

up a sort of natural religion (*quasi honeste religionis*), among men, but such an allegation is as absurd as it is unfounded. Freemasonry is built up on the universal reception and toleration of all who honestly believe in and accept the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

It makes two exceptions in its wise-defined limits; it sternly excludes atheists, as well as those who affect to set up the so-called "Independent Morality."

But it does not, in any form, essay to avow a religion for men, or the Brotherhood.

It proclaims no dogmata, imposes no tests, interferes with no conscience, and antagonises no creed.

It is simply tolerant, charitable, and comprehensive in the truest and most proper sense, and seeks to hallow the universal recognition of the Most High by acts of unselfish benevolence, by labors of untiring goodwill, towards the fraternity and mankind. But though it does this, and does it always kindly and peaceably, Freemasonry is not anxious to bear the reproach of applauding, or encouraging any procedure alien from its acknowledged theories, and hostile to its avowed programme and platform.

It therefore avoids, as a rule, public display, except when connected with its own proper work, except when asked by lawful authority to participate in acts of public utility, charity, religion; or except, above all, when the ends to be attained, and the objects to be advanced, are admittedly and objectively good, wise, seasonable and useful.

Freemasonry is ever most anxious not to appear to commingle with the divergencies or shibboleths of denominational zeal; it eschews, above all, as it abominates anything like, partizan celebration or questionable loyalty; it resolutely sets itself against all words and acts which in any way infringe on that great principle of reverence for law and order which

runs through the entire teaching of our Maso.lic system from first to last.

But with all that seeks to advance reverence for the Great Creator and the peace and good will of men and brethren, Freemasonry ever keeps "the touch."

In anything that would promote the peaceful and elevating work of religion; in all that seeks to bring man nearer to his Great Creator and his brother man; in all that would lead up to a spread of culture, education, civilization, humanity, and goodwill among the nations of the world, among the children of the dust, Freemasonry always rejoices to avow its concern, and its concordance, its fraternal sympathies, and its ready interest.

But though it is not religion, as we said before, it is religious, very religious in its respect for religion; in its approval of all religious labors which tend either to the mental illumination or religious consolation of our fellow men.

With all these aspects of religion, as a handmaid of the Great Artificer of all, in pouring the oil and wine of humanizing and elevating and soothing religion into the ever open wounds of our poor suffering humanity, Freemasonry always expresses warm concern and living interest. Some have objected to any interference with building of churches and the like. But it is surely a superficial and un-intellectual view of the matter, and utterly opposed to the traditions, the teachings, the symbolism of Freemasonry. Erasmus said of old, talking of cathedrals—"Tanta magestatis sese erigit in cælum ut procul etiam metuentibus religionem inculcat."

Therefore, as our operative forefathers raised the many wondrous buildings we still admire, so we speculative Freemasons of to-day express our hearty sympathy with all such good works, which create art, advance civilization, and aid the dissemination of light, culture, and