

## Should Christians Be Members of Secret Societies?

### Introduction

Early in her sojourn in Australia (1891-1900) Ellen White was called upon to give counsel to a prominent worker in our publishing house who had become deeply involved in the activities of the masonic lodge. The counsel she presented to this brother led him to sever his connections with the lodge in spite of the fact that he had attained the highest degree of honor in the organization.

Without condemning, Mrs. White pointed out that the christian cannot serve two masters, or render allegiance to two authorities. Our brother, who had become so involved in lodge activities that his work for the church had been sadly neglected, recognized the simple truth in the Ellen G. White counsels, and his confidence in the message was confirmed as Mrs. White--unknown to herself--gave the secret sign used only by members of the lodge. He promptly surrendered his membership in the lodge, although he had stoutly affirmed on a number of occasions that nothing would shake his confidence in the fraternal organization or lead him to break with it. Looking back to this experience in later years, he testified that the spirit of prophecy message completely changed his life.

At this time and in this connection, Mrs. White wrote quite fully concerning the relationship of Seventh-Day Adventists to such organizations. This was published under the title "should christians be members of secret societies?" In pamphlet form, it had wide circulation in australia and in the united states, but it has long been out of print. This pamphlet is reprinted here in its entirety.

## Should Christians Be Members of **Secret Societies?**

Selected Messages Book 2, chapter 13

by *Ellen White*

The second chapter is composed of counsels from the pen of Mrs. White relating to the attitude that Seventh-Day Adventists should take toward labor organizations. This material was published in 1946 as section ii in the pamphlet *Country Living*. It appears here in this permanent form for continued and prayerful study.--White Trustees.

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“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? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

The Lord’s injunction, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor. 6:14), refers not only to the marriage of Christians with the ungodly, but to all alliances in which the parties are brought into intimate association, and in which there is need of harmony in spirit and action. The Lord gave special direction to Israel to keep themselves distinct from idolaters. They were not to intermarry with the heathen nor form any confederacy with them: “Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: but ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: for thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Ex. 34:12-14).

“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers. . . . Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations” (Deut. 7:6-9).

Again the Lord declares through the prophet Isaiah:

“Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; ... Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Isa. 8:9-13).

There are those who question whether it is right for Christians to belong to the Free Masons and other secret societies. Let all such consider the scriptures just quoted. If we are Christians at all, we must be Christians everywhere, and must consider and heed the counsel given to make us Christians according to the standard of God’s Word.

### Cooperation With Divine Agencies

The people of God on earth are the human agents that are to cooperate with divine agencies for the salvation of men. To the souls that have joined themselves to Him, Christ says, “You are one with Me, ‘labourers together with God’” (1 Cor. 3:9). God is the great and unperceived actor; man is the humble and seen agent, and it is only in cooperation with the heavenly agencies that he can do anything good. It is only as the mind is enlightened by the Holy Spirit that men discern the divine agency. And hence Satan is constantly seeking to divert minds from the divine to the human, that man may not cooperate with Heaven. He directs the attention to human inventions, leading men to trust in man, to make flesh their arm, so that their faith does not take hold upon God.

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:22, 23).

And when our light becomes darkness, how shall we be a light to the world?

The work of our personal salvation also depends upon our cooperation with the divine agencies. God has imparted to us moral powers and religious susceptibilities. He has given His Son as a propitiation for our sins, that we might be reconciled to God. Jesus lived a life of self-denial and sacrifice, that we might follow His example. He has given the Holy Spirit to be in Christ’s stead in every place where help is needed. He employs the heavenly intel-

ligences to bring divine power to combine with our human efforts. But we must accept the gift of God, we must repent, and believe in Christ. We must watch, we must pray, we must obey the requirements of God. We must practice self-denial and self-sacrifice for Christ's sake. We must grow up into Christ by constant connection with Him. Whatever turns the mind away from God to trust in man, or conform to a human standard, will prevent us from cooperating with God in the work of our own salvation. This is why the Lord forbade His people to form any alliance with the heathen, "lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee" (Ex. 34:12). He said, "They will turn away thy son from following me" (Deut. 7:4). And the same principle applies to the association of Christians with the ungodly.

