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A CATECHISM ON MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORDER OF THE KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.—How long have you been a member of this order? Why did you join the order? To provide for yourself and family in case of sickness and death is certainly proper and right. See 1 Tim. 5, 8. But is joining a lodge a proper and right way of doing this? That is the question. I am convinced that it is not a proper and right way. I am convinced that membership in your organization is forbidden by God and, therefore, sinful and wrong. As your pastor it is my sacred duty to instruct you and to endeavor to bring you to a knowledge of the sinfulness of your lodge connection. I take it for granted that you do not see any wrong in belonging to the lodge, otherwise you would abandon it. I have this confidence in you that you would not knowingly continue in sin. But why don't you see any wrong in it? Because you do not see the real, true character of your order. It is this character, the un-Christian and anti-Christian character of your organization, which we oppose. We do not attack the character of the men belonging to it, but the character, principles, and purposes of the order, of the system. We do not deny that there are good men in your lodge. You say that even ministers belong to it. This may be another reason why you can see no wrong in your lodge connection. But need I tell you that not men but Christ is our exemplar and teacher?

Does not the Bible say "that ye should follow His steps"? And does not our Savior Himself say to us, "Learn of me"? And what does He teach us concerning lodges? He teaches us that it is sinful to belong to them. He says unto us, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate." It is true, the word "lodge" is not to be found in the Bible, but the Bible constantly cautions us against those very things which are constantly found in the lodge. Because the Bible is against the lodge, we are against it, and would oppose it even if no other churches would do so. But ours is by no means the only church that bears witness against lodgism. Look at the following testimonies of non-Lutherans:

1. BAPTISTS. *The Baptist Church Directory*: "It may be said that whether these societies are good or bad in themselves . . . connection with them will be a grief to many, and it is, at best, of very questionable propriety; the safer course, by far, is to avoid them altogether."—Rev. Nathaniel Colvert, who with others organized the Tremont Temple Baptist Church in Boston: "All members of Baptist churches of the same faith and order, in good standing, are invited to participate with us; except . . . members of secret associations; to such the invitation is not extended."—The late Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D.: "Membership in the secret lodge is certainly incompatible with usefulness in the Christian church. . . . The heart cannot be halved; and he that attempts to love the Church of God with one hemisphere of his heart, and the secret society with the other, will speedily find that he is very much more of a lodgeman than a churchman." "They tell us to spare this or that secret order, but it will not do. They are all organized on a false basis of morality, and our eye must not spare, any more than did Samuel when he slew Agag."—Rev. S. P. Henson: "We are often told in vaunting speech of the illustrious names that have given their sanction to secret societies. No matter for that—the name of Jesus is

above every name, and His name is recorded in reprobation of them."

2. CONGREGATIONALISTS. Samuel Adams, the father of the American Revolution: "I am decidedly opposed to all secret societies whatever."—Rev. Prof. C. G. Finney: "When I became a Christian, I had to forsake my lodge sin as I forsook my other sins."—Dwight L. Moody: "I do not see how any Christian, most of all a Christian minister, can go into these secret lodges with unbelievers."

3. METHODISTS. John Wesley: "What an amazing banter upon all mankind is Freemasonry!"—Rev. B. F. Roberts: "To be a good Mason and a good Christian at the same time would be treason to Christ."—President U. S. Grant: "All secret, oath-bound political parties are dangerous to any nation."—The *International Cyclopaedia*: "Wesleyan Methodists . . . exclude from their fellowship all members of secret societies."

4. PRESBYTERIANS. Rev. Howard Crosby: "We have no hesitation in writing secret societies among the quackeries of the earth. Whatever in them is not babyish is dangerous."

Such testimonies might be multiplied *ad infinitum*; but these will suffice to show that there are many Christians outside our church who account the lodge an institution with which no follower of Jesus Christ should have any connection. With the help of God I will now endeavor to bring you to the same knowledge. I believe that a catechisation will be the easiest and most successful way of accomplishing this. I will, therefore, ask a series of simple questions which you will kindly answer. The purpose of this catechisation is not to receive knowledge from you, but to impart knowledge to you. Nor is it my purpose to pump secrets out of you. If you should fear, however, that you would disclose secrets by answering the one or the other question, we will let others answer for you. Let us begin, then, in God's name.

**A Catechism on Membership in the Order of the
Knights of Pythias.**

I.

1. Was the obligation which you took a simple promise, or was it a promissory oath? (*Note: If it is at once acknowledged that the obligation is an oath, questions 2 to 5 are to be omitted.*)

2. Were you obligated on the Bible?

3. You were blindfolded and required to kneel upon both knees before an open coffin containing a skeleton. On that coffin two swords were crossed with the points toward you. On those swords was an open Bible called the book of law. You placed your left hand upon your left breast and your right hand, palm downward, on the book of law. In this position you took the obligation. Now tell me, please, is it not an outward form or sign of appealing to the Author of the Bible in an oath when a person thus places his right hand on the Bible?

