



“Memor et Fidelis.”

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*Address of the M. W. Philip C. Tucker, Esq., Grand Master of Vermont, D. G. H. P. of the General Grand Chapter of the United States, &c., &c., to the Grand Lodge of Vermont, on the Canada question, January 14th, 1857.*

READ IT.

MY BRETHREN,—During the past year the important question relating to the Grand Lodge of Canada—and which this Grand Lodge passed upon, to its own entire satisfaction, at its last annual communication—has been agitated in other Grand Lodges, with differing results. The Grand Lodge of Ireland, and the Grand Lodges of Kentucky, South Carolina, Louisiana, Iowa, the District of Columbia and some others, I am advised, agree with the decision made by Vermont. The Grand Lodges of England and Scotland, abroad, and those of Massachusetts, New York, Missouri and Virginia, at home, hold adverse opinions to ours. The Grand Lodges of Maine, Wisconsin, Connecticut, and some others, have the subject under consideration, and some of the Grand Lodges of the United States, have not, so far as I am informed, yet taken it up for consideration at all.

It is not to be doubted, that if this Grand Lodge saw even specious reasons to sustain the opinion that its action had been premature on this important subject, it would, from a sense of duty, review it. Assuredly, if I had been convinced; or—even less than that—had I seen any strong reason to create doubt as to the entire correctness and soundness of our action of last year, I should feel it to be my duty now to recommend a new investigation. I have endeavoured to obtain all the information in my power, and to examine carefully and impartially all the argument which has come to my hands during the year;

and so far from finding any weakening of my opinion, the result has been to strengthen and to confirm the judgment I had previously formed—that both as matter of duty, of honor, of policy, and of sound masonic principle, the Lodges of Canada which assembled at Hamilton on the tenth day of October, 1855, and formed an Independent Grand Lodge for Canada, acted lawfully and right, and upon every correct principle of masonic law, usage, practice and precedent—as well as brotherhood—ought to be sustained by the Grand Lodges of the United States.

In the differences of opinion which have arisen out of the consideration of this subject, one Grand Lodge—out of great caution—has reviewed its action of last year. Massachusetts, with her aged Grand Lodge and her acknowledged masonic bearing and talent, staggered the District of Columbia by her adverse action; or rather, perhaps, shook the opinion of its Grand Master. A re-investigation was directed by that Grand Master, the Chairman of the Committee for the purpose, being that enlightened, learned, and well-informed mason, Brother Benjamin B. French, of the City of Washington. The result is before the masonic world. A thorough re-examination of the subject confirmed a most intelligent committee in the former view taken by that Grand Lodge, and their views were confirmed by it, supporting the decision which had been previously made. Brother French and his associates are among the most intelligent masons of the United States, and they are brethren who can never be justly charged with lending their sanction to law-breaking or revolution in the masonic world.

When this subject was under consideration in our own Grand Lodge, at its last annual communication, I studiously withheld any ex-

pression of my own opinion; nor was that opinion known beyond myself, until you, my brethren, had, by a unanimous vote, extended the right hand of masonic fellowship to the independent Grand Lodge of Canada. As I was not heard, in argument, then, I anticipate your willingness to hear me patiently now, when the correctness of your action has been questioned elsewhere.

Grand Lodges, as they exist at the present time and as they have existed from the year 1717, are wholly *new* institutions. They are not institutions of ancient date, and have no odor of antiquity about them. In the olden time every single Lodge was wholly independent, and the privilege of practising the masonic rites was *inherent* in masons, when assembled together in due form, as individuals. The Charter obtained, not far from the beginning of the fourth century, “from the King and Council,” by Saint Alban, empowered those masons simply to hold a “general council,” which was called an “Assembly.” That “Council” or “Assembly” did not consist of members by delegations from Lodges. It was a *general* one, embracing the craft, as it then existed, in England, *at large*; and it was the duty of every mason to attend it, if he lived within fifty miles of the place of assemblage, and had “proper warning.”

Nor was the gathering of the masons at the City of York, under Prince Edwin, in 926, a *Grand Lodge*, in any fair modern understanding of those terms. It was a “congregation” of masons only, who composed a “*General Lodge*,” of which he was Grand Master. He was Grand Master of *Masons*, but not of a *Grand Lodge*, as now understood; for no such *Grand body* then existed.

It is doubtless true, that the York “*Assembly*” exercised jurisdiction, in its day, over