaying regalia finery than all the churches of the large city had given for the support and spread of the gospel for the previous twenty years! And yet over half of the members of that fraternity were church-members.

Suppose that instead of all this Christian money being expended for feathers, brass bands and banqueting, that it had found its way in spiritual channels in all the noble enterprises of the church, and had gone toward the erection of colleges, founding of asylums and homes for the unfortunate and for the establishment of missions in heathen lands, how much better it would have been, and what a thrill of relief would have gone through the land. Don't you begin to see what is the matter with the church today? Don't you understand why it is so financially cramped and embarrassed, and why it is unable to carry out its beneficent plans? It is because that the money of God's people is going to the lodge.

11. The evil of the chaplaincy.

I regard this point as one of great gravity. I know that there are many excellent men in this office, and that many fraternities try to get proper men to fill the place. But it is as well known that this often fails, and the men who should never thus officiate are in this office.

How often have I seen at funerals a minister of the gospel, whom God had called and anointed for the sacred work of the ministry, set aside as a piece of useless lumber, while a fraternity monopolized the solemn hour, and a man from the trades comes forward, and although not called of God to such a work, and oftentimes not even a religious man, would conduct the religious service over the dead. Do you mean to tell me that this is right in the sight of God?

A gentleman, who is prominent in the fraternities, told me several days since that he has frequently seen a chaplain administering the oath of the order, and while doing so was as full of beer as a vessel with water. Still another told me that during a visit to a large city in Kentucky he attended a meeting at a certain fraternity one night and witnessed the installation of one of the members into the office of chaplain, and that as the Bible was handed him with the customary remarks, quite a titter ran around the room. On asking the cause of the amusement he was told that the man was the father of two illegitimate children.

The effect of a sacred office thus misused and abused, and thus wrongly occupied is to bring the truth, the Bible, the ministry and the ordinances of God into contempt. It produces deadness of heart, and is bound to beget irreverence. Let the man who handles holy things be a holy man, and a man called of God, and not by man. The Almighty himself has spoken here, and demanded that they who bear the vessels of the Lord be clean. When a man opens or handles the Word of God for me, I would have him be a man of God and called of God.

The fraternity here rushes in where angels fear to tread. They, in installing a man into a chaplaincy, have usurped the solemn, sacred work of the Holy Ghost. It would be well for them to inquire into the cause of the destruction of Dathan and Abiram and their followers. The Bible tells us that God made the earth open and swallow them up, because they took upon themselves a sacred office and work to which God had not called them.

12. The fraternity has captured much of our preaching talent.

This appears in two respects. I have been informed that nine-tenths of our preachers belong to secret societies. This means of course a muzzled pulpit in every quarter. Not that our preachers are afraid to declare the truth, for they are true men; but after joining a fraternity friendships are formed, kindly relations established, and they are slow to speak of the evils they see. God only knows the pain it has given me to speak as I have.

GOD, THE PREACHER, AND THE LODGE.

The fraternities have captured our preachers in another way. Some of our best talent is today in the offices of these societies as clerks and secretaries. I believe that when God calls a man to preach the gospel he never proposed that he should be a salaried officer in an institution of man's organization. And although they may say they still preach here and there as occasion offers, yet it is not the preaching that God contemplated when he called them. God wants a man to swing loose, free from all restrictions and limitations, and give the whole life and all the energy and time to the heaven-appointed work. This was the way that Christ preached and that the disciples labored, and it is the way for the man called of God to preach today. I tell you if all men who have been thus called would so devote themselves ardently to the one work of saving souls, they would soon take on a new appearance, and we would take a great leap forward.

13. The fraternity is used by many as a substitute for the church.

How often have I heard, how many times have you heard men say about Masonry that it was as good as the church; that they wanted no other church; but you have got to remember that Jesus Christ did not found it, nor did he join it, nor did he endorse it. Christ founded the church and told us to come unto her. When men found an institution and tell us that it is as good as the church, I think those men are in danger. I would not stay a moment in an institution if its teaching and spirit would produce a feeling of that kind among its members.