4. Again, you said at the end of each obligation: "So help me God—and may He keep me steadfast." Does not this solemn appeal to God plainly stamp those obligations as oaths?

5. The Chancellor Commander says to the page: "These heroes still live, and will live while friendship warms the heart of man. This virtue is the corner-stone of the order, and our members are sworn to exercise it toward each other." Isn't this a plain admission that your members are sworn, that they are put under oath?

6. Do you see any wrong in having taken that obligation or oath?

7. In those oaths you used God's name. What does God say in the Second Commandment concerning His name?

8. What is meant by this?

9. When only may we swear by God's name?

10. Let us examine your lodge oath according to this rule. Did the glory of God demand it that you solemnly

called on His name to help you never to reveal the password, grip, signs, or any other secret or mystery of the various ranks, to obey the laws of the order—did the glory of God demand this?

11. Would it have been detrimental to the glory of God if you had not taken such an oath?

12. On the other hand, did the welfare of your neighbor demand it that you were sworn to exercise charity toward him?

13. According to the Bible, then, your oath was unnecessary, was it not?

14. Didn't you take God's name in vain, then?

15. Moreover, you know that all oaths in uncertain things are forbidden. Did you know the password, grip, secret work, or mystery at the time when you solemnly promised never to reveal them?

16. You solemnly promised to obey the laws of the order. Did you positively know in advance that they were laws which God would allow you to obey?

17. Was it right before God to take such an oath in uncertain things?

18. That oath was wrong, therefore, in every way.—I believe it that you did not know this at the time. You erred in ignorance. But is ignorance of the law an excuse?

19. Does not the Bible say: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain"?

20. How, then, may you get rid of this guilt?

21. But suppose a person sees that he has sinned, and asks God to forgive him, but will not forsake that sin, can such a person have mercy?—"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy," Prov. 28, 13.

22. What must you do, then, to obtain mercy?

II.

1. According to the laws of the Knights of Pythias of the State of Missouri (p. 184), one of the objects and purposes of this organization is to provide for the relief of its

members. You certainly do not believe that we condemn this object and purpose?

2. God wants us to love even our enemies and to do good unto all men, even to the ungodly and unbelieving—does He not?

3. But love is, as you may know, of two kinds. There is a love which is essentially affection. It takes pleasure and delight in a person and longs for union and communion with him. The other is essentially pity, compassion, benevolence. Do you suppose that God wants us Christians to love the ungodly with delight and affection, to long for fellowship of heart and soul with them?

4. Does God want us believers to have intimate fellowship with unbelievers?

God has most earnestly forbidden such fellowship in many Bible passages. See Ps. 1 and comp. Ps. 26, 4; 139, 20—23. Is. 52, 11. Rom. 16, 17. James 4, 4. Rev. 18, 4. 2 Chron. 19, 1—3. 2 Cor. 6, 14—18, and many other passages. Let us read and examine the last-named passage: "*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.*"

5. Who says this?

6. To whom does the Lord say: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"?

7. What does it mean to be "yoked together" with unbelievers?

8. With whom shall we believers not be intimately connected?

9. What kind of an intimate union or yoking together is it when believers are yoked together with unbelievers?

10. What does God, therefore, say in verse 27?

11. Can you misunderstand such plain language?

12. Let us now read the instructive story of an unequal union of a believer with an unbeliever. Read 2 Chron. 18, 1—3.

13. Who was Jehoshaphat? See 2 Chron. 17, 3—6.

14. Do you remember who Ahab was?

15. Jehoshaphat was a believer, while Ahab was an unbeliever. Still, what did Jehoshaphat do, according to 2 Chron. 18, 1—3?

16. What did God say to Jehoshaphat because of this unequal union with Ahab? See 2 Chron. 19, 1. 2.

17. What lesson does this story teach us?

18. Are there any unbelievers in your order?

19. Yes, I know that a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being is one of the qualifications for membership. But do not the devils also believe that there is a God? See James 2, 19.

20. But does this belief that there is a God, a Supreme Being, make the devils true believers or Christians?

21. The Bible says, "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him." And again: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." Now, you know that the Jews, Unitarians, and others deny the Son. Are these believers, then, or unbelievers?

22. Are there not such unbelievers in your order, men who do not honor the Son, but deny Him?

23. Let us look at the list of your membership.—So there are men in your order who by their profession or by their manner of life plainly show that they are unbelievers.

These may be honorable men, but believers they are not. Now, does not your *Handbook* for the Order of the Knights of Pythias of Missouri say on page 8: "This is a benevolent Order, and has for its object the bringing together and binding together of a brotherhood of honorable men"?

24. Is this merely an object on paper, or does your order accomplish this object?

25. It certainly does. It brings together Jews and Gentiles, believers and unbelievers. These different classes of men sit together in the lodge room as brothers and friends; they sing together and pray together. Is that right?

