

THE CEREMONIES AND DOCTRINE OF THE UNITED ORDER.

Although the Templar body of to-day cannot prove a direct descent from the Chivalry of the Crusades, its legend and traditions strongly point that way, and in all tradition there lies a germ of truth, we therefore endeavor to imitate and assimilate our ceremonies and practices as closely as possible to that of the Ancient Order, strictly conforming to the doctrines of the Soldiers of the Cross, who fought for the faith on the plains of Palestine.

The ceremonies of the United Orders of the Temple and Hospitalers of Malta, are intended to inculcate the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion, the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Great Captain of our salvation, and a firm belief in the Holy Trinity, one and indivisible, the chief and indestructable characteristic of the Order, without which, in spite of all sophistry and special pleading, no Templary can exist. If any Templar system admits those who reject the Trinity in unity, or Hebrews, who adhere to the Judaical law, they have just as effectually laid aside the principles of the Order, as Orangemen would do if they opened their doors to Roman Catholics, in fact the instant the Order ceases to be Trinitarian it also ceases to be a true branch of the Templars, and should be treated as such.*

* The question does not arise which is most correct, the *Trinitarian* or *Unitarian* system—that is a religious question, with which we are not concerned at present—but the Templar Order has, from its very inception, been strictly Trinitarian, and it is altogether unreasonable that any one should wish to join it who is not prepared to accept the doctrine of the Trinity. The name by which, even before the Order obtained that of Templar, (originated, as all know, from their House near the Temple of Solomon), and they were known to the world, and designated themselves, "The poor fellow-soldiers of Jesus Christ," and the existing branch in Portugal is now called the "Knights of Christ." In fact, the ancient rules and ceremonies go to show conclusively that the Order is peculiarly Trinitarian. To speak of the Templar Order as a Masonic Order of Knighthood, is simply ridiculous. The Order existed for centuries apart from Freemasonry without any known connection, further than that the Knights employed the Ancient Craft as workmen; and our traditions claim that the intimate connection now existing between Templary and Freemasonry originated at the time of the violent suppression of the former, when the Society of Builders sheltered many of the Templars amongst their own Body. In these days of growing scepticism and atheism, our Christian Order is of more importance than ever, when to all appearance we are approaching a struggle, when religion and free-thought will find themselves face to face, and when the battle will have to be fought out to the bitter end—all the more reason then that we ought to remain staunch to the dogmas of our Ancient Faith, and sternly repel any attempts made to lower the standard of our religious tests.