

Modern Free Masonry as a purely speculative system, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols,—not confined to operatives, but open to such men of all professions as may be initiated, does not date back beyond the reign of Geo. I, when masonry having almost become extinct, was revived and so re-organized as to bring it, as far as the ancient landmarks permitted, into harmony with modern ideas. This took place in the year 1717, when the Grand Lodge of England was formed. Previous to this, a Grand Lodge, *as at present constituted*, had no existence. It is obvious, therefore, that it can only be to the subsequent historical development of the seed then planted, that we can look for principles to guide us in our present inquiry, and were the case otherwise, it would surely be a serious mistake were we to look for rules affecting only non-essential details of government, as well as fundamental principles, in a state of society utterly different in manners and modes of thought from the present in which we live.

Masonry being progressive, cannot in the nature of things be stationary. As the habits and ideas of men, and modes of thought change, by a wonderful process of development that is constantly going on, it is always found to adapt itself to altered circumstances.

In the year 1729, the good results of what had been done in England, were so apparent that masons in Ireland were stimulated to proceed to the formation of a Grand Lodge for that portion of the united kingdom; and in 1736, a like procedure was taken in Scotland, and by the formation of these three Independent Grand Lodges, which are the Mother Lodges of our modern systems of Free Masonry, new life and vigor was speedily imparted to the principles of our honourable and ancient craft. An impulse without parallel in its previous history, was in consequence given to the progress of masonry in all parts of the world. Provincial Grand Lodges, with Provincial Grand Masters at their head, were speedily authorized by them, and established by the Charters they granted in almost every country in Europe and throughout America. The Masonic Colonies thus planted, every where prospered. But in every instance the voice of History tells us that as soon as they found themselves in a position to assume the responsibility of independence, they did not hesitate to assert their inherent natural right to independence, and declare themselves the sole, lawful, supreme Masonic authority within their respective jurisdictions. Of course this was not always done without opposition. Those who were not immediately interested were not always unanimous, and the Mother Grand Lodge did not always listen with calmness and good temper to the claims of her children to independence. But in every instance, as soon as human passion had time to cool down, so that the voice of reason might be heard, the claims advanced were admitted to be in accordance with masonic principles, and the new jurisdiction was recognised as lawful.

Such briefly in outline is the development of our modern Free Masonry from the good seed planted in 1717, and the natural conclusion to which a careful survey of it seems to lead is:—

1. That as Masonry exists solely for the promotion of the moral and social virtues, the extent of the jurisdiction of a Grand Lodge should be governed by the affinities, interests and social relations that bind and cement communities together as one people,—in other words, should be co-extensive with the political divisions of countries:—

2. That a Provincial Grand Lodge, working in subordination to a Mother Grand Lodge in another Country or Province, is only suited to Masonry while in a state of infancy:—