Nothing has so powerfully convinced me of the dangerous power of these fraternities and their actual rivalry of the church as the recently uttered threat of some church-members, that they would quit the church if I said aught against the fraternity.

What a state of mind and things does this reveal! These men and women will cease to listen to a man called of God to preach, and will dissolve their connection with a divine institution if a man should open his lips in warning and rebuke against a human institution! Certainly these societies have encroached upon the feelings and judgments of men, to thus plant them in antagonism to the servants and church of the Son of God.

I once read of a Roman emperor appealing to his general for the legions he had scattered and lost through a disastrous campaign. "Varus, Varus, where are my legions?" So I look over these fraternities and say, give back to us the men you have taken from us. Give us back the talents, and genius, and grand energies, and devoted labors. Give them back as they once were, and we will march down upon the world's want and sin and take captives for our God.

14. Many of these fraternities are striking at the sanctity of the Sabbath.

I do not say this of the Masonic fraternity, nor of several orders I could mention in this place. But I speak of a vast number of fraternities, benevolent and otherwise, that fill the land today. In some cities I could name, much of the Sabbath-breaking is done by societies and fraternities--by parades, by processions, by picnics and excursions. God's holy day is made to look like a holiday. How my heart has been pained as I have seen them on the Sabbath with fluttering flags and musical instruments, accompanied by the usual street crowd of men and boys, pushing their way to the point of destination. Many a time I have been kept awake until three or four o'clock on Sunday morning, by the sound of music and dancing that flowed from one of these fraternity halls near my home. Banquets, suppers and picnics begun on late Saturday hours and prolonged into the Sabbath, are facts well known.

Here in St. Louis, and only last summer, one fraternity picnicked by or near a large brewery on Saturday afternoon, and the last of them was taken from the garden by city officials at six o'clock Sunday morning. An officer in the fraternity told me this with his own lips. Another society the same summer went out on the Sabbath and made a contract for so many kegs of beer, the understanding being that for all kegs used over the number of twenty, a discount of one dollar per keg should be allowed. This drinking was done on the Sabbath, and done publicly in the face of a Christian community and Sabbath laws!

In another city it is a fact well known, that the city council was resisted by one of these orders, in their effort against Sabbath desecration. The society, it will be remembered, carried the case against the council into the courts of law. It is for you to say after this, whether these fraternities strike at the sanctity of the Lord's day or not.

15. This active membership in these fraternities will certainly harm the spirituality of a Christian.

Whom do you find comprising these fraternities? I grant you many excellent men. My best friends and yours are there. But besides these there is a host of men who are unbelievers and haters of God and the Bible. With these men you are thrown as companions and friends. They create an atmosphere; form an influence. You breathe this atmosphere and feel the influence. The effect will be to lower the love of your religious life. Why does the Bible say, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers?" Why does God say, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly?" and why does he say, "Come out from among them, O my people?" All this is simply the recognition of the fact that the religious life and character is affected by its associations, and that there is danger here, and great danger, for the people of God (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

16. In all of the fraternities and in all the degrees of Masonry under the Knights Templar the name of Jesus Christ is omitted.

This to my mind is the gravest fact of all. The Saviour's name is not known in them. If you doubt me, get hold of the rituals and read and seek in vain. Listen to the public prayers. Go to the funeral services and listen for the name of Jesus Christ. You will listen in vain. My friends, I don't care to be connected with any order on earth that fails to directly recognize the Son of God. Christ Says: "He that is ashamed of me, of him will I be ashamed." "He that denies me before men, him will I deny."

This applies to an individual and to an institution as well. I cannot belong to a society or fraternity that is ashamed of my Lord, or that to please men will leave out his blessed name; therefore have I dissolved my connection with all fraternities forever. With nothing but the kindest personal feelings to its members, with only kindly remembrances of individuals, yet am I done with the system itself.

17. There is no absolute necessity for these societies.

If you examine the social feature, history proves it is not the best. The best development of the social nature is not obtained by the separation of the sexes, but by their being drawn together. Club life is the confirmation of this statement.

