

The Grand Master properly declined all communication with the Grand Orient of France, and gives his reasons therefor in the following well-chosen and unmistakeable language :—

"It is a matter of history that, some years ago, the Grand Orient of France became false to Freemasonry, and struck from its teaching and its Ritual that landmark which requires a candidate, before initiation, to state his belief in the existence of a Supreme Being. The Grand Lodge of New York, in common with other Grand Lodges in America, thereupon severed all fraternal relations with the Grand Orient, and that interdiction still remains in force. With this information before me, and solemnly realizing that the very existence of our Fraternity in this God-fearing, God-loving land of ours depends upon jealously guarding that landmark of landmarks, I respectfully declined to receive the communication and documents, and I further declined to furnish a copy of our Masonic law or Ritual to the Grand Orient as requested.

"I am a believer in the old-fashioned Masonic doctrine that teaches the 'existence of one ever-loving and true God.'

"I am a believer in the old-fashioned Holy Bible of our Masonic fathers, and that it 'is given us as a rule and guide for our faith and practice.'

"Freemasonry is a reality. It is not a mockery. We assemble our Lodge 'in the name of God.' We demand of each candidate an affirmative answer to the question, 'Do you believe in the existence of one ever-loving and true God?' This question is not perfunctory, merely asked for the purpose of complying with the requirements of the Ritual. It is the *heart* of our Institution; cut it out and the Masonic body is dead. Give it the life-blood of an honest answer, and belief will grow into living faith, into undying love.

"Freemasonry lives only so long as it is earnestly devoted in practice, not theory, to the service of God and the elevation of His image and likeness—man. By this devotion, which has ever been manifest through the centuries of the past, Freemasonry has reached a higher plane of usefulness than any other human society.

"Believing that I reflected the sentiments of the officers and representatives of this Grand Body in preserving that landmark, in preserving the purity of our banner, which now worthily bears the motto, 'Holiness to the Lord,' I refused all suggestions of Masonic communication with the Grand Orient of France."

There is the true ring about these utterances of Bro. Vrooman, which we heartily commend to the attention of the Brethren whithersoever dispersed.

The volume of proceedings contains a report of the ceremonies of the laying of the corner stone of the Washington Memorial Arch in New York city, by the Grand Master on the 30th May, 1890.