

latter may exist as a recognized body; and it remains in allegiance thereto. In short, a lodge of Masons holding a charter under a living Grand Lodge, cannot be compelled by any other Masonic authority whatever to change its allegiance; and any attempt to coerce it by such other grand body is an assault, not only on the Masonic liberty of its members, but on their Grand Lodge, which has no right to cast them off, they being an integral part of itself; and such an assault as would at once justify the latter in calling upon all the Grand Lodges of the world to resent it, as an attack upon the common liberty and rights of those bodies, by such measures as in the common judgment would seem meet. And why not? Seeing that a Grand Lodge with its subordinate or constituent lodges, as you please to consider them, is like a tree with its branches and roots, which are all one; so that you cannot injure either without injuring the tree; so whether a particular lodge is a branch (subordinate), or a root (constituent) is no matter; the Grand Lodge (like the tree) can neither lawfully abdicate government, nor abnegate the same over any constituent part without its consent; and certainly nobody else can interfere.

Any Grand Lodge instituted within the territory where any such chartered lodge may exist, must take its jurisdiction subject to the incumbrance occasioned by the prior rights of the lodge, which will hold its own jurisdiction half way to the next lodge, or as may be agreed on; and pursue its ordinary Masonic course as though nothing had happened; although it might be better if the latter would elect to accept the new jurisdiction.

All who claim that the lodges located in any state or other independent political division, in which no Grand Lodge may exist, can elect to unite and form a Grand Lodge of their own; admit also thereby their right to elect to stay as they are; any other supposition dissipates the right of

election. A proposition that a lodge may elect to leave its Grand Lodge and accept allegiance in another; but that at the same time it cannot elect to decline to do so, is not even good nonsense; and yet some lodges must elect to go out and form a Grand Lodge before there can be such a body for other lodges to elect to join. The whole process of forming a Grand Lodge is, therefore, a process of election; and that is all there is of it.

Take the second proposition, which includes forced affiliation of the members of one lodge by another lodge which is situated nearer. This being a similar State case, the right and the law must be the same; to wit, the law of Masonic liberty—of election—a law which presents itself as necessarily existing and paramount in every such case, and inseparable from it, in such an institution as Freemasonry.

The right of a Mason to continue his existing affiliation, or unite with a nearer lodge, is so obvious that it need not have been mentioned here, if the same right in a lodge of Masons to adhere to its own Grand Lodge had not been put in question, and an attempt actually made, backed up by one or more Grand Lodges, to coerce the "affiliation" of several lodges—that is, to force them to elect to leave their old Grand Lodge and accept allegiance in the new.

When this project shall be accomplished, the Grand Lodges which support the innovation will have already committed themselves, at the expense of unfraternal edicts and widespread animosities, to the mischievous doctrine of forced affiliation all round, as well in respect to individual Masons as to lodges of such—the two cases being in substance the same; for what is the difference to Freemasons between forcing twenty of them separately out of their own lodges, and forcing twenty of them in a body out of their own Grand Lodge? Hence the firebrand of forced affiliation must, doubtless, soon be added