As for the benevolent feature, I say that while good has been done, I verily believe that if God's people would take the contributions and turn them into the channels marked out by the Bible and church, that greater good would be done at less expense and with greater glory to Christ.

As for the insurance feature, what can I say against it? I say nothing against it. Men have a right to have such corporations; but this I can say, that you can improve on it. Instead of giving your money from month to month for the keeping up of your insurance policies, you can put your money into a building association, get shares there, and then by and by in a few years have a house over the heads of your wife and children. Don't have your wife sitting there working and waiting for you to die in order to get a house. It is a grizzly thing to look at--it is a ghostly thing to contemplate--a woman waiting and wondering when you are going to die in order to get a house. Build your house now for her and the children. If you go on in these insurance companies you are paying out month by month, and year by year, and if you fail in a payment you know you are gone, and all that you have expended is lost. You are taking a great hazard in such a case.

Put your money down in things that are material, tangible, palpable, and that will remain permanent. Invest in these shares of building associations, and you will have a house over your head to cover you.

I cannot see the absolute necessity of these orders now. We have got along without them for ages and ages, and I believe we can get along without them still. Don't forget that when Christ established an institution to save this world, he didn't found a secret fraternity, but a church that is open as the heavens in its sacraments, ordinances, teachings, and meetings.

In conclusion, let me say that what I have spoken today I have spoken in love. Policy would have dictated silence, but I love Truth better than policy, and your good more than my ease and reputation.

Let me exhort you to stand by your home and that little woman there whom you call your wife. You haven't got a better friend on earth than that wife of yours. She left everything to follow you in life. She gave up father and mother and a comfortable home. You have not been to her what you should have been, and what you promised when she stood as a bride by your side and looked up in her helplessness to you. The light, you notice, is going out of her eye, the spring from her step, and she is getting prematurely old. Go back to her and spend the evenings with her as you used to do. Pay her the old-time attentions, and before a week the light will begin to come back to her eye, the color

steal into her cheek, she will fasten a bit of ribbon in her hair, or a knot of flowers, and be like her old-time self.

The children all love you. There is no other group on earth that loves you like the family group. When sickness and trouble come, and you stagger home, you find it out. What do those men down the street with whom you talk and drink so much--what do they care for you? So look to your family. Cultivate them.

As I said to you two Sabbaths ago, when your wife is dead you will remember the loneliness of her life, produced by your attendance night after night upon these fraternities. When that little boy of yours is dead, and sleeps in his grave on the hillside, they will tell you then how much he missed you in the evenings you were gone, and how he talked about you and waited, hoping you would return before he fell asleep.

How bitterly you will feel all this when the time comes. I once saw a man whose wife had died. He did not waken to her value until then. His heart was torn. He had not found out that he had an angel for a wife; he did not know it until she was dead, and he then cried, "My God, she is gone!" Oh, brother, come back to her, come back and spend the evenings at home! What a time you can have for reading, what sweet music you can have, what romps with the children; what a sweet domestic scene I have before me now! And if there is any evening that the house of God calls you out, come and bring them all with you. How different this is from the fraternities. You cannot take them with you there. Go rather to the place where you can hear words of grace from the pulpit; go where the soul is fed; go and assemble with God's people and not with worldly people; and go where you will be fitted for a higher, nobler, and eternal life.

Stand by the church rather than any fraternity on the earth. Stand by the church, for it is of God. It cost the precious blood of your Saviour. It is the one institution that is going to survive the flames of the last day. When the fire burns around the whole world, and the flames leap from the heart of the earth to the tops of the mountains and swallow up all things in a final destruction--then I notice that every earthly institution shall sink into the common ruin with no hope of resurrection. Fraternities and earthly orders shall go down forever, but the church, the church of our Lord, purified and redeemed, shall rise above the flames, and be landed in the presence of our God forever. Stand by the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave his own heart's blood for you, now do you stand by him. You will want him to be with you in the dying hour. You will want him to be your friend when the final day of judgment comes. Make him your friend now, and say from today, my Lord, I am for you out and out in all things, and for all time to come, forever and forever.

[Loud and unanimous response from the congregation.]