### In Covenant Relation

When we accepted Christ as our Redeemer, we accepted the condition of becoming laborers together with God. We made a covenant with Him to be wholly for the Lord; as faithful stewards of the grace of Christ, to labor for the upbuilding of His kingdom in the world. Every follower of Christ stands pledged to dedicate all his powers of mind and soul and body to Him who has paid the ransom money for our souls. We engaged to be soldiers, to enter into active service, to endure trials, shame, reproach, to fight the fight of faith, following the Captain of our salvation.

In your connection with worldly societies are you keeping your covenant with God? Do these associations tend to direct your own mind or that of others to God, or are they diverting the interest and attention from Him? Do they strengthen your connection with the divine agencies, or turn your mind to the human in place of the divine?

Are you serving, honoring, and magnifying God, or are you dishonoring Him and sinning against Him? Are you gathering with Christ or scattering abroad? All the thought and plan and earnest interest devoted to these organizations has been purchased by the precious blood of Christ; but are you doing service for Him when uniting yourselves with atheists and infidels, men who profane the name of God, tipplers, drunkards, tobacco devotees?

While there may be in these societies much that appears to be good, there is, mingled with this, very much that makes the good of no effect, and renders these associations detrimental to the interests of the soul. We have another life than that which is sustained by temporal food. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). Jesus said, "Whoso eateth my

flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life" (John 6:54). Our bodies are built up from what we eat and drink. And as in the natural, so in the spiritual economy; it is that which our minds dwell upon which sustains the spiritual nature. Our Saviour said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Spiritual life must be sustained by communion with Christ through His Word. The mind must dwell upon it, the heart must be filled with it. The Word of God laid up in the heart and sacredly cherished and obeyed, through the power of the grace of Christ can make man right, and keep him right; but every human influence, every earthly invention, is powerless to give strength and wisdom to man. It cannot restrain passion, or correct deformity of character. Unless the truth of God controls the heart, the conscience will be warped. But in these worldly societies the mind is turned away from the Word of God. Men are not led to make it the study and the guide of life.

### Is God Honored?

I ask you who take pleasure in these associations, who love the gathering for indulgence in wit and merriment and feasting, Do you take Jesus with you? Are you seeking to save the souls of your companions? Is that the object of your association with them? Do they see and feel that there is in you a living embodiment of the Spirit of Christ? Is it manifest that you are a witness for Christ, that you belong to a peculiar people, zealous of good works? Is it manifest that your life is governed by the divine precepts, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37), and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 19:19)? To speak to the hearts and consciences of those that are ready to perish, is beyond the power of one who does not himself surrender all for Christ. But where do your fluency and warmth of speech show that your interest is centered?

In these societies what are the favorite subjects of conversation? What are the themes that excite interest and give pleasure? Are they not the gratification of the senses --eating and drinking and pleasure seeking? The presence of Christ is unknown in these gatherings. No reference is made to Him. His companionship is not desired. Where and when is God honored by such associations? Wherein is the soul in the least benefited? If you do not influence your companions for good, are they not influencing you for evil? Will it do to lay aside the lamp of life, God's Word, and mingle freely with this class of associates, and come to their level? Do you think you can find something to satisfy the hunger of the soul apart from truth and the favor of God? Shall

those who profess to believe the truth for this time be at home in such scenes, when God is not in all their thoughts?

In the same room where these societies have had their gatherings, the congregations have met to worship God. Can you during the sacred hour of divine service forget the scenes of merriment and feasting, and indulgence in the wine cup? All this God writes in His book as intemperance. How does it blend with eternal realities? Do you forget that at all these pleasure gatherings there is a Witness present, as at the feast of Belshazzar? Could the curtain that separates us from the invisible world be rolled back, you would behold the Saviour grieved to see men absorbed in the pleasures of the table, in hilarity and witticism, that put Christ, the center of the world's hope, out of their thoughts.

