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## Full Forgiveness.

Translated from Dr. E. Preuss's *Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung*, Part V.

THE REV. JUL. A. FRIEDRICH, Iowa City, Iowa.

(Continued.)

Are we to produce still more testimonies? Are we to show — and this would be an easy task — that our Evangelical Lutheran Church has confessed the doctrine of full forgiveness at all times? Are we to summon Martin Chemnitz to the arena? or Aegidius Hunnius? Hunnius says: There are no degrees in justification. For it is impossible that a man should have partly obtained forgiveness of sins and partly not. It is also impossible for a man to be partly in grace and partly without it, or to be an heir of eternal life and at the same time a child of the devil. But he that is justified *has obtained full forgiveness of all his sins* and is fully in grace and an heir of eternal life. For in justification our greater or lesser worthiness does not come into consideration, consequently our justification cannot be increased or decreased by our worthiness. Not even our faith conditions our justification in so far as it has this or that quality, being strong or weak, but only in so far as it apprehends its object, the merits of Christ. But the merits of Christ are indivisible.<sup>1)</sup> John Gerhard says: The Word of God “carefully distinguishes between justification and

1) *Justificatio nec magis recipit nec minus, quandoquidem fieri non potest, ut quis ex parte remissionem suorum peccatorum obtineat, ex parte vero non; nec quisquam partim in gratia est, partim extra gratiam; nec quis potest esse ex parte haeres vitae aeternae, ex parte vero filius gehennae et damnationis. Sed homo justificatus plenariam omnium peccatorum adeptus est veniam, et totus est in gratia Dei atque vitae sempiternae haeres. Neque spectantur in justificatione illae virtutes, quibus auctis vel diminutis ipsa quoque justificatio tale subeat vel incrementum vel decrementum. Quin ne quidem fides ingreditur justificationem, quatenus ex sua conditione aestimata nunc firma, nunc languida est, sed quod subjectum suum aspicit, quod aequabile semper est. Considerat quippe gratiam justificantis Dei, quae infinitate sua omnem inaequalitatem respuit. Considerat meritum Christi, quod, quia infinitum est et in justificationis actu totum apprehenditur, itidem hujusmodi graduum inaequalitatem in justificationis arcano non constituit. (A. Hunnius, *Articulus de Justificatione*, p. 102.)*

# The God of Odd-Fellowship.

BENJAMIN M. HOLT, Fargo, N. Dak.

Lodge periodicals no doubt outnumber church periodicals ten to one. Lodge periodicals are made up (besides of lodge news and lodge directories) of religious notations, religious poems, religious editorials, religious lectures, etc. So-called ministers of the Gospel contribute religious matter for lodge periodicals and give the lodge a religious boost.

Lodge periodicals are read with great frequency and much interest since the lodge way to "life eternal" is such an easy way as compared with the way of the Cross. GOD is the password to the lodge above, and little is expected of the lodge member except that he admit there is some state of existence in the hereafter. Unbelievers, unchristians, Orientals, and Jews together complete the lodge roster.

The average lodge periodical furnishes sufficient antichristian material upon which to build a splendid sermon against these forces of darkness. And by following up the various religious leads thus presented, writing letters of inquiry to lodge officials, lodge editors, etc., one might be able to compile a salable booklet against lodgism on the basis of material gathered from a single issue of a lodge periodical.

An instance. Some kind Odd-Fellow recently placed into my hands the February issue, 1928, of *The Odd-Fellow World* (North and South Dakota). The lodge duty to "bury the dead" adorns the front cover. On page 4 is an editorial using such terms as "living waters," "angel," "sod" (grave), "dust to dust," "God," "from above" (heaven), "prayer," etc. On page 7 is another

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11) Of course, *παρ' ἐκεῖνον*, Luke 18, 14, means "passing by the other." So the publican was justified while the Pharisee was passed by. This is the explanation of all exegetes of the Evangelical [*i. e.*, Protestant] Church, from Luther down to Lange and Meyer. Luther: "The other, the Pharisee, went his way not justified, but damned."

