



Sovereign Great Priory of Canada

Christian Chivalry & Freemasonry

Rarely does one connect Chivalry with Freemasonry, yet there is one branch of the fraternity which places great stress on Christian Chivalry and those virtues which go to make up chivalric character.

We refer to that great Order known as Knights of the Temple, or Knights Templar.

The original Knights of the Temple were Christian warriors; they were men of Faith, inspired with love of God and the Church. The story of their exploits, their adventures, their self-sacrifice, and their accomplishments, read as a page from a story book.

There is nothing so appealing in all history as the story of the great Crusades, sponsored by the Church, but actually carried on through the great chivalric orders of that day. The object of the Crusades was to wrest the Holy Land and the sacred places of Christian history from the Moslem.

The Crusade period marked a new era in the life of the world. It brought the Eastern and Western worlds together. The evils and virtues of the East were brought to the West and vice versa. But the greatest thing which emerged through these conflicts of Christian and Saracen was the virtue of Charity. The Knights of the Temple and the Knights Hospitaller were the Red Cross organization of that day. For the first time in the history of war; men began to think of aiding others. Many are the deeds of Charity recounted, not only between those of the faith, but extending from Christian to Moslem.

Thus did this era usher in those homely virtues of Charity, Hospitality and Universal Benevolence.

Today the warlike character of the Knights has disappeared; no more is it thought necessary to engage in useless struggle over holy sites and places; no more is it believed necessary to fight men of other nations in order to convert them to our way of thinking.

But the same feelings of Love, and Truth, and Charity, and Hospitality, and Universal Benevolence still remain in the human heart, and the world at large is benefited by any group which encourages such essential needs of mankind.

Thus has grown the modern Order of the Temple. Knights of today claim no direct legal descent from those ancient knights of old, yet they do claim to carry on the virtues for which they fought, bled and died. No longer is it necessary to fight with material weapons, for today "the pen is

mightier than the sword", and the weapon of a knight is the influence of a good life carried out as set forth in the New Dispensation - that we love one another.

And you ask: "Just what place does the Templar Order hold in respect to other branches of Freemasonry?"

And we reply: "A most important part". To the Christian Freemason it represents the summit of the teachings of the Craft. While in no way minimizing the teachings of the symbolic degrees, yet to him the Order of the Temple conveys the essence of Masonic teachings, and is the Christian interpretation of the Symbols of ancient Craft Masonry.