Those who cannot discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not, may be charmed with these societies that have no connection with God, but no earnest Christian can prosper in such an atmosphere. The vital air of heaven is not there. His soul is barren, and he feels as destitute of the refreshing of the Holy Spirit as were the hills of Gilboa of dew and rain.

At times the follower of Christ may by circumstances be compelled to witness scenes of unholy pleasure, but it is with a sorrowful heart. The language is not the language of Canaan, and the child of God will never choose such associations. When he is necessarily brought into society that he does not choose, let him lean upon God, and the Lord will preserve him. But he is not to sacrifice his principles in any case, whatever the temptation.

### Not of Christ

Christ will never lead His followers to take upon themselves vows that will unite them with men who have no connection with God, who are not under the controlling influence of His Holy Spirit. The only correct standard of character is the holy law of God, and it is impossible for those who make that law the rule of life to unite in confidence and cordial brotherhood with those who turn the truth of God into a lie, and regard the authority of God as a thing of nought.

Between the worldly man and the one who is faithfully serving God, there is a great gulf fixed. Upon the most momentous subjects--God and truth and eternity-- their thoughts and sympathies and feelings are not in harmony. One class is ripening as wheat for the garner of God, the other as tares for the fires of destruction. How can there be unity of purpose or action between them?

“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).

“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” (Matt. 6:24).

But we are to beware of indulging a spirit of bigotry and intolerance. We are not to stand aside from others in a spirit that seems to say, “Come not near me; I am holier than thou.” Do not shut yourselves away from your fellow men, but seek to impart to them the precious truth that has blessed your own heart. Let it be manifest that yours is the religion of love.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

But if we are Christians, having the Spirit of Him who died to save men from their sins, we shall love the souls of our fellow men too well to countenance their sinful pleasures by our presence or our influence. We cannot sanction their course by associating with them, partaking in their feasts and their councils, where God does not preside. Such a course, so far from benefiting them, would only cause them to doubt the reality of our religion. We should be false lights, by our example leading souls to ruin.

I lately read of a noble ship that was plowing its way across the sea, when at midnight, with a terrific crash, it struck upon a rock; the passengers were awakened only to see with horror their hopeless condition, and with the ship they sank to rise no more. The man at the helm had mistaken the beacon light, and hundreds of souls were at a moment's warning launched into eternity. If we present a phase of character that misrepresents Christ, we present a false light, and souls will surely be misled by our example.

### Danger of Spiritual Declension

And Christians who connect themselves with worldly associations are injuring themselves as well as misleading others. Those who fear God cannot choose the ungodly for companions, and be themselves unharmed. In these societies they are brought under the influence of worldly principles and customs, and through the power of association and habit the mind becomes more and more conformed to the worldling's standard. Their love for God grows cold, and they have no desire for communion with Him. They become spiritually blind. They can see no particular difference between the transgres-

sor of God's law and those who fear God and keep His commandments. They call evil good, and good evil. The brightness of eternal realities fades away. The truth may be presented to them in ever so forcible a manner, but they do not hunger for the bread of life, or thirst for the waters of salvation. They are drinking at broken cisterns that can hold no water. Oh, it is an easy thing, by association with the world, to catch their spirit, to be molded by their views of things, so that we do not discern the preciousness of Jesus and the truth. And just to the degree that the spirit of the world dwells in our heart, it will control our life.

When men are not under the control of the Word and the Spirit of God, they are captives of Satan, and we know not to what lengths he may lead them in sin. The patriarch Jacob beheld those who take pleasure in wickedness. He saw what would be the result of association with them, and in the Spirit he exclaimed, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united" (Gen. 49:6). He lifts up the danger signal, to warn every soul against such associations. The apostle Paul echoes the warning: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11). "Be not deceived: Evil company doth corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33, R.V.).

The soul is deceived when it trusts to worldly policy and human inventions instead of trusting in the Lord God of Israel. Can man find a better guide than the Lord Jesus? a better counselor in doubt and trial? a better defense in danger? To set aside the wisdom of God for human wisdom is a soul-destroying delusion.

