

I must refer you to our Great Priory Proceedings of August, 1877, in which will be found the report of the Ritual Commission, with the changes recommended fully explained, and clearly showing the absurdity of perpetuating palpable historical errors, because the Masons of the last century believed in an *imaginary* Order of Masonic Knighthood.

It is useless to assert, that any body or society calling themselves Templars, who base their origin on "Free and Accepted Masonry," represent the Ancient Religious Military Order of the Crusades in any way. Many societies have arisen under Templar designations:—as "Good Templars," "Masonic Templars," &c., but whose doctrines and usages are diametrically opposed to the Order of the Crusades.

It will be apparent to the most casual observer, that the "peculiar" dogmas of Christianity could *never* have had any connection with the "*Universal Creed*" of Modern "Free and Accepted Masonry," therefore, a *Masonic* Christian Order of Knighthood is an anomaly. The Orders of Knighthood of the Middle Ages being purely Christian, the prefix "Masonic," is a misnomer and creates a false impression.

The history of the Ancient Templars and Knights of St. John, is well known, and it is evident that their principles and customs could never have had anything to do with existing "Free and Accepted Masonry." The idea then of amalgamating *true* Templary with Masonry destroys the very foundation of both. No doubt Drs. Anderson and Desaguliers in 1717, sacrificed much of what was then known of the early "St. John's" (Christian) (4) Ma-

to come in. So with the Templar degrees founded on "Free and Accepted Masonry" that had replaced it, in which the true derivation and object of Templary is lost, and nothing but the name retained. Its whole organization, doctrines and ceremonies, were altered to suit the views of the times, and of those who neither cared or wished to know the history and intention of the Order, which indeed are totally unfitted for the popular ideas of the great majority seeking admission, who believing only in the universal plan of "Free and Accepted Masonry," see nothing in the Templar degrees but a Masonic military pageant more suitable to their taste and feelings, and have no desire to discuss its merits or enquire into its derivation.

Few appreciate research, and seldom if ever go beyond the surface, consequently they are unable to understand so beautiful a system as English Templary, which stands alone on its own merits and principles as a Christian Society, whose mission is to advance the interests of our Ascended Redeemer, whom we are bound to follow in His life and precepts, and thus far, at least, pay homage to the Great Captain of our Salvation, whose sworn soldiers we have constituted ourselves, and that by our own voluntary act.

As a matter of historical fact, Templary founded on Modern "Free and Accepted Masonry," is pure fiction, and one of the myths of the past. Craft Masonry itself ignores and repudiates the claim, and does not support or wish it to be understood that such exists, and merely *tolerates* it as a body of Masons in a military garb, professing Christian principles. (5)

(4) The early Christian character of Masonry is shown in the primitive Lodges before the Society was incorporated into Building Guilds. These Lodges were under the supervision of the Monks, and were frequently termed "*Fraternities*" of this or that Saint. The Building Society of "Strasburg" was called "Brothers of St. John," and not designated "Masonry;" but it has been proved beyond a doubt that the Masonic Fraternity of our times is the legitimate off spring of the Building Corporations or "Guilds" of the Middle Ages, who were themselves the successors of the Christian Builders, consisting at first wholly of Monks or Lay Brothers in the Monasteries. And it is well authenticated that the first association of "Stone Masons" were employed solely in the service of the Church.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland still keeps up the recollection, by calling the "Craft" degrees "The Masonry of St. John." Masonry to enable the "million" of all creeds

(5) A well-known, able, and learned Masonic author and authority of the United States, in writing to me some years back, says:—"Viewed in the light of present opinion in this country, Masonic Templary is an absurdity. There is not the *slightest* foundation for the impudent *fiction* that the Knights Templar Order, after the Political Suppression of A. D. 1312, became Free Masons, and under the *mask* of Masonry continued their Templar organization. * * * The Ritual of the Order was made here; there is *nothing* of the Templar in it or in the militia uniform they wear. The titles of the different officers and designations they have adopted, are altogether unsupported by *any* historical evidence, being purely imaginary, the production of ritual compilers for the purpose of assuming the military character without the slightest authority for doing so, and are merely a pretext for playing at soldiers for the purpose of pageantry and display in public."