religious article using the same terms as those mentioned above and also "heavenly form," "last degree" (death), "grand lodge of love" (heaven), "conductor" (God), and even intimates a possibility of the existence of hell, "hoping not to be black-balled" when they arrive at the grand lodge above. On page 20 is an article headed "A Sort of a Sermon," an appropriate title indeed, for a *sort* it is. On page 31 Sir Humphry Davis is quoted: "I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing, for it . . . , far above all combinations of earthly hopes, calls up the most delighted visions, palms and amaranths, the gardens of the blessed," etc. What *sort* of religion the Odd-Fellow religion is we find explained on page 12: "Blind creeds and kings have had their day. . . . Make way for brotherhood — make way for man."

After having read all these religious features of the Odd-Fellow periodical, I wrote to several leading Odd-Fellows whose name and address was given in the paper in question. I summed up what I had read in their magazine and on the basis of this evidence asked them *who* the god of Odd-Fellowship is, *why* the name of Christ is omitted from Odd-Fellow ritual prayers, ceremonial tenets, burial services, etc. Mr. J. M. Patton, the editor, says: "Before the meeting is declared open, every one joins in the Lord's Prayer. Is there anything particularly wrong there?" (February 7, 1928.) To show that his lodge makes use of this prayer as a religious exercise for the body and not for the soul, Mr. Patton enclosed, and referred to my special attention, an Odd-Fellow poem composed by Rev. A. T. Hough, poet laureate of the Odd-Fellow Grand Lodge of Vermont:—

"No new religion does she [I. O. O. F.] teach;  
 She's here to practise, not to preach.  
 For when the earnest prayer is said:  
 'Give us this day our daily bread,'  
 Odd-Fellowship produces then  
 The needed loaf as her Amen.

"Change hate to love with touch divine,  
 Thy links around all nations twine,  
 Transform each ancient, soulless creed  
 Into a living, loving deed," etc.

Pretending that they are Christians because they pray the Lord's Prayer, these men call down the curse of God upon themselves in pronouncing the teachings of Christ and the apostles as "ancient, soulless creeds," replaced by Odd-Fellow deeds.

Dr. C. E. McNaught, Czar of the Muscovites, St. James, Minn., says: "While Odd-Fellowship has a veneration for religion, . . .

we avoid all affinity with any system of faith or sect." (Feb. 14, 1928.)

Rev. E. E. Vernon, Grand Chaplain of the South Dakota Odd-Fellow Grand lodge, says, in regard to *who* the god of Odd-Fellowship is, and also in regard to whether or not he himself prays in the name of Jesus Christ while praying in the lodges or when using the ritual prayers of the order: "What is said [in lodges] and written [in lodge magazines] is said and written with the thought of a great, universal, Father-God in mind." (Feb. 15, 1928.)

Mr. Earl L. Wilder, Amboy, Minn., speaking for the Muscovite High Priest in Odd-Fellowship, answers my letter in real Odd-Fellow style. He writes: "If your character and reputation are good . . . and you believe in God, you may be elected into a lodge of Odd-Fellows for about \$20. . . . We boast of Catholics and Lutherans [and Jews] in our order, for it is not founded on religious prejudice. . . . I wonder if you will let me do a little preaching in regard to Odd-Fellowship. . . . *No one sect* is the possessor of the only right way to worship. God gave us our brains for a purpose, and that purpose is to work out our own salvation. [The reason why all people of low mentality and physical imperfections *cannot* be saved.] If we are honest and sincere, our way of thinking is *right*. . . . Quibblers who are sticklers for any rigid method of deportment or worship are deviating from the *example* of Christ. . . . The Odd-Fellows recognize this, and their order is founded to admit people of widely differing beliefs. . . . Your article on dancing makes me think your belief repels thousands of *honest men* by its narrow-gage inelasticity. . . . Permit me to point out that there is scarcely a feature of the teachings of Christ *not* promulgated many years before by Confucius. What did Christ do in the twelve years unaccounted for? We don't know, but it is my belief that he *studied* and found a more effective way to evangelize the world. . . . I will be glad to continue the discussion in fuller detail to see if your peculiar views can hold up under a virile attack." (Feb. 12, 1928.)