26. Your order does not only purpose to bring men together, but also to bind them together. Does it endeavor to bind its members together in friendship?

27. Is friendship, as the *Handbook* says (p. 4), "the strongest bond of union between man and man"?

28. By this strongest bond of union all Knights of Pythias are bound together?

29. Are you also bound together with them by this strongest bond of union?

30. There are unbelievers in your order. To these as well as to the others you are bound, bound by the strongest bond of union between man and man. Do you see no wrong in this?

31. You asked God to help you exercise that "unexcelled and almost unequalled friendship" of Damon and Pythias toward every Knight of Pythias and thus also toward those members who deny your blessed Redeemer. Really, isn't that wrong?

32. You are unequally bound and yoked together with unbelievers while God says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Are you not disobeying your God?

33. God says, "Wherefore come out from among them." Will you stay with them when God says, "Come out from among them"?

34. Can you give me a definition of the verb "doubt"?
 —*Webster*: "To waver in opinion or judgment; to be in uncertainty as to belief respecting anything; to hesitate in belief; to be undecided as to the truth of the negative or affirmative proposition; to be undetermined." Doubt is opposed to faith, assured belief. Rom. 14, 23. Have you an assured belief that it is perfectly proper and right to belong to your lodge, or has the thought entered your mind that it might be wrong?

35. Let us read Rom. 14, 23.

36. How will this passage read if we substitute the words, "If he belong to the lodge," for the words, "If he eat"?

37. "*Whatsoever* is not of faith"—does that include lodge membership?

38. What is your lodge connection if it is not of faith?

39. What is said of him that doubts and yet eats?

40. What must be said of him that doubts whether it is perfectly proper and right to belong to the lodge, and yet joins it and stays in it?

But it seems to me that the two reasons which have been presented are so plain as to leave no room for doubt. They show, and show plainly, that a Christian should have nothing to do with the lodge. Still, our chief objection to lodgism has not been presented as yet. Let us proceed to it now.

III.

1. Did I understand you to say that there is nothing in your lodge that conflicts or interferes with your religion?

2. Your order has religious exercises, such as praying, singing, etc.?

3. The Bible says, "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." Does your order honor the Son?

4. Doesn't that interfere with your religion?

8. Does not your order teach that men can get to heaven by their own deeds?

9. Have you ever heard words similar to the following: "Keep sacred the lesson of to-night; and so live that when you come to the river that marks the unknown shore, your hands may be filled with deeds of charity, the golden keys that ope the palace of eternity"?

10. Should we fill our hands with deeds of charity?

11. But is it true that deeds of charity are "the golden keys that ope the palace of eternity"?

12. Will the person who imagines that his good deeds will open heaven for him enter into heaven?

13. St. Paul says: "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse." Do you understand these words?

14. What is the fate of the person who imagines that his good deeds will open heaven for him?

15. Does your order expect its members to believe the statement that deeds of charity are "the golden keys that ope the palace of eternity"?

16. Is not the order thereby teaching a way of damnation?

17. Can you be and remain a member of, and give your moral and financial support to, an order which ignores Christ, the only Redeemer, and teaches that a person can open heaven by his own good works, and thereby leads people to destruction?

18. To withdraw from the lodge may mean a great deal to you. But can you be a disciple of Jesus, unless you deny yourself, and take up your cross, and follow Him?

19. To abandon the lodge may be tantamount to abandoning money. But what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

20. What does God promise you if you come out from among them? See 2 Cor. 6, 18.

21. Shall you ever want if the Lord Almighty is a Father unto you?

I have now set before you God's command and promise. His command is plain and peremptory: "Come out from among them." Will you disobey it? His promise is persuasive and precious: "I will be a Father unto you." Will you disbelieve it? Do not confer with flesh and blood. Do not delay your decision. Act now. "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith: To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

C. F. DREWES.

WILLIAM TYNDALE,
THE TRANSLATOR OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

(Concluded.)

Tyndale's Death in Holland.

King Henry sent Sir Thomas Elyot to the Continent to drag Tyndale to England, and for a time the Reformer wandered about in Germany to elude his pursuers, but later he again settled in Antwerp. In 1534 he reissued the Pentateuch and the revised second edition of the New Testament—"Tyndale's noblest monument." The prologues and glosses "have to a considerable extent been translated from the German of Luther." In 1535 Tyndale prepared yet another edition of the New Testament, with headings to chapters of the Gospels and the Acts, but without the marginal notes. It was a crime in any Englishman to sell, buy, or read a copy of the New Testament in his native tongue. A change was coming. Richard Herman, a merchant adventurer of Antwerp, was imprisoned for his "help to the setting forth of the New Testament in English." He appealed to Anne Boleyn, now Queen of Henry VIII, and in a letter to Thomas Cromwell she requested the release of the prisoner. And in gratitude for her favor, Tyndale struck off for her private use a copy of his New Testament on vellum, beautifully illuminated. Her name, in faded red