

family, and was a man of great learning and ability. His mother was Mary, the daughter and heiress of Robert Cox, Esq., a highly respectable family of the county of Wilts.

The young Christopher Wren was in very delicate health in childhood, so much so that his parents were unwilling to send him from home to be educated, and his father took that labor upon himself—assisted by a private tutor. His progress in learning was rapid, and his disposition was as gentle and amiable as his capacities were great. At an early age, when his health had improved, he was placed under the care of Dr. Bushby, of Westminster, where he had the best tutors England could afford; and such was his genius and taste for learning, especially mathematics, that when only in his thirteenth year he invented a new astronomical instrument, and dedicated it in excellent Latin to his father. In his fourteenth year he was transferred from Westminster to the University at Oxford. His attainments in the classics and mathematics were, at this time, far beyond his years; and his fondness for mechanics was such that he had already produced as many inventions as can be claimed by a full-grown New Englander of the present day. By his precocity of intellect and great attainments in science, he attracted the attention of the learned men of the University, and won their friendship and regard. Dr. Wilkins presented him to Prince Charles as a prodigy in science; and he was already intrusted with the translation of papers that would have tried the attainments of mature scholars.

The seventeenth century was the noon-day of England's glory—at least in mind. It was the century of poets, artists, and men of letters. Milton, Dryden, Cowley; Pope, Swift, Steele, Addison; Newton, Locke, Barrow, Boyle, Hälley, Harvey; Rubens, Vandyke, Rembrandt, and a great cloud of giant minds, both in England and on the Continent, made that century memorable in the world's history. The mental activities of the world were such as they had never been before; and it seemed as though humanity was about to ignore its kindredship to dust, and assert its claims to a higher birthright and a more glorious destiny. Dr. Harvey had discovered the circulation of the blood; and Galileo, with his glass, had invaded the heavens, and demonstrated the revolution of the planets.—*Bro. Cornelius Moeri, in Leaflets of Masonic History.*

MASONRY—WHAT IS IT? AND WHENCE ITS ORIGIN?

MASONRY is divided in two branches, or more properly speaking, viewed under two heads; one of which is denominated Operative (physical and temporal), the other Speculative (moral, sacred, eternal). Operative Masonry is the science of architectural labor, the art of building up, beautifying and adorning Temples for the worship of God, and habitations for the comfort and convenience of man.

As a science or art, Operative Masonry unquestionably had its origin in man's first necessity for a sheltering wall or canopy to serve as a protection from the rigor and changes of the season.

It was the intimate companion of Speculative Masonry from its origin till the year 1717, when the last Ancient Grand Master died, when *the beautiful symbol went down* or was changed, and the physical labors of Operative Masonry closed, and the following rule, or law, was adopted for the government of Masons in all future time:

"That the privileges of Masonry should no longer be restricted to Operative Masons, but extended to good men of various professions and callings. *Provided*, they were regularly approved and initiated into the Order."

Here you will very readily discover that these questions, "What is Masonry?" and "Whence its Origin?" apply exclusively to Speculative Masonry, and to that we invite your kind attention.

The antiquity of Masonry being generally acknowledged, and its great utility realized by the oppressed and down-trodden in every nation and age of the world, still that question to many minds remains unanswered, "What is Masonry, and whence its Origin?"

The learned and intelligent Mackey says: "It is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."

Hutchinson says: "The foundation of Masonry is religion, because our ancient brethren having experienced that from religion all civil ties and bonds which united mankind were derived, they laid the corner-stone of Masonry on the bosom of religion."

Laurie says: "It is founded on the benevolent intention of extending and conferring mutual happiness upon the best and truest principles of morality and virtue."

Norval says: "A Mason's Lodge is a school of piety, a school of the noblest virtue that adorns the human race, a school of brotherly love. With the Holy Bible ever open upon its altars, it invites us to peruse its sacred pages, for in them only are the words of eternal life."