Thanks for the preaching, Mr. Wilder! But did Christ *only* "study"? Did He not *die*, too? His "deed" completes the Christian "creed." \*

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\* I accepted Mr. Wilder's challenge to "continue the discussion" and wrote him at length in matters of his antichristian statements; but he has made no reply.

Let me submit some more evidence:—

A PRAYER.

"I take no thought of my neighbor's birth  
Or the way he makes his prayer;  
I grant him a white man's place on earth,  
If his game is 'on the square.'" Etc.

(*The Wisconsin Odd-Fellow*, Jan., 1928.)

"Fraternalism defines every neighbor as a brother." (*The Wisconsin Odd-Fellow*, Jan., 1928.)

"Keep thou thy dreams, though faith should faint and fail,  
And time should loose thy fingers from the creeds. . . .  
A dream may lift thy spirits past all fear  
And with the great may set thy feet on high."

(Frontispiece poem in the *Wisconsin Odd-Fellow*, Feb., 1928.)

There are some men in Odd-Fellowship who have Christian tendencies; and, whether consciously or unconsciously, by their opinions they often try to affect the teachings and principles of Odd-Fellowship. In a recent Odd-Fellow periodical we notice in a poem: "Christ came to Bethlehem, long, long ago." Another: "Odd-Fellowship makes men better Christians." However, on every editorial front page of this Odd-Fellow periodical we find these words: "*We do not hold ourselves responsible* for any views or opinions expressed in the communications of our correspondents." This statement puts a rather forceful damper on the statements of those men who think they can make Christian references in Odd-Fellow journals prove that Christianity is really a part of the teachings of the lodge. To settle this matter once for us all I have reported various Christian statements made in official Odd-Fellow periodicals to Hon. Leon S. Merrill, Grand Sire of the Odd-Fellow Grand Lodge. Here is his official verdict in regard to Christianity *versus* Odd-Fellowship:—

MR. B. M. HOLT,  
1124 4th Ave., S. S.,  
Fargo, N. Dak.

Orono, Maine, March 5, 1928.

DEAR SIR:

Replying to your letter of February 26, Odd-Fellowship holds no affiliation with systems of faith or sect, and in all of its ceremonies avoids reference to matters which might in this respect become contentious.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)

LEON S. MERRILL, Grand Sire.

In other words, Odd-Fellowship has *nothing* to do with Christianity as a religion, but studiously *avoids* all things that would lead its members or others to think that the lodge holds anything in common with those who believe that we have forgiveness for all our sins *only* through faith in the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ.

I might try to analyze this lodge material further; but I think extensive elucidations are superfluous; and I believe I have the right to presuppose sufficient Christian knowledge on the part of those who care to read these notations to ask them to make their own comment.

We should perhaps say something about the Rebekah Lodge, or female Odd-Fellowship; but space forbids. I can merely point out the fact that the Rebekah Lodge is a *part* of Odd-Fellowship itself and exists only in accordance with the rules of Odd-Fellowship. I herewith quote the Rebekah funeral service as furnished by Mrs. May Barrette, president of the Rebekah Assembly:—

“This our sister has reached the end of life’s journey, and while we are assembled to pay our last loving tribute of affection and mingle our sympathetic tears with those of the stricken mourners, we bow in humble submission to the will of an all-wise Father who doth not afflict His children willingly, but, like a father, pitying them, calls them nearer to His side and shelters them within His fold,” etc.

There are two “folds.” Christ is Shepherd of one fold. Who is tending the other fold?

This time we shall try to be just a little individual and shall close, not with a hymn verse, but with a new, framed photograph of the lodge-god as found on page 10 of the *Wisconsin Odd-Fellow*, December, 1927. He looks quite natural, too, clean-shaved and all dressed up for Sunday. Here he is:—

#### DID HE LEAVE ANY INSURANCE?

*“Do you imagine that people will ask where you have gone after you die? Not on your life! They will ask if you left any life insurance, and if so, how much. When this question is answered, they will know where you have gone without asking.”*