

mentation, or authorized public statements calculated, in the least, to prejudice the mind of any member against his religion, or give the impression that Freemasonry is a substitute for religion. Nowhere in its ritual, liturgy, obligations, charters, unwritten traditions or printed instructions will be found any intimation that Freemasonry is superior to the Church, or that it claims to be the world's religious instructor.

3. Further than this, the Fraternity is the avowed enemy of Atheism, non-religion and irreligion. Appreciating the physical and moral and revealed proofs of the existence and beneficent control of the Creator, Masons require every candidate, before passing through any of the ceremonies of initiation, to declare his trust in God. By no possibility can a professed Atheist become a Freemason. If any such should falsely say that he believed in God for the sake of admittance into the Fraternity, he would be on a level with those dissemblers in our churches who, while serving the devil, assume the role of saints. But as the Church is not correctly judged by the pious frauds that afflict it, so neither is Freemasonry to be held responsible for any possible excrescences. Immorality, libertinism, sensualism, and all forms of vice are not only denounced in a general way, but, when detected in the individual member, are disciplined and reproved. The Society arrays itself against impurity, intemperance, dishonesty, and the like, and does not hold itself accountable for any individual defections from its rules, though it exercises its disciplinary authority over the detected transgressor.

4. Freemasonry is based upon the Holy Bible. This book is called, in Masonic language, the First Great Light, and no Lodge is opened without its presence on the altar to pour forth "upon the East, the West, and the South its refulgent rays of Divine truth." The Bible is to the Craft

the exponent of the will of God, the rule by which every real Mason will endeavor to regulate his conduct, and the norm by which he will correct his failings.

The traditions, legends, significant words, and much of the symbolism of Masonry are from sacred history. Nor does the Order pervert these things, or put new and unhistoric explanations upon them. The Society is neither "advanced" in its theology, nor "high" in its Biblical criticism. Freemasons are, as a rule, less interested in weakening the authenticity and credibility of the Old Testament than many modern Churchmen and professors in theological schools. For Professor Kuenen and the destructive critics of the Old Testament generally, Masons have no sympathy, but with Dr. Wm. H. Green, the conservative and learned Hebraist, of Princeton, they fully agree as to the historic reliability and trustworthiness of the Word of God.

5. What is asked, are the religious principles of Freemasonry? Though neither a religion nor a substitute for religion, the organization, from the nature of the case, has fundamental and vital principles which it maintains. It is a system of modified Theism, on which, according to conviction and preference, the individual member may graft his own views as to the ramifications and details of practical theology and the plan of salvation. Some will be interested, then, in hearing why Freemasonry attaches so much value to the Bible, the chief aim of which is to enlighten the world about Jesus Christ. It is because Masonry desires to be ruled, in things, pertaining to the mission and work of the Society, by the recognized highest expression of God's will. Freemasonry existed before the Bible was completed or its canon defined, during which period the Fraternity held in greatest reverence the then highest recognized symbol or exponent of God's will, but when Jehovah caused His will to be reveal-