If you would see what man will do when he rejects the influence of the grace of God, look to that scene in the judgment hall, when the infuriated mob, headed by Jewish priests and elders, clamored for the life of the Son of God. See the divine Sufferer standing by the side of Barabbas, and Pilate asking which he should release unto them. The hoarse cry, swelled by hundreds of passionate, Satan-inspired voices, is, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas" (Luke 23:18)! And when Pilate asked what was to be done with Jesus they cried, "Crucify him, crucify him" (Luke 23:21)!

Human nature then is human nature now. When the divine Remedy that would have saved and exalted human nature is despised, the same spirit still lives in the hearts of men, and we cannot trust to their guidance and maintain our loyalty to Christ.



## God Looks Beneath the Surface

These societies, that are not controlled by the love and fear of God, will not be found true and upright toward man. Many of their transactions are contrary to justice and equity. He who is of too pure eyes to behold evil will not, cannot, be a party to many things that take place in these associations. Your own conscience will bear witness to the truth of what I say. The talent and skill and inventive power with which God has endowed men are, in these associations, too often perverted to instruments of cruelty, of iniquity, of selfishness in practicing fraud upon their fellow men.

Of course all this is denied by the members of these bodies. But God looks beneath the pleasant, attractive appearance, to the secret, underlying motives and the real working of the association. While some of them claim to make the Word of God in a certain sense the basis of their organization, they depart far from the principles of righteousness. The vows imposed by some of these orders require the taking of human life when the secrets of the order are divulged. Members are also pledged, under certain circumstances, to clear the guilty from deserved punishment. Toward those who work against the order, they are required to pursue a course that is not at all in harmony with the law of God.

We cannot swerve from the truth, we cannot depart from right principles, without forsaking Him who is our strength, our righteousness, and our sanctification. We should be firmly rooted in the conviction that whatever in any sense turns us aside from truth and justice in our association and partnership with men, cannot benefit us, and greatly dishonors God. Every species of deceit or conniving at sin is abhorrent to Him.

Fraud runs all through these secret associations, and none can be bound up with them and be free men before God and heaven. The moral nature is dragged down to that which God pronounces unjust, which is contrary to His will and His commandments. One who professes to love God, may in these associations be placed in positions which are called honorable, but in the eyes of God he is tarnishing his honor as a Christian, and separating farther and farther from the principles of righteousness and true holiness. He is perverting his powers, that have been purchased by the blood of Jesus. He is selling his soul for nought.

In the revelation of His righteous judgments, God will break up all these associations; and when the judgment shall sit and the books be opened, there will be revealed the un-Christlikeness of the whole confederacy. Those who

choose to unite with these secret societies are paying homage to idols as senseless and as powerless to bless and save the soul as are the gods of the Hindus.

These societies offer some advantages which from a human point of view appear like great blessings, but not so when judged by the Lord's measurement. Behind their apparent advantages are concealed satanic agencies. The larger the income drawn into the treasury, the more and deeper is the evil. The ungodly gain which has enriched these societies will, when traced out in all its bearings, be seen to be a curse. The words which Eliphaz spoke to Job are true in respect to these associations: "I saw him 'taking root,' but I 'cursed his habitation'" (Job 5:3). They are Satan's traps, his net to entangle souls.

### A Question of Loyalty to God

Very many things are sanctioned and upheld by the world when they are an offense to the Holy One of Israel. It was seemingly a small thing for Eve to depart from God's specified restrictions and do the thing He told her not to do, and for Adam to follow her example; but that very thing was planned by the archdeceiver to destroy the souls of men by leading them to follow their own imaginations rather than the revealed will of God. So in these associations principles are held that bring men under the deceptive power of Satan, leading away from safe paths into rebellion against God and disregard of His holy standard of righteousness. "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38), is the oft-repeated injunction of our Saviour. Watch, watch with diligence and care, lest Satan succeed in ensnaring the souls of those for whom Christ has paid the ransom money of His own blood.

God calls upon you who would be His children to act as under the divine eye, to adopt the holy standard of righteousness. His justice and His truth are the principles that should be established in every soul. He who preserves his integrity toward God, will be upright toward man. No man who truly loves God, will, for the sake of a bribe of gold and silver, of honor, or any other earthly advantage, expose his soul to temptation. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36, 37).

Christians must sever every tie that binds them to these secret orders that are not under the control of God. They cannot be loyal to these organizations and loyal to God. Either the connection with these bodies must be severed or you will assimilate more closely to them, and as the result will come to unite more fully with them, and will sever the ties that bind you to those who love

and fear God. The Christian will abandon those things which are a hindrance to his spirituality, be the sacrifice ever so great. Better lose money, possessions, and life itself, than to imperil the vital interests of the soul.

### Stewards of God

You who have connected yourselves with these secret societies are trusting in a staff that will be broken in pieces; you do not trust in the Lord God of Israel, diligently searching to know His will and to follow in His way. When you invest money in these organizations, you do so in the hope of making provision for the future. You have given them time and thought and labor and money, while the cause of Christ has been neglected. Every dollar paid into these organizations is as truly turned away from the cause of God as if sunk in the ocean. But was not this capital entrusted to you of God to use in His service, for the salvation of your fellow men? By investing it where it cannot honor God or benefit men, you are repeating the sin of the slothful servant who hid his Lord's talent in the earth.

The Lord had entrusted to the unfaithful servant not a large capital, but only one talent. That one talent the man did not invest for the interest of God; he hid it in the earth, complaining that the Lord was a hard Master, reaping where He had not sown, and gathering where He had not strown. The selfishness he manifested, and the complaints he made, as though God would require of him that which He had no right to claim, showed that he did not know God, or Jesus Christ, whom He had sent. Everything he possessed was the Lord's own property, and was entrusted to him to use for God. When he says, "I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth" (Matt. 25:25), he acknowledged that the talent was from God.

And what saith the Lord?--"Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed" (Matt. 25:26). Here He repeats the servant's words, not acknowledging their truth, but showing what, even according to his own account, the servant ought to have done. The Lord virtually says: "You made no effort to trade upon My entrusted capital, and to gain an increase to promote My glory in the earth. Thou oughtest . . . to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not {traded on his Lord's goods} shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness" (Matt. 25: 27-30). To every soul to whom the light of truth has come is this lesson given.

We should never forget that God has placed us on trial in this world, to determine our fitness for the future life. None can enter heaven whose characters are defiled by the foul blot of selfishness. Therefore God tests us here by committing to us temporal possessions, that our use of these may show whether we can be entrusted with eternal riches. It is only as the self-sacrificing life of Christ is reflected in our life that we can be in harmony with heaven, and be fitted to enter there.

### Where Are We Placing Our Treasures?

But the great study and ambition of the world is to obtain material, temporal advantages, to the neglect of spiritual good. Thus it is with some members of the church. When at last they shall be called to render their account to God, they will not only be ashamed but astonished that they did not discern the true riches, and have not laid up treasure in the heavens. They have bestowed their gifts and offerings upon the enemies of truth, expecting a time to come in this life when they would receive the returns for what they have invested. They could entrust their means to secret societies, but when the cause of God is in need of the means He has committed to His human agents, they feel no interest, they do not consider the gift that the Lord has made to them. They are blinded by the god of this world.

They say: "I have nothing to give to this enterprise; for I shall receive no returns. In paying to the lodge, I am providing for the future, and, besides this, I must bear my share of expense for the entertainments that gratify my taste. I cannot give up these enjoyments. Why does the church look to me to help meet these constantly recurring demands? 'Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth' {Matt. 25:24, 25}, expecting that some time I would be benefited by it."

The Saviour bids us: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

Many are laying up their treasure in these secret societies, and can we not see that their heart is there? However powerful may be the evidences of truth, little by little it loses its brightness, loses its force, heaven fades from the mind, the eternal weight of glory, the gift of God for a life of obedience, appears a matter unworthy of notice in comparison with the supposed benefits to be

realized in laying up earthly treasure. Souls are starving for the bread and water of life; but what is that to him whose heart is set on this world? Many a man is saying by his actions, if not in words, "I cannot let go my interest in these earthly treasures, to secure that which is eternal. The life to come is too remote for me to count upon. I choose the earthly goods, and I will run the risk of the future. God is good and merciful." Slothful servant! your portion is just as surely appointed with hypocrites and unbelievers as you continue to pursue this course. The fascination of the club room, the suppers, and the world-loving associates, has led, as did Belshazzar's feast, to forgetfulness of God and dishonoring of His name.

### Will You Cooperate With God?

There is a blindness upon human minds that is willful. Jesus said, "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15). The work of God for the salvation of men is the one work of supreme importance to be carried forward in our world; but many do not see this, because their interest is more with the ranks of the enemy than with the loyal soldiers of Christ. They do not see the necessity of the cooperation of the human with the divine agency. The Lord has bidden us: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12, 13). This is the plan which God has revealed to us to guide us in all the plans and purposes of life. But while men pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10), many reject the very means by which God would establish His kingdom.

When they are willing to count all things but loss that they may win Christ, their eyes will be opened to see things as they really are. Then they will turn away from the earthly attractions to the heavenly. Then they will see the true nature of the worldly, selfish enjoyments that they now value so highly, and these things that they now hold so dear will be given up.

All heaven is looking upon you who claim to believe the most sacred truth ever committed to mortals. Angels are waiting with longing desire to cooperate with you in working for the salvation of souls. Will you refuse this heavenly alliance in order to maintain your connection with society where God is not honored, where His commandments are trampled upon? How would the truth ever have been brought to you if others had felt so little interest in its advancement as some of you manifest? The cause of God demands our help, that it may be established upon a proper basis, and that the truth may

be carried forward into new fields, to those who are ready to perish. Can you who claim to be sons of God refuse to aid in this work? Will you, in order to receive an earthly return, withhold your means from the treasury of God, and let His work be shamefully neglected? It is grievous to consider what might have been accomplished in the saving of souls if the heart and service of all who profess to believe the truth had been undividedly given to God. Work has been negligently done. If self had been hid in Christ, sinners might, through wise, ingenious methods, have been won to the truth, and today be in cooperation with God.

Now, before the time comes when you must render up your account to God, I urge you to give heed to His word, "Lay up for yourselves" a "treasure in the heavens" (Matt. 6:20; Luke 12:33), not in secret societies. Consider that there is only one Proprietor of the universe, and that every man, with his time, his intellect, his resources, belongs to the One who has paid the ransom for the soul. God has a righteous claim to constant service and supreme affection. God's will, not your pleasure, is to be your criterion. And though you should accumulate a fortune less rapidly, you are laying up treasure in heaven. Who of the church is resolved to maintain his spirituality? Who will develop an experience that reveals Christian fervor, persevering energy? Who, like Jesus, will not fail nor be discouraged, not in grasping means for the service of self, but in laboring together with God?

All who are striving for the crown of everlasting life will be tempted as was their Master before them. He was proffered the kingdoms of the world if He would pay homage to Satan. Had Christ yielded to this temptation, the world would have passed forever under the sway of the wicked one. But, thank God, His divinity shone through humanity. He did that which every human being may do in the name and strength of Jesus. He said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10). If this is the way you meet temptation, Satan will leave you, as he left Christ, and angels will minister unto you, as they ministered unto Him.

To those who have thought and talked of the great advantages to be gained by worldly association, the Lord declares, through the prophet Malachi:

"Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal. 3:13-15).

These are the thoughts of many, if the words are not spoken.

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 3:16 to 4:1).

Here are the people that in the world are judged to be greatly favored; but there comes a time when the children of God are distinguished as those who are honored of God because they have honored Him.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3).

### The Better Way

While temporal honor and riches and power are the great objects of ambition with the men of this world, the Lord points out something more worthy of our highest aspirations:

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised" (Jer. 9:23-25).

"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them

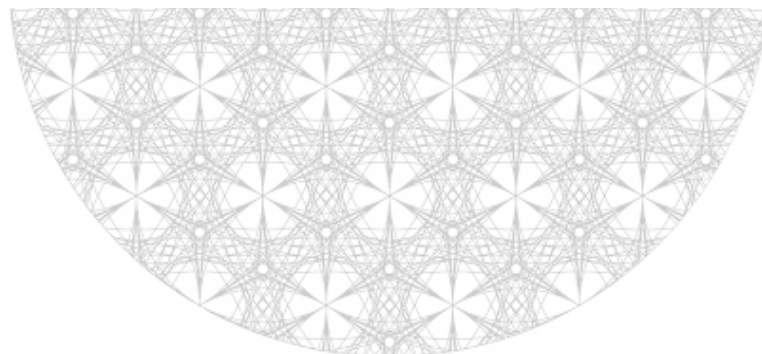
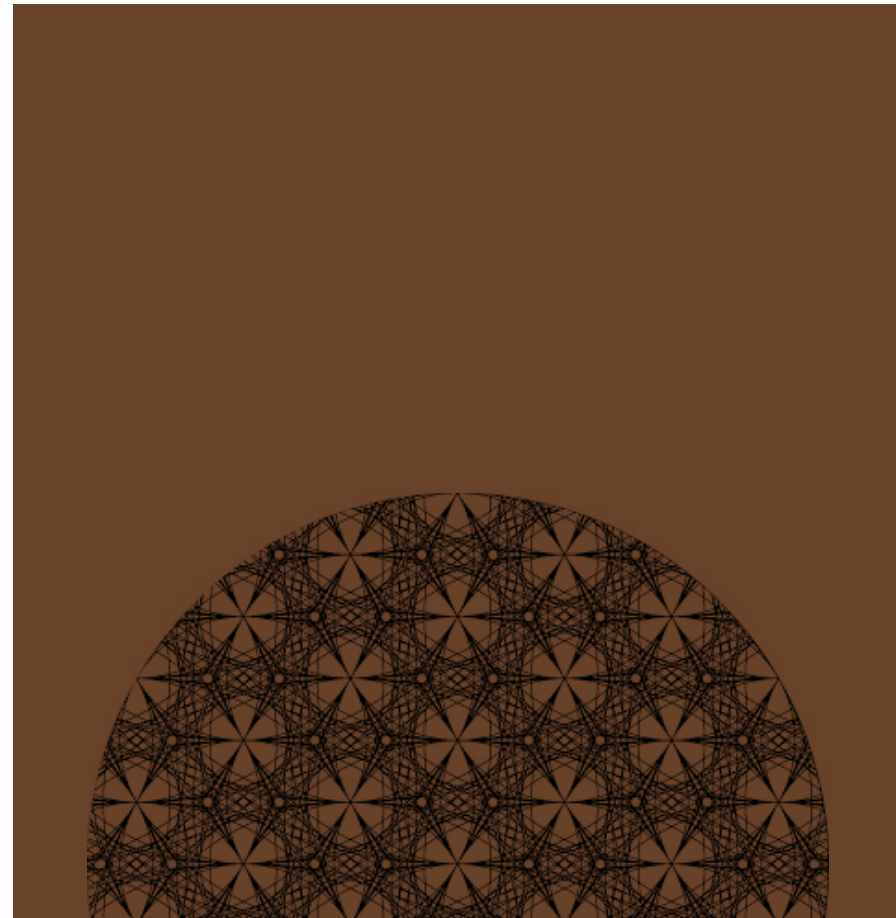


which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:6-9).

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:13-19).--Pamphlet published in 1893, Should Christians Be Members of Secret Societies?

### Cannot Receive the Seal of God

Those who stand under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel cannot be united with the Free Masons or with any secret organization. The seal of the living God will not be placed upon anyone who maintains such a connection after the light of truth has shone upon his pathway. Christ is not divided, and Christians cannot serve God and mammon. The Lord says, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17, 18).--Letter 21, 1893.



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