

"have fallen into the error of supposing that all the books which are bound up with the volume commonly called the Bible, are received as the work of inspiration. There are many things in it hard to understand, some impossible of explanation, but in the main points it undoubtedly speaks the will of the Supreme Architect of the Universe. In a Masonic Lodge it is a symbol of the Divine will as revealed to man. Masons are not required to believe all its statements; indeed but few intelligent men do. If you will read the answer given by the Law and Jurisprudence Committee to Question 10, page 56 of the Grand Lodge proceedings for the year 1879, you will see that, by implication, at least, the Grand Lodge does not exact a belief in the Bible as a qualification for Masonry. If you believe in the existence of a God and the immortality of the soul, you are qualified for Masonry, and, of course, if qualified for initiation, to retain your connection with the lodge. You are mistaken in the supposition that the Masonic institution is founded upon the Bible. As a symbol, it regards it with the greatest veneration, but there are lodges in which it is not to be found at all, the Koran or the Vedas being substituted. As a Mason I have no right to ask you to believe as I do." \* \* \*

In this connection I desire to call your attention to an important point which, it seems to me, must have been introduced into our ritual in modern times, without proper consideration, as to its effect. It is sometimes taught that the Bible is given to us as a rule and guide of our faith. The word "faith," I think, has undoubtedly been substituted for the word "conduct,"—a by no means synonymous term. In the Ancient Charges we read that although "in ancient times, Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, whatever it was, it is now thought more expedient only to obligate them to that religion

in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves, that is to be good men and true, or men of honor and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished, whereby Masonry becomes the centre of union and the means of conciliating true-friendship among persons that must have remained at a perpetual distance." In another place it is said that "hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us." Is it not the most arrant hypocrisy for us to say to an initiate who is of the Hebrew faith, that the Bible—that is the Old and New Testaments—are given to him as the rule and guide of his *faith*? It may be a rule and guide for his *conduct*, without doing violence to his *faith*, for the sublime lessons of morality taught by the Saviour, were not a new code, but are the essence of all that Moses and the Prophets taught. I respectfully submit that the proper teaching is that the Bible is given to Masons as the rule and guide of their conduct, and that it should no where be taught that it is a rule of *faith* in Masonry.—*Frederick Speed, G. M.*

#### AIMS OF FREEMASONRY.

What has been done is, perhaps, of less importance than that which remains to be accomplished. It is not enough that we have wrought a task in the quarries and brought up our work for inspection, agreeably to the designs laid down for us by those whom we have succeeded in the labor of building up the walls of our Masonic Temple, for having reached a stage of Masonic preferment when it has been allotted to us to design that others may execute, the Craft have a right to demand that the plans we shall conceive shall correspond, in the grandeur and breadth of their conception, with the exalted honors which we enjoy. If the high dignities and sounding titles we possess be our only qualifications to enlighten the Craft and the world in respect to