

GRAND MASTER'S ADDRESS.

Allocution of Col. W. J. E. MacLeod Moore Delivered before the Sixth Annual Assembly of the Sovereign Great Priory Knights Templars in Montreal.

ALLOCUTION

Of the Supreme Grand Master, Col. MacLeod Moore, Great Prior of the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada, read before the Great Priory at Montreal, on Tuesday, the 22nd October, 1889.

FRATRES.—It is with undiminished pleasure I greet you once again, as I had greatly feared from my impaired health of late, that I could not have had that gratification at this, our Annual Assembly, held somewhat later than usual, to admit of members who belong to the A. & A. S. Rite 33rd attending the Supreme Council in session here this week.

During the past fifteen months the fell destroyer has dealt lightly with our ranks; no reports of casualties by death have been announced to me. Not so our fratres of the United States, who have lost some of their bright lights. They have our fraternal sympathy.

The notice last year of the death of our late esteemed frater, Charles Davis Macdonnel, of Peterborough, Ont., did not take place until after the annual meeting of Great Priory—he died on the 29th July, 1888—and was at one period Grand Chancellor of this Great Priory. His kindly and genial disposition endeared him to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance—he is another who has passed away of the recipients of the lesser cross of the Order,—conferred upon him at my recommendation, by H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, as a Knight Commander of the Temple in Canada. "May he rest in peace."

Invitations were sent to me from bodies of the obedience of the Grand Encampment of the United States, and no doubt were also received by others in this jurisdiction, to attend the Triennial Conclave at Washington during the early part of the month, which my failing health did not admit of my accepting, but I am glad to learn that many members from Canada were present, as it is always profitable to witness the proceedings of other Grand Bodies of the Order, although differing so materially from our own, by which the fraternal and kindly feelings are thus kept up, and I rejoice to say, such exists amongst us. We can assure them at all times of a fraternal welcome,—no doubt in the present instance our Canadian fratres found their visit to Washington to witness the magnificent spectacle of so many U. S. Templars in military uniform, and partaking of their generous and lavish hospitality, most enjoyable. To me large military organizations are no new sight, and I cannot now feel the same interest in those of an imitative character, more particularly as I have long abandoned the idea that Masonic Military Templary represents "the true Order," or that there is any connection between Templary and Freemasonry, which at one time I may have supposed existed,—at the same time the discussions and proceedings in their Grand Encampment are always interesting and instructive. My correspondence with their Grand Master, General Charles Roome, has been most pleasing, in which we have exchanged ideas of interest to both on the construction of the two modern systems.

To the Nestor of the symbolism of Masonry and erudite writer on all subjects connected with Masonry, General Albert Pike, Grand Commander of the Southern jurisdiction A. & A. S. Rite 33rd, I am indebted for the most interesting and valuable information as regards true Templary, from his facile learned pen, which has cleared up many doubtful points relative to Masonic Templary, that had not been quite clear to me.

Excepting for the unfortunate misunderstanding with the Great Priory of England our relations with all other jurisdictions are undisturbed.

I cannot help remarking, with all due respect for the opinions of others, that I consider it was a mistake to have interfered with my last year's Allocution, by not publishing it in tact as read, with the proceedings. The committee to whom it was referred had a perfect right to express their disapproval of any portion of it that they did not agree to, but I think they should have rendered it in full, to prevent any misconception being placed upon it by those who had not heard it read, and to admit of the whole body being acquainted with my views. I make these remarks in all good feeling, not from any fault-finding with the adverse opinions of others.

I regret having been unable to visit any of the preceptories from ill health, excepting that at Brockville, but have been well represented by the Provincial Priors, whose reports will be laid before you.

I shall now continue from last year's Allocution my detached remarks on the Templar system of the empire, and endeavour to point out many errors and mistakes that have crept in and been allowed to remain for want of contradiction and explanation.

The inception of a true and correct understanding of the Modern Templar system, must be looked for from the commencement of the Grand Mastership of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales and formation of a "Convent General" for the Empire A. D. 1873, as it is only within the last thirty years any attempt has been made to clear up the contradictory opinions and statements that surround Modern Templary, respecting its origin, object and meaning, with its assumed Masonic connection, no trouble being taken previously to investigate the truth or falsehood of the assertions made, every idle tale and legend being taken for granted as strictly true. Various theories were advanced to prove that Templary was a component part of "Free and Accepted Masonry" of the 1717 revival, but all have failed to convince before historic wrath and modern criticism, however carefully perversion of truth may be arranged. At this time, 1873, a most searching investigation was instituted as to its alleged derivation and connection with Freemasonry, as well as direct descent from the old orders of chivalry. It was then clearly ascertained and declared that Modern Templary was in no way a part of speculative Freemasonry, but merely allied to it, to preserve the intimate connection that was supposed to have existed between the old Christian builders—stone masons of the Cloisters, and the Religions and Military Orders of the Crusades, to represent and continue them as a Christian society, following the principles and usages of chivalry by preserving their traditions and trinitarian Christian belief in the symbolic teaching of the "Sacred Mysteries."

Although it cannot claim a direct descent from the ancient "Military" Order, after its suppression in the 14th century, still a continuous connection exists, and the perpetuation of its doctrines and principles accounted for and traced, from many of the original members retiring into secular life and the religious houses throughout Europe, and also joining the coteremporary Order of St. John of Jerusalem. If the old "Templar Order" is dead, its teachings have survived. Nothing is more certain than that the rules, constitution and even the general features of the ceremonies have been preserved, appropriated and practised with such modifications as the changes in opinion and state of society demand, and is a revival of the same object, which it correctly represents. This view of the subject has the weight of evidence, legendary as well as historical, over the visionary assumption of "Masonic" Templary, but many in this sceptical age who have taken the Templar degrees, eagerly seize upon any new theory, physical or moral, to use it, if possible, against Christianity, under the cover of science or criticism, insisting that in the course of evolution the old Templar doctrines were merged into speculative Masonry of a universal creed, and will not admit the advisableness of perpetuating the exclusive Christian trinitarian character, considering that Knights Templary and Freemasonry must eventually yield to evolutionary progress, believing that man's conception of the Deity corresponds with his knowledge of nature, and with advanced intellectual studies. Of revelation they profess to know but little.

I. Such is the language of the free-thinking and advanced opinions of the day as regards Templary in opposition to those who desire to perpetuate in the true Templar system the doctrines of the catholic faith to the honour and glory of God.

II. The argument brought forward, that the Templar degrees formed a part of the original plan of speculative Freemasonry on the revival is a mistake based upon anachronisms, as they all refer to periods long after the invention of additional degrees or the Templar system. The error of adopting these degrees at all has been distinctly pointed out by modern Masonic investigation of the most reliable authority.

III. The Templar degrees are not a Military association; they only borrow the name from the ancient chivalric Orders, whose principles and rules they are supposed to imitate by engaging in a spiritual warfare for the protection and promulgation of the Christian faith, which it is not reasonable to believe would be accomplished if they reverted to its original military character.

As a purely Christian society allied to Freemasonry, military evolutions and displays are quite out of place, of no benefit, and questionable both in policy and utility.

The title "Sir" prefixed to the names of members is another inconsistency, assuming a title of the British aristocracy, frequently making the great mistake of leaving out the baptismal name altogether, to which it applies, as the "title" can only be properly used with the Christian name, or when combined with it and the surname. The term "frater" has been incorrectly objected to, as giving the idea that it refers to the "Roman Catholic Priesthood." This is a mistake, the word was always used in the mediæval military religious fraternities, being merely the Latin for brother.

IV. There is no such